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MISSISSIPPI  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION

# MEETING MINUTES

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**Date:** 11 July 2023

**Attachment 3**

**Time:** 3:00 PM

**Location:** 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

## Commissioners in Attendance

Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Steve Eggert, Fridley; Jeff Dains, Lauderdale; Randy Stille, St. Anthony Village; and Michael Lukes, St. Paul.

Staff and Guests: Emmy Baskerville, Nick Busse, Eva Hanson, Shawn James, Akadia Johnson, Dan Kalmon, Connor Price, Kevin Reich, Udai Singh, Nancy Stowe and Will Umoefer, MWMO; Glenda Meixell, Anoka Conservation District; Betty Risdahl, citizen; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Chair Eggert.

## Approval of Agenda

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

## Approval of Minutes

Motion by Stille, second by Lukes to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

# **Consent Agenda**

## **2023-019: Tort Liability**

Motion by Dains, second by Stille to approve Resolution 2023-019 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Reports from Staff**

Busse introduced Johnson, the new MWMO Administration and Operations Specialist.

Singh introduced the members of the monitoring department and reported that he will be leaving MWMO to take a position at the Board of Soil and Water Resources, a state-wide organization with influence on water quality and creation of standards that inform policy.

Singh provided an annual update of the MWMO monitoring program, which includes goals, tasks, staff, priorities for the 2021-031 watershed plan, and updates regarding pollutant loading from the 1NE and 11CHF subwatersheds. The MWMO core program is responsible for monitoring and tracking changes in the water quality of the Mississippi River and local drainage systems. Teams conduct regular year-round sampling of the river and storm sewers to gather water quality data. The goal of the MWMO is to use this data to support science-based watershed management and respond to current and emerging issues to reduce impacts within the MWMO jurisdiction. Water is examined for biological, chemical and physical parameters to develop a baseline and provide information to track changes and monitor the performance and effectiveness of stormwater practices and systems.

The river has been monitored for the bacteria TMDL since 2005, hydrologic mixing from 2012-2015, water quality parameters since 2015, and bathymetry monitoring since 2014. The full Mississippi bacteria TMDL has not yet been completed. Seven outfalls are monitored along with seven sites along the Mississippi within the 14-mile stretch within the MWMO jurisdiction. This data will allow MWMO and partners to determine current conditions and identify best-needed areas for project implementation. Monitoring of installed projects allows staff to understand the actual effectiveness of practices.

## General Business

### 2023-020: Upper Harbor Geotechnical Services

Staff is requesting \$50,000 out of the approved financial, legal and engineering services funds of \$2,327,780 to perform soil analysis on Parcel 5 where the regional treatment facility will be built. Barr Engineering has been selected to provide the geotechnical services required.

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2023-020 approving the hiring of geotechnical services needed to inform the regional treatment facility 90% design at Upper Harbor at a cost not-to-exceed \$50,000. Motion carried unanimously.

### 2023-021: Ole Olson Park CIP Grant

This project is just south of the Upper Harbor Terminal. MPRB has requested capital project funding for habitat and shoreline improvements in the park and implements the MPRB Above the Falls Plan. This park is located within the priority natural resource corridor. The project includes flattening the slope south of the rail bridge, making the park more accessible to the river. The project includes prairie restoration, removal of contaminated soils, and reducing need for retaining walls. There are erosion concerns with structures near the riverbank that would also be corrected. Future maintenance of the project area would be done by Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR). The total project cost is approximately \$3.5 million. MPRB is requesting \$419,960 in grant funding for planning and coordination services, erosion control and seeds/plugs for planting. There is about \$800,000 in CIP funding available for this type of project.

Motion by Lukes, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2023-021 approving funding for the Ole Olson Park and 26th Avenue North trail connection in an amount not-to-exceed \$419,960. Motion carried unanimously.

### 2023-022: Stewardship Fund Planning Grants

The Commission received six applications for 2023 Planning Grants as follows:

- 1) **Marcy Hoes Neighborhood Association, Community-led restoration at Father Hennepin Bluffs Park - \$19,990.** This project will develop a Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) for 6.09 acres of riverside natural area. The landscape is currently dominated by invasive species, susceptible to erosion, and a barrier to recreation. The Association will collaborate with FMR to assess the current conditions of the site and determine restoration approaches, creating an NRMP which will be implemented at a later date. Additionally, the Association intends to interface with indigenous community members

regarding the site, restoration practices, and native vegetation to ensure the NRMP is developed in a way that honors the history of this site.

- 2) **Midway Contemporary Arts - \$20,000.** This project includes the redesign of an existing 8,600 square-foot building. The funds will be used to assess opportunities for green design to inform the overall building project, such as incorporating green infrastructure to capture runoff from the roof and parking lot and incorporating green roofs.
- 3) **Dar Al-Qalam Cultural Center - \$20,000.** The vision is to create a recreation and learning center adjacent to the cultural center. The land currently has flooding issues. This project would explore opportunities to use this land as a programmable outdoor space and living laboratory with native vegetation and habitat, as well as features to capture stormwater. The project will also engage membership of over 1,000 people who use the property. Commissioner Buesgens recommended reviewing whether utility installations may interfere with planting since the property borders a railway.
- 4) **Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church Parking Lot - \$8,000.** This large parking lot requires repair and this project will explore possibilities for incorporating eco-friendly options such as permeable pavers, stormwater capture systems, and addition of green space. This is at a busy, visible intersection in the Audubon Neighborhood.
- 5) **St. Boniface Church Parking Lot - \$20,000.** The church is experiencing drainage issues in its large parking lot. Members are interested in creating a stormwater management plan to assess options to address and manage water on the property with a focus on increasing the amount of community green spaces and native plants, as well as a public education campaign to reach their large community. The space is also used in the summer for the NE Farmers Market.
- 6) **Windom Park Citizens In Action (WPCIA)– Cardinal Co-Op - \$20,000.** WPCIA is working with Cardinal Housing Cooperative on a very visible residential lot at the corner of Lowry and Lincoln Street. Cardinal intends to build a six-unit housing cooperative with a goal of incorporating stormwater best management practices on the property such as stormwater capture, storage, permeable pavers, and native vegetation.

Staff recommends funding all six projects at a total cost of \$107,990 from the Stewardship Fund.

Motion by Buesgens, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2023-022 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

## **2023-023: Bottineau Field Park**

This is a request to partner with MPRB for upcoming improvements to the park. The 9 acre park is located about 400 yards east of the river and included in MPRB's Above The Falls and East of the River master plans. The park will include a new splash pad, skate park and more. Staff are

looking at extensive habitat restoration above and beyond minimum requirements and the potential for GSI in the parking lot and near hard surfaces, tree trenches and water conservation. The location has a potential to be a possible Riverway Street that could link neighborhoods to the river in the future as well as important habitat for pollinators. The area southeast of the park is prone to flooding. Staff is requesting \$41,000 for professional assessment services to assess feasibility and cost effectiveness of potential projects in the park.

Motion by Buesgens, second by Stille to approve Resolution 2023-023 as presented at a cost not-to-exceed \$41,000. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Board Updates and Announcements**

Buesgens reported that next Monday is the target date to tear down the Rainbow site off 44th Street. Water reuse projects will be incorporated in the redevelopment of the site. The road construction project on Central from 37th to Stinson is going well and the 53rd Street project will begin soon.

The project for the F-Line, a high-speed bus route down Central Avenue, has been approved.

Columbia Heights City Hall will be moving to its new location over the next two weeks. Buesgens requested a copy of an MWMO map to be displayed at City Hall.

Eggert requested the map and a list of installed projects to be reviewed at the September meeting to be sent out for review prior to the regular meeting materials.

Lukes noted that the District 12 Environmental Committee discussed putting a “rest log” in west Kasota Pond for the turtles.

Singh expressed sincere gratitude to the Board and Staff for the last twelve years of support and guidance. Singh is very proud of the MWMO internship program and will continue teaching part-time at the U of M. The Board thanked Singh for his years of service.

## **Open Public Input**

None.

## **Adjourn**

There being no further business, motion by Buesgens, second by Dains to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.