

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2024

Call to Order

President Bob Cutshall called the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District Board of Managers workshop to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the NMCWD office, Discovery Point, 12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie.

Managers Present: Bob Cutshall, Peggy Kvam, and Chris-Ann Lauria

Advisors Present: Janna Kieffer and Katie Turpin-Nagel (Barr Engineering) and Michael Welch (Smith Partners)

Staff Present: Elizabeth Boor (Watershed Specialist), Brett Eidem (Natural Resources Planning and Project Manager), Erica Sniegowski (Administrator), Zach Stafslie (Regulatory Program Manager), and Gael Zembal (Education and Outreach Coordinator)

Others Present: Renae Clark, Ann Kattreh, and Leah Hughes (City of Bloomington)

I. Bryant Park Renovation Project

Zach Stafslie introduced Renae Clark, City of Bloomington Assistant Director of Parks and Park Projects, to provide an informational overview of the city's planned reconstruction of Bryant Park and the associated floodplain rule variance request. Mr. Stafslie noted Barr Engineering is in the process of reviewing the variance request and permit application. Staff will bring a review of the permit application and associated variance request to the board at an upcoming meeting or workshop.

Ms. Clark provided an overview of the park-reconstruction project, explaining that the city proposes to raise the opening elevation for the main park building to 822.6 feet from 819.5 feet. She said at the proposed new elevation the building is protected to somewhere between the 10-year storm event and 50-year storm event but is still lower than the district's required elevation of 826.66, two feet above the 100-year storm elevation. Ms. Clark said the city submitted a variance request to the district because the building design does not function well programmatically in other studied scenarios, especially for accommodating accessibility for the playground.

II. Birch Island Lake Water Quality Study Summary

Katie Turpin-Nagel, a water resources engineer with Barr Engineering, presented an overview of the Birch Island Lake water quality study.

Ms. Turpin-Nagel pointed out that if water levels are high enough, the watershed draining to Birch Island Lake increases by 670 acres, though this happens rarely. Ms. Turpin-Nagel said discharge from Lake Rose needs to flow through a bypass pipe under Highway 62 to reach Birch Island Lake.

Ms. Turpin-Nagel reported that summer average phosphorus concentrations in Birch Island Lake were generally below the state water-quality standard from 1997 to 2019. Between 2020 and 2021 conditions degraded, and summer average phosphorus concentrations exceeded the state standard. She presented Barr's preliminary lake-management recommendations, including internal sediment-loading management with an alum treatment in a 7.8-acre zone along the eastern side of the lake, followed by sediment-release monitoring, sediment coring, and water-quality monitoring, along with plant reestablishment options.

Ms. Turpin-Nagel said an alum treatment should reduce total phosphorous by 13 to 37 pounds per year and reduce total chlorophyll-a concentrations in the lake. She said even with this anticipated reduction in chlorophyll-a, the model indicates the levels would still exceed the state standard, so other management practices should be considered, such as upland stabilization and fertilizer management.

Ms. Sniegowski mentioned potential implementation of a residential fertilizer-reduction initiative in the Birch Island Lake watershed, similar to the district's pilot program in Minnetonka for residential soil testing as part of a program to reduce application of excess nutrients to lawns. Staff plans to roll out the program to other areas in the watershed.

Ms. Turpin-Nagel noted results of a fish survey on Birch Island Lake revealed an overabundance of fathead minnows. She said the minnows could be causing over-predation of the zooplankton and thereby impacting algae levels due to less zooplankton available to feed on the algae. She added that due to the fluctuating

water levels in the lake, fish stocking/fisheries management is not recommended at this time.

Ms. Turpin-Nagel said Barr recommends the district consider conducting a lake-level stabilization and flood-management evaluation of the lake. Barr also recommends the flow capacity of the pipe bypass system be maintained as much as practicable. She said the City of Eden Prairie has increased its inspection and routine maintenance of the bypass pipes and structures over the past three years and Barr recommends that the city continue with these efforts. Ms. Turpin-Nagel said Barr also recommends that the upstream channel erosion from the storm sewer outfalls downstream of Eden Prairie Road to the wetland north of Birch Island Lake be addressed, potentially in partnership with Hennepin County and the City of Eden Prairie. She said addressing upstream sediment loads should reduce maintenance frequency for the bypass pipes and structures.

Ms. Turpin-Nagel noted an upcoming public meeting on the Birch Island Lake Water Quality Study on January 8. She said the final report will be complete by February.

President Cutshall said it seems the lake level needs to be stabilized before the district spends money on treatments that may or may not be effective depending on rainfall amounts. He said the lake appears to be a viable floodwater retention site, as part of an overall flood-risk mitigation plan. Ms. Kieffer said the district would need to explore whether water could be conveyed to Birch Island Lake from other areas such as Holiday, Wing, and Rose lakes.

Janna Kieffer agreed the district could investigate water-level stabilization, flood-risk reduction and the feasibility of water-quality projects for Birch Island Lake in tandem.

III. Earned Sick and Safe Time Update

Administrator Sniegowski explained the new Earned Sick and Safe Time law that went into effect January 1 requires employers to provide paid leave to employees who work in the state and work 80 or more hours a year. She said the district needs to update its employee manual to comport with the new law.

Proposed updates will be brought to the board for review and approval.

IV. Staffing Update

Administrator Sniegowski reported Brett Eidem moved up to a Manager II position effective January 2, 2024, and he will supervise the watershed specialist. She plans to hire two interns this summer and would like to fill a full-time

communications position later this year. She added that some changes may be considered when the shared administrative assistant contract expires in June.

V. **Office Furniture**


Administrator Sniegowski said she would like to add another desk/workstation to help accommodate 10 full-time employees. She has a proposal from Commercial Furniture Services for just over \$5,500 to purchase and assemble the new furniture and arrange the space.

It was moved by Manager Kvam, seconded by Manager Lauria, to authorize the administrator to enter into an agreement with Commercial Furniture Services at an amount not to exceed \$5,501 for office furniture. Upon vote, the motion carried.

VI. **Adjournment**

It was moved by Manager Kvam, seconded by Manager Lauria to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m. Upon vote, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,


Chris-Ann Lauria (Feb 22, 2024 11:00 CST)

Chris-Ann Lauria, Secretary

NMCWD-January-4-2024-Workshop-Minutes

Final Audit Report


2024-02-22

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Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAwgnwx5LYuSmHY9aNs44QgWzNTRsRqKJ


"NMCWD-January-4-2024-Workshop-Minutes" History

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