

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Tuesday, November 30, 2021**

1. Call to Order

Vice President Anderson called the 30th day of November 2021 regular board meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. via online video conference.

Present: Vice President (President Pro-Tem.) Jackie Anderson, Secretary Pro-Tem. Dave Bakke, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz, Manager Doug Toavs, Manager Chris Loth.

Absent: None.

Others: Administrator, Mike Kinney; Office Manager, Bobbie Law; Senior Land Management Coordinator, Nick Bancks; Planning Coordinator, Emily Heinz (CLFLWD staff); District Engineer, Greg Graske; Cecilio Olivier, Kevin Biehn, Joe Pallardy (Emmons & Olivier Resources); District legal counsel, Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners); Hanna Valento (Forest Lake City Council); Bob Muske, Chris Hoyt, C. Norby, Blake Roberts, Jill Grindahl, Scott Schmoll, Dan Coates (members of the public)

Vice President Anderson introduced the purpose of the special meeting which is to provide a thorough synopsis of past District projects for new managers, consider approving a scope of work for the Forest Lake Internal Load Analysis, and address the District's planning process for greenway corridors, capacity and office space.

2. Greenway Corridor Overview

Kevin Biehn gave a presentation regarding the greenway corridor. The main topics covered during the presentation included an update to the Board, confirm desired goals and outcomes of the project, and receive direction on the next steps as the direction will affect the 2022 scope of work from Emmons and Olivier Resources. He noted the connection and importance of this project to improving resiliency to climate change.

He gave an overview of the work completed to date. Mr. Biehn explained the prioritization process completed to inform where the corridor would best benefit ecology, recreation opportunities, and water quality. These areas of interest include portions of Chisago County and Washington County northwest of Forest Lake, and Washington County southeast of Forest Lake. He outlined the partners included in the engagement process. These include the City of Forest Lake, Washington County, the City of Scandia, the City of Wyoming, and the Department of Natural Resources. The primary information they gathered from these partners is that they are generally supportive, but they would like the plan to align with their comprehensive plans. Mr. Biehn and Nick Bancks believe the District will have to lead this planning effort.

Mr. Biehn gave an overview of the possible integration with other current District initiatives including the natural resource inventory, hydrologic & hydraulic (H&H) modeling, and floodplain vulnerability.

Managers discussed their priorities of possible outcomes of the greenway project, the public input process, and the direction for staff. Manager Anderson clarified that her belief is that this discussion is simply background and not to be used to prioritize efforts because new managers may like time to develop their own sense of priorities. She outlined her concerns regarding the presentation. She believes that the focus needs to be on water and natural resources, with the recreation element to be led by municipalities. She noted the level of growth coming to the Forest Lake area that will increase the need for resource protection, in particular wetland restoration for water quality, flood resiliency, and protection of carbon sinks and of groundwater. She indicated that the District's primary focus is to utilize natural systems to create clean water instead of spending money on manmade systems. Manager Anderson also noted that the District's municipalities have done a good job of setting aside areas for natural parkland, and the District's efforts should align with that. She expressed the need to consider also growth in the Comfort Lake area. Mr. Biehn noted the importance of collaboration and recreational opportunities. Manager Bakke stated that he appreciated the presentation. He also noted that he has discussed this effort with the Scandia Parks and Recreation Committee chair, and that the many organizations/committees in the community can help build momentum for this project. He noted the importance of planning. Manager Schmaltz noted that he believes it is vital to focus on prioritized areas and move forward with work that can be done within those areas. Managers discussed educational opportunities within the greenway plans. Vice President Anderson asked that staff plan a workshop to discuss the goals of the greenway corridor initiative sometime in February of 2022. Manager Schmaltz asked that EOR review and select one area that it believes would be the best location for initial efforts.

Managers discussed the Sunrise River flow path.

3. Greenway FY22 Budget Allocation, Linkage to 2022-2031 WMP, and Proposed Planning and Funding Sequencing

Emily Heinz gave an overview of the 2022 budget and the District Watershed Management Plan as they relate to greenway corridors. She stated that \$50,000 is allocated to the 2022 budget line item 5-120-B Greenway Corridor Visioning & Assessment. Vice President Anderson reiterated her interest in resuming this conversation in 2022. Manager Schmaltz noted his understanding that staff should be provided guidance from the board on the desired direction for this project sooner rather than later. Vice President Anderson requested that a full a list of grant opportunities for this project be brought to the board in February.

4. Greenways Implementation, Potential Funding Sources, and Considerations

Mr. Bancks gave an overview of two possible state funding sources, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Outdoor Heritage Fund. He noted that they are

habitat-focused funding with resources available. He gave an overview of past proposals that were presented to the Outdoor Heritage Fund by other organizations. He noted the importance of planning with stakeholders.

5. Forest Lake Water Quality Improvements and Internal Load Analysis

Administrator Kinney provided background information on where the District began with phosphorus reductions, where it is now, and where it hopes to go. He explained the importance of adaptive management process. He highlighted the District's progress measurement process including baseline monitoring by staff and volunteers, sequential diagnostic monitoring to target water quality projects, and post-construction monitoring to quantify whether a project is functioning as designed. He noted the importance of a targeted approach to projected implementation. Mr. Kinney gave an overview of completed projects and the year they were completed. He stated that the monitoring data revealed that the District has achieved 83% of the external load reduction goal for Forest Lake.

Joe Pallardy explained three internal load reduction control options including chemical, physical, and biological options. He then gave a real-life example of phosphorus reduction possibilities in Forest Lake. He noted that additional data were collected in 2021 to further understand anoxic conditions in the middle basin of Forest Lake. Cecilio Olivier explained that the lake is not anoxic all year round, generally once in the summer and once in the fall. Mr. Pallardy then gave an overview of the west basin, noting that internal loading is not a huge problem in this basin. He explained that this tells Emmons and Olivier staff that the external load reductions have enabled the District to reach water quality goals in this basin of Forest Lake. Mr. Pallardy gave an overview of the east basin noting that goals have also been met in this basin through external reduction efforts. He explained that these facts combined would lead to their future goal to tackle internal loading specifically in the middle basin of Forest Lake. He noted that 2021 has been an extremely dry year, which is good for evaluating internal phosphorus loading, being that there is limited external loading entering the lake.

Mr. Pallardy gave an overview of a case study conducted outside the District on Prior Lake. He explained the process of identifying phosphorus sources including collecting multiple sediment core samples to determine alum dosing levels needed to achieve reduction goals. He hopes that the District can mirror this success on Forest Lake.

Mr. Pallardy gave a synopsis of common aquatic vegetation and how it can generate internal phosphorus loading. Managers discussed curly-leaf pondweed and the importance of timing when harvesting to achieve reduction of internal loads of phosphorus. Manager Schmaltz noted that curly-leaf pondweed is mainly chemically treated on Forest Lake rather than harvested. Managers discussed the importance of having scientific data that back phosphorus reduction as a result of harvesting.

Mr. Pallardy gave an overview of this project and noted that the next steps would include load analysis, a review of data, and submission of a Clean Water Fund grant application to fund the alum treatment itself in August of 2022.

Manager Schmaltz moved to authorize the administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter into an agreement with Emmons and Olivier Resources, Inc in accordance with the November 24, 2021, scope of work and in an amount a not to exceed \$36,330. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Chris Loth	X			

Manager Schmaltz noted that the District has been the biggest recipient of Clean Water Fund grant dollars to complete projects like this one. Mr. Kinney noted that the District recently learned that it is recommended to receive two FY2022 Clean Water Fund grants for water quality improvement projects in the District. He explained that this equates to around 4.5 million dollars that have been awarded to the District since 2014.

6. Capacity and Space Planning Process

Mr. Kinney gave an overview of the history of the District's staffing capacity and office space planning process. He noted that the process started seven years ago when the City of Forest Lake moved to a new office which required the District to find a new space. He explained that ultimately a lease was signed for the current space, which was previously a hair salon. He explained that the idea was always to investigate and obtain a more permanent space. He explained that a workload analysis was completed to determine current and future staffing needs. He noted that the District recently shifted its monitoring program in-house, creating a need to rent additional storage unit space to store monitoring equipment and vehicles.

Mr. Kinney explained that this history is important to review because of the several new managers.

Vice President Anderson indicated that information regarding the Willow Point property, possible educational partnerships opportunities, and capacity will be discussed by the Board at the December 16th regular board meeting.

Manager Bakke suggested all members of the community that would like to provide input and become involved consider joining the District's Citizen Advisory Committee.

7. Adjourn

- a) Next regular board meeting – December 16, 2021**

Managers adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 6:01pm.

Dave Bakke, Secretary Pro-Tem. _____