

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP  
OF THE  
BOARD OF MANAGERS  
OF THE  
NINE MILE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT**

**THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2021**

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Cutshall called the Workshop of the Board of Managers of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District to order at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, May 6, 2021. The meeting was conducted by web-based video conference, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021, after the Chair determined that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not prudent for the Board of Managers, or any committee thereof, to meet in person.

Managers Present: Grace Butler, Bob Cutshall, Erin Hunker, Peggy Kvam, and Larry Olson

Manager Absent: None

Advisors Present: Janna Kieffer and Meg Rattei (Barr Engineering)

Staff Present: Randy Anhorn and Erica Sniegowski

**II. Approval of Agenda**

Administrator Anhorn added to the agenda item V to add a staff update on the maintenance of Phase I of the Discovery Point landscape and restoration project.

**Manager Hunker moved, seconded by Manager Butler to approve the meeting agenda as presented. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved 5-0.**

### **III. 2020 Water Monitoring Program Summary and Summary Report**

Administrator Anhorn summarized the District's goals for the 2020 water monitoring program, including tracking trends, evaluating results of projects, and supporting studies of the District's adaptive management approach. He reminded the managers that eight lakes were monitored as part of the 2020 program: North Cornelia, South Cornelia, Edina, Holiday, Indianhead, Normandale, Rose, and Wing. Administrator Anhorn reported the creek was monitored in 10 locations, there were 29 lake-level readings, ground water levels monitored at six locations, and there was intermittent blue-green algal bloom monitoring, following District protocol, on Arrowhead Lake, Lake Cornelia, Lake Edina, and Lake Holiday.

Engineer Kieffer shared a presentation and walked through the results of the District's 2020 lake monitoring program. She noted the three primary evaluation factors the District uses when it's doing a holistic assessment of lake health: water quality, aquatic communities, and water quantity. She added the District also considers how recreation factors and wildlife habitat affect and are affected by overall lake health.

Engineer Kieffer explained the District monitored Lake Holiday, Lake Rose, and Wing Lake in Minnetonka and Arrowhead Lake and Indianhead Lake in Edina not only for water quality but also for the aquatic communities, including monitoring the macrophyte (aquatic plant) community, phytoplankton, and zooplankton. She reported the District also conducted targeted monitoring in 2020 to evaluate the effectiveness of recent District management projects. Engineer Kieffer said targeted monitoring took place on Lake Cornelia, Lake Edina, and Normandale Lake.

Engineer Kieffer reminded the Board that Lake Holiday, Lake Rose, and Wing Lake are shallow lakes. She reported the three lakes exceed the state standard for phosphorous for shallow lakes. She pointed out that in 2020 Lake Rose met the state standard for secchi depth and chlorophyll *a*. Engineer Kieffer talked about the plant communities of the three lakes, noting Lake Rose met the plant IBI threshold in August. Engineer Kieffer reminded the Board that the District is conducting water quality studies on Holiday, Wing, and Rose lakes in 2021.

Engineer Kieffer reported neither Arrowhead Lake nor Indianhead Lake met state standards for phosphorous, chlorophyll *a*, or secchi depth in 2020. She stated lake water levels were high and water clarity depth was low in 2020. She said neither Indianhead Lake nor Arrowhead Lake met the plant IBI threshold of 11 plant species in 2020. Engineer Kieffer reminded the Board that the District is conducting water quality studies on both Arrowhead Lake and Indianhead Lake in 2021. She reported Lake Edina, North Lake Cornelia, and South Lake Cornelia did not meet state standards for phosphorous. Engineer Kieffer talked about the 2020 monitoring results of Normandale Lake, noting that at 61 micrograms per liter, the lake barely exceeded

the state standard for phosphorus of 60 micrograms per liter. She reported Normandale Lake did meet the state standard for clarity and chlorophyll *a*.

Engineer Kieffer shared a slide about nitrogen levels in Normandale Lake, explaining that as nitrogen moves through the lake, levels decrease, meaning the algae and aquatic plants are taking up nitrogen. She said the levels suggest there are times that nitrogen is the limiting nutrient in the lake. Engineer Kieffer displayed a graph indicating the different types of plants and quantities in terms of average wet weight observed in Normandale Lake in 2020 samples. She said the most common plants found in 2020 were coontail, common water weed, and white water lily. She also discussed the frequency of occurrence of filamentous algae, noting frequency was greater in June than in August.

Engineer Kieffer talked about blue-green algae found by District staff in Lake Holiday, North Lake Cornelia, South Lake Cornelia, Arrowhead Lake, Indianhead Lake, and Lake Edina. She said in these cases the blue-green algae counts were greater than the World Health Organization's (WHO) threshold for moderate probability of adverse health effects.

Engineer Kieffer discussed 2020 chloride concentrations in Rose, Indianhead, Holiday, Wing, Normandale, South Cornelia, North Cornelia, Arrowhead, and Edina lakes. She noted that the lakes that receive runoff from major roadways tended to have higher chloride concentrations, especially during the spring and early summer. She noted unusual increases in chloride concentrations were observed in September in Indianhead Lake and Normandale Lake, and suggested that the observed increases in chloride concentration could be a result of fertilizer use.

Ms. Meg Rattei of Barr Engineering presented the results of the 2020 creek monitoring results. She said there were ten creek monitoring sites, and she explained the goal of creek monitoring is to evaluate the stream's fish and aquatic life community and the ecosystem components essential for the survival of fish and aquatic life. Ms. Rattei stated the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has changed water quality standards by changing the fish Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) and adding a macroinvertebrate IBI to the standards. She reported the MPCA listed all of Nine Mile Creek as impaired based on their most recent assessment. The previously-listed fish impairment on the North Fork from the headwaters to Metro Boulevard was retained and the rest of the creek was identified as impaired for fish and macroinvertebrates.

Ms. Rattei commented that while the entire creek has been identified as impaired for fish, looking at data from each of the District's creek monitoring locations can help characterize the extent of impairment. She noted that the most downstream monitoring location appears to have met the fish IBI (FIBI) in the past four years and several of the monitoring locations have met the FIBI standard in some years during that time period. She talked about the fish IBI standard prior to 2018, which was the

MRAP FIBI. She said four of the creek's monitoring locations met the standard per the MRAP FIBI and using the more recent FIBI standard, three locations met the standard in 2020. Ms. Rattei commented that downstream Main Stem and the downstream North Fork monitoring locations met the criteria in both the MRPA FIBI and the FIBI.

Ms. Rattei noted that none of the creek monitoring locations met the MPCA's macroinvertebrate IBI (MIBI) standard in 2020.

Engineer Kieffer presented data from the District's 2020 lake and groundwater level monitoring, summarizing that overall, the District is seeing lake and groundwater levels going down, as compared to high levels generally seen in 2019 and 2020.

Administrator Anhorn mentioned the District is holding a community stakeholder meeting about the water quality study for Arrowhead and Indianhead lakes on May 25.

Manager Butler commented that her takeaways from these reports are that the District has a lot of work to do in terms of fertilizers and nitrates and that she may need to learn more about the WOMP stations and what information they collect. She said she would like to have a future Board discussion about whether the District can work with the DNR or some of the cities to have more groundwater indicators from wells. Administrator Anhorn responded that the District's 2021 budget includes funds to evaluate how to best expand the District's groundwater well network for more coverage for groundwater monitoring.

#### **IV. Wetland Restoration/Protection Plan RFP Bullets**

Administrator Anhorn reported the District has two requests for proposals (RFPs ) that will be on the Board's May 19, 2021 meeting agenda to authorize staff to distribute. He described the RFPs, which are for stabilization of the South Fork of Nine Mile Creek and further evaluation and prioritization of wetland protection projects.

Administrator Anhorn reminded the Board of the wetland protection and restoration RFP discussed at the previous Board meeting. He and Engineer Kieffer walked through a staff memo that detailed the direction and feedback provided by the managers regarding what tasks to include in the RFP. Engineer Kieffer talked in more detail about the difference between wetland protection projects and hydrologic restoration projects, remarking the permanent projects discussed in the memo were in the context of high-quality wetland protection projects such as stormwater retrofits.

Manager Butler commented that she thought the projects focused on invasive species, which are projects that will come later, will not be a wetland-by-wetland

project but instead will be an RFP that will cover work regarding the invasive species across multiple wetlands.

There was discussion about including a budget range in the RFP to help provide guidance on level of effort the District is seeking in the bids. The managers discussed narrowing the focus of the RFP from the eight projects to fewer based on input from Barr Engineering.

**V. Update on Maintenance of Phase I of the Discovery Point Landscape and Restoration Project**

Program and Project Manager Sniegowski shared a slide showing the project location. She reminded the Board that in phase I the planting tasks were divided into the native prairie area and the fescue grass area as a way to have a demonstration area of each and to help the District understand the maintenance requirements of each as well as learn to what degree the buckthorn re-emerges. Program and Project Manager Sniegowski said it had always been the District's plan to remove the fescue area and to turn it into a native prairie area after the research was collected. She said having the fescue area at Discovery Point has been useful as a demonstration area, so the staff plans to leave half of the fescue and convert the other half of that area to native prairie. Program and Project Manager Sniegowski explained why the contractor has recommended doing a prescribed burn. Following the prescribed burn, the contractor will seed the native prairie plantings. She provided more details about the prescribed burn process, seeding, and straw mulching. Program and Project Manager Sniegowski talked about the plan to communicate to the neighbors about the prescribed burn.

Manager Butler recommended the District put up a sign during the event to indicate a District contact person and number.

At 6:44 p.m. the meeting moved into closed session for the purposes of conducting the annual performance review of the District Administrator. The Board moved out of closed session at 6:56 p.m.

**VI. Summary of Closed Session for Purposes of Conducting Administrator's Performance Review**

Chair Cutshall reported a summary of the Board's closed session in which the Board conducted Administrator Anhorn's annual performance review. He stated the Board is pleased with Administrator Anhorn's performance over the past year and the Personnel Committee recommends a 4% salary increase.

**Manager Hunker moved, seconded by Manager Butler to authorize a 4% salary increase for Administrator Anhorn retroactive to March 26, 2021. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved 5-0.**

**VII. Adjournment**

**It was moved by Manager Butler, seconded by Manager Olson, to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved 5-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Erin Hunker, Secretary