



Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Planning Commission Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes-Final

Date: 10/26/2023

Minutes prepared by Liz Hansen

Location: Western Service Center

Attendance

Members Present

- Jerry Rich
- Amy Hunting
- Barry Graham
- James Guttman
- Nate Reitz
- Tony Nelson
- Kelly Kausel
- Brady Folkestad
- Lori Hansen
- Michael Esch

Dakota County staff members attending:

- Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager
- Niki Geisler, Parks Director
- Liz Hansen, Administrative Coordinator
- Joe Walton, Natural Resource Senior Ecologist

Member(s) Absent:

- Mike Cahn
- Jill Smith
- Dennis Peine

Meeting Called to Order

- Time: 7:03 p.m.
- By Planning Commission Chair, Amy Hunting
- Commissioner Kausel joined the meeting at 7:09 p.m.
- Commissioner Reitz joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

- The Planning Commission opened the meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

- Comments/Notes: No audience member wished to address an item not on the agenda.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Hunting asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

The Planning Commission advised no changes, additions, or deletions.

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved, seconded by Commissioner Hansen, approving the agenda. Voice vote: Ayes – 8 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved

Approval of Minutes (from September 28, 2023)

Chair Hunting asked if there were any changes to the previous meeting’s minutes.

The Planning Commission advised no changes, additions, or deletions.

MOTION: Commissioner Graham moved, seconded by Commissioner Folkestad, approving the previous meeting’s minutes. Voice vote: Ayes – 8 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved

Item VI. Vermillion River Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan (Hastings) -Action (Joe Walton, Natural Resource Senior Ecologist)

Joe Walton, Natural Resource Senior Ecologist, presented this item. The Planning Commission received an overview of the plan’s status, including comments received from the public during the open comment period.

Questions and comments by the Commissioners, along with responses from staff (*italics*):

Planning Commissioners noted that there were not many public comments on the plan. *Staff agreed and stated that the plan was widely publicized in the local newspaper, county web page, and social media. Staff also contacted the DNR and presented to the Hastings City Parks Committee.*

Several Planning Commissioners commented that they thought the plan was widely publicized and that often, there is not the same interest in natural resource management that there may be in other plans.

One of the comments received was on the preservation and management of the mill ruins near the Veteran's Home. *Staff responded that they contacted the City of Hastings and the Historical Society and that this is the*

city's land. Dakota County will interpret the story of the mill, but the City will need to take the lead on preserving and managing the mill ruins.

A commissioner mentioned that attending local farmers markets may be a good way to engage residents on natural resource management plans. *Staff agreed with the comment.*

There was a discussion on cost-share incentives for managing natural resources on adjacent private land. *Staff provided an overview of the County's voluntary easement program, along with landowner obligations and county cost share for managing protected land.*

A commissioner mentioned that there are now some new best management practices for managing buckthorn, citing recent research by the University of MN. Buckthorn can be managed by planting aggressive native plant species that compete with and suppress buckthorn. *Staff responded that the research was promising and that buckthorn is the symptom of the problem within a crumbling ecosystem.*

A commissioner mentioned that Dakota County has been very innovative in its natural resource management techniques, such as using goats to control invasive species. *Staff agreed with the comment.*

MOTION: Commissioner Graham moved, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, recommending to the Physical Development Committee of the Whole to adopt the Natural Resource Management Plan for the Vermillion River Greenway Hastings Segment. Voice vote: Ayes – 10 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved

Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions

Comments/Notes: Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, provided the Planning Commission with an update on the following County Board Actions:

- Authorized acquisition of the Schiela Trust property for the Veterans Memorial Greenway
- Provided direction on greenway cost-share policies and practice

Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

Lebanon Maintenance Shop Open House	October 24 th , 4:30-6:00pm Lebanon Hills Regional Park Visitor Center
Lebanon Maintenance Shop Virtual Meeting	November 9 th , 6:30pm https://bit.ly/LH-MF
Vermillion River Watershed Plan Public meeting	Late November TBD

Topics for next meeting (Thursday, November 16, 2023)

Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, let the Planning Commission know that there is one item on the schedule for next month's meeting:

- Mississippi River Greenway – Long Range Plan

Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates:

A commissioner attended the Lebanon Hills Maintenance Shop Open House and inquired about whether funding was available to restore the current shop location. *Staff responded that there is funding in the budget to remove the old shop and stabilize the existing site with native vegetation. The County will need to decide the long-range future for the site through a separate study that looks at the future of Camp Sacagawea, either at its current location or at the old shop location.*

Commissioners discussed the need for public engagement about what to do with the old shop location, with comments about the quality of natural resources near the existing shop, the needs for the camp, and other needs such as accessible public bathrooms in the area.

Adjournment

Chair Hunting asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Commissioner Folkestad moved, seconded by Commissioner Hansen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Voice Vote: Ayes – 10 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Hansen, Administrative Coordinator