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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, December 21, 2009

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Location: MWMO Conference Area
1224 Marshall Street NE, Suite 100, Minneapolis, MN 55413-1036

Commissioners in Attendance:

Jerry Faust, St Anthony; Scott Vreeland, MPRB; Karen Gill-Gerbig, Lauderdale; Paul Ostrow, Minneapolis; Karlyn Eckman, St. Paul; and Diane Hofstede, Alternate, Minneapolis

Staff and Guests: Doug Snyder (MWMO), Dan Kalmon, Zhenya Stone (MWMO), Jenny Winkelman (MWMO), Erica Sniegowski, Nancy Dilts (MWMO), Jim Roe (Interpretive Design Consultant), Houg Feu (Videographer), Irene Jones (Friends of the Mississippi River), Edna Brazaitis (Friends of the Riverfront), Sarah Nettleton (New Facility Architect), Teresa Sterns (New Facility Project Manager), Matt Nelson (Construction, Mortenson Construction), and Michael Huber (New Facility Architect)

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Commissioner Ostrow.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda and consent agenda were approved as written.

Old Business

Executive Director Salary (consent agenda discussion)

Commissioner Gill-Gerbig stated that the MWMO is a public entity which pays a fair wage and should be conservative with expenditures in these difficult economic times. She also mentioned that the MWMO does quality work and should be noted for that. The board approved the Executive Director's salary at \$98,458.00.

Approval of Schematic Design for the New Building

Interpretive Framework/Jim Rowe

Jim Rowe, the interpretive consultant for the new building, explained that Foug Heu was videotaping all meetings related to the construction of the new building in order to keep the process open and perhaps help others who plan to construct similar eco-friendly buildings.

Roe explained that an ETAC has been established to provide discussion for the interpretive framework; the committee includes MWMO staff: Nancy Dilts, Erica Sniegowski, Jenny Winkelman and Doug Snyder; Dave Wiggins from the National Park Service, Lisa Hawkins of Earth Force, Stephanie LeGro from Dakota County, and Karlyn Eckman, from the University of Minnesota and who is a member of the MWMO Board.

Interpretive planning is working with an integrated process; it changes over time as the trajectory goes forward many years. Planning integrates with the design of the building and its landscape and includes formal and informal learning. It attempts to create themes that create an emotional connection between the river and an audience. There is no model yet because a critical component—that of identifying the MWMO’s audiences—has not been ascertained. The groups and people already committed to the MWMO are the core audience for the plan, but others, such as elected officials, directors of agencies, and staff in watershed management should also be considered. Developing audiences could include students (not necessarily student groups), people for trainings (e.g. landscape), and/or meetings. Once someone hears about the MWMO, we want to create a positive image. Next steps are to create exhibits and structured learning environments.

Sarah Nettleton, Architect

Sarah Nettleton stated that many conversations have been generated on how to use space in and outside the new building. Fred Rozamalski has proposed creating an area for birds on migratory routes. This would push the building closer to the street.

Nettleton sees the building focusing on water, and the MWMO is considering a cistern in the front, raingardens, and sharing parking with Tony Jaros. There is an intended connection between the inside and the outside of the building. The sun’s trajectory is being taken into consideration, and the building is oriented to a north/south grid with good southern exposure; shading (not mechanical, but moveable) will be provided, and some windows will be installed on the north side of the building for ventilation. There will be views of both downtown and the river.

The building is being designed as a flexible multi-purpose facility that can be used as an office and for community needs. There will be three large rooms downstairs, which are interconnected with sliding doors. There will be plug-ins in the floor. The floor plan is presently a simple layout, with a view of the river from the wet classroom and a windowed overlook to the eddy room (large room in entry). There will possibly be a bridge from the garage to the main building.

The layout as it presently stands is 12,000 feet; 10,000 feet were allocated in the original plan, so some tradeoffs will have to be made. Commissioner Faust emphasized that the MWMO wanted a green building; Commissioner Ostrow said that payback for expensive green components should be in the twenty-year range. Commissioner Eckman reminded the board that the MWMO was growing, and that planning for a doubled staff would be in organization’s best interest. Doug Snyder commented that the planning presently includes fourteen staff members plus interns. Adding on to the building will be possible.

After a lengthy discussion which touched on the building's footage, sustainability, placement on the lot, possible shared spaces, river access, and functionality, the board asked Snyder if decisions on these variables needed to be made at the meeting. Snyder stated that the schematic design had to be approved in order to have conversations about the variables. The MWMO is trying to make a strong connection to the river while accommodating public trails.

Facility Cost/Matt Nelson, Construction, Mortenson Construction

Matt Nelson, Construction, talked about the process of cost estimating at the Mortenson Construction. The last project on which he worked was the TCF Stadium. The pre-construction process at Mortenson includes 20 people plus a chief estimator; this group puts together an all-inclusive detailed estimate, using sophisticated software. Once complete, the estimate is sent out to subcontractors for real-world bid pricing.

The board was interested in knowing if prices were particularly low right now and wanted to know how long they would stay low, if they were. Nelson confirmed that prices are very low now and may even drop more. Mortenson does not anticipate the market changing much in the recent future. The main concern for construction is that some businesses will be going out of business this winter, and that could pose problems.

Snyder commented that initial plans hoped to build the building for \$2.50 square foot, and that was based on a 10,000 square foot building. There was a discussion on the use of contingency moneys and time frames in which to use those funds. The board will have to decide where those funds are applied—either towards the physical building, furnishings, and/or programs. Gill Gerbig suggested that the MWMO seek grants to fund the expansion to 12,000 square feet, as it would make more sense to expand earlier rather than later. A discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of providing community services followed.

The board approved the current schematic design, based on the original budget. Snyder said that determinations could be made later as to what needed to be altered. The board also voted to present the schematic design to BWSR (the Board of Water and Soil Resources).

Thank you and Farewell to Paul Ostrow and Karlyn Eckman

Paul Ostrow and Karlyn Eckman, with eight years and nine years of service to the MWMO respectively, are retiring from the board. Remaining members of the board, staff, and Snyder presented them with plaques honoring their years of service in bringing the MWMO from its infancy to the influential organization it is today. Ostrow commended the MWMO by stating that this organization understands the difference between setting policy and having a vision; he vowed to follow future MWMO activities. Eckman felt that the MWMO was light years ahead of where it started nine years ago; she will remain active on the ECAC. All MWMO staff expressed their gratitude for the reasoned and diligent support provided by Ostrow and Eckman. Diane Hofstede, presently serving as an alternate for the City of Minneapolis, will become the representative from Minneapolis for 2010. St. Paul's representative will be Matt Hass, who is currently serving as that city's alternate.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Voting:

Aye - Faust

Aye – Gill-Gerbig

Aye - Vreeland

Aye - Ostrow

Aye - Eckman