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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 12 July 2022

Time: 3:00-5:00 PM

Location: 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

Commissioners in Attendance

Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Steve Eggert, Fridley; Jeffrey Dains, Lauderdale; LaTrisha Vetaw, Minneapolis; Randy Stille, St. Anthony Village; and Becca Thompson, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB).

Staff and Guests: Alicia Beattie, Nick Busse, Donald Hagen, Eva Hanson, Shawn James, Brian Jastram, Dan Kalmon, Josephine Khan, Jim Rudolph, Wyatt Schulman, Udai Singh, Nancy Stowe, and Kevin Reich, MWMO; Glenda Meixell, Anoka Conservation District; Andy Schilling, MPRB; Mike Lukes, St. Paul; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Chair Eggert.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Stille, second by Dains to approve the May 10, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Resolution 2022-018: 10 Year Plan (web guidance): Agreement Extension
2. Resolution 2022-019: North Minneapolis Engagement Agreement Extension
3. Resolution 2022-020: Restorative Development Partnership Agreement Extension
4. Resolution 2022-021: Towerside Phase II 30% Design Agreement Extension
5. Resolution 2022-022: Upper Harbor Terminal 60% Design Agreement Extension

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously

Reports from Staff

Stowe introduced James, the new Projects and Planning Specialist at MWMO. Singh introduced Rudolph as recently promoted to the Water Resources Specialist position, and newly hired water quality monitoring interns Hagen, Hanson, Khan, and Schulman. The Board welcomed new staff members.

General Business

Resolution 2022-023: MPRB Grant Approval for Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT). The MWMO has been actively participating in the Minneapolis UHT project since 2015 with a goal of establishing District and Regional stormwater systems that will improve habitat, public space, and stormwater.

At the May 2022 Board meeting staff provided an overview to the Board on potential grant projects at UHT. It was noted that MWMO staff would be seeking approval in July for a grant to the MPRB. The grant includes regrading the slope of the site to 3.5H:1V for forest restoration along the riverbank and shoreline; an overlook that creates space for a system of connected habitat (aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial); and opportunities for interpretation of the site's natural systems. A restored ravine under the overlook will support an ephemeral stream channel that will carry water during or immediately after precipitation events. Taken together, these projects will significantly improve habitat within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) and benefit the aquatic ecosystem of the Mississippi River. The forest restoration will include about 500 trees, predominantly oak since they provide more habitat than other species of trees.

There is an \$11,000,000 placeholder in MWMO's 10-year Plan for UHT, though current estimates put the MWMO cost closer to \$7,000,000. To date, \$300,000 has been committed to planning, design, and engineering at the site. This MPRB grant is the first in a series of grants MWMO staff are discussing with partners at the UHT site.

At this time staff is requesting a not-to-exceed MPRB grant amount of \$2,600,000 for infrastructure, grading, habitat, and stormwater infrastructure on MPRB's land. There is a typo on the documents noting the amount at \$2,700,000.

Motion by Stille, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2022-023 with the correction of the not-to-exceed amount from \$2,700,000 to \$2,600,000 as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2022-024: Stewardship Fund Planning Grants. The Planning Grants have one cycle per year with a deadline in March and awards grants up to \$20,000 per applicant. Three applications were received and reviewed by Staff and the CAC. All three projects are recommended for awards totaling \$51,183.00.

1. Little Earth Healing Roots & Native Pollinator Project at \$15,483 awarded to Metro Blooms. This Planning Grant is for a 6,000 SF pollinator patch area with native plantings just north of Little Earth Urban Farm. The grant will support outreach and incorporation of Community Grant outcomes, site assessment, community gathering events, and creation of plan documents to prepare for project implementation.
2. ZaRah new stormwater management system to capture and manage water on-site awarded at \$20,000 to Metro Blooms. This grant is for the building at 1200 West Broadway which is currently an incubator space for black women entrepreneurs to operate businesses and provide cultural healing services. This grant will support outreach and design of a new stormwater management system plan for the site to capture and manage the water in coordination with an existing water storage system.
3. Breakroom Pocket Park project at \$15,700 awarded to Midwest Skateboarding Alliance to provide infrastructure for stormwater management at a permanent skate park in what is currently a vacant lot on 2nd Avenue N and North 4th Street in Minneapolis. This grant will support soil and permeability tests, sun/shade study, stormwater modeling and other work deemed necessary by the engineer and design team. Thompson requested more information regarding the long-term use and maintenance for this project as it moves forward.

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2022-024 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2022-025: Stewardship Fund Grant Program Funding Increase. The Stewardship Fund Grant Program has been a highly successful approach in support of community-led projects and programs to manage stormwater, control pollution, and improve water quality and habitat. Grants have provided crucial funds to organizations seeking to expand their impacts while incorporating outreach and engagement efforts with their own audiences and other local communities. Entities eligible for Stewardship Grants are schools, non-profits, local governments, official neighborhood groups, and business/professional associations. Project sites must be within MWMO boundaries and benefit those that live, work and play in the watershed.

[Vetaw arrived 4:01 p.m.]

Since 2003, through Board action, the MWMO has allocated \$250,000 for Stewardship Fund programs and projects. Over the past ~ 20 years, the Program has been limited to awarding up to \$250,000 each year through a competitive process. The program has become more popular in the community and has branched into three separate types of grants (Community, Planning, and Action). Over time, project costs associated with materials and labor have increased and demonstrated a need for an increase in funding to be able to adequately support worthy projects that meet the program's goals and provide excellent public value if funded.

Not all grants are funded, as the grant review is a competitive process with program requirements that necessitate denial of funds in many cases. While staff wants to utilize as much of the program funding as possible when there are worthy applications, not all funds will necessarily be used each year.

MWMO staff requests an annual increase of \$100,000, or 40%, over the present Program award limit, which would bring the award limit to \$350,000 per year. This will support staff's ability to reach more community organizations pursuing water and habitat protection projects and programs. Grant agreements will remain one-year agreements with requirements to expend funds within two years.

Commissioners recommended future reviews of the grant program at three to five-year intervals to avoid 40% increases in the future and gauge the program success and needs in a more timely manner.

Motion by Vetaw, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2022-025 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2022-026: Professional Services for North Columbia Golf Course NW Basin Redesign. In 2020, the MWMO, City of Minneapolis, and MPRB began the construction of storm sewer improvements and a series of stormwater BMPs as part of the Columbia Golf Course and Columbia Park BMP Project in Northeast Minneapolis. The project was undertaken to treat 2,100 acres that drain through this property to the Mississippi, alleviate flooding issues and create habitat. The project included the construction of the NW basin located in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Columbia Parkway and 5th St. NE in the City of Minneapolis on the west side of the project area. The intention of the NW basin (previously referred to as the NW Infiltration Basin) was for stormwater to enter the basin from storm sewer inlets at the northeast and northwest corners, and to infiltrate up to two feet of stormwater runoff volume.

Several rainfall events in late August/early September of 2021 revealed that the NW Basin did not infiltrate the stormwater runoff as desired. Multiple technical investigations have occurred since that time to try to understand the cause of the lack of infiltration in the basin. Ultimately, because of the variability of soil types under the basin due to past fill, as well as varying groundwater levels found under parts of the basin and in the surrounding area, the consultant team of SRF Consulting and Braun Intertec determined that infiltration performance will likely never be reliable. The recommendation from the design team is to redesign the NW stormwater basin to function as a wet basin.

Area residents have expressed favorable comments about open water in the basin. The redesign includes sediment and nutrient removal in the basin and enhancing habitat around the pond. The redesign will be completed by August 2022 with construction to begin in fall 2022. This request is for an additional \$44,667 to complete the redesign as well as construction engineering and observation services. The original amount for construction of the project may have enough in contingency to cover this construction costs More will be known after the redesign is complete.

Motion by Stille, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2022-026 as presented. Motion carried.

Open Public Input

None.

Board Updates and Announcements

Mike Lukes introduced himself as the new Commissioner representing St. Paul (upon Mayoral approval). Lukes worked as a hydrologist for the National Weather Service and has a background in meteorology and an interest in local history.

A map of projects completed with MWMO funding is available on the website, although it is not comprehensive and requires updating. Staff are working on an interactive option for project information.

MWMO activities are gaining recognition! Singh was recently contacted to speak at a symposium regarding the projects MWMO has undertaken to improve water quality.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2022. The meeting will be held in-person at MWMO.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary

Record of Motions

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Stille, second by Dains to approve the May 10, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously

Motion by Stille, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2022-023 with the correction of the not-to-exceed amount from \$2,700,000 to \$2,600,000 as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2022-024 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Vetaw, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2022-025 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Stille, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2022-026 as presented. Motion carried.