

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE  
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT  
AND CITY OF WYOMING  
Tuesday, August 18, 2020**

**1. Call to Order**

President Spence called the August 18, 2020 special joint board meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. via online video conference.

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District Board: President Jon Spence, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz, Assistant Treasurer Jim Dibble.

Absent: Secretary Jen Oknich.

Wyoming City Council: Mayor Lisa Iverson, Councilmember Linda Nanko Yeager, Councilmember Claire Luger.

Absent: Councilmember Dennis Schilling, Councilmember Joe Zerwas.

Others: Mike Kinney (CLFLWD Administrator); Robb Linwood (Wyoming City Administrator); Emily Heinz (CLFLWD staff); Chuck Lindell, Fred Weck, Kelly Dumais (Wyoming staff); Mark Erichson (Wyoming engineer); Meghan Funke (CLFLWD engineer); Archie DuCharme (Wyoming resident).

**2. Introductions**

Attendees introduced themselves and went over meeting objectives including desired inputs to Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) 10-year plan, understand common goals and objectives, and identify opportunities for collaboration/partnership.

**3. CLFLWD Watershed Management Plan Update**

Watershed Technician Heinz provided an overview of CLFLWD's progress on its 10-year watershed management plan update. In 2019 the District focused on public outreach and gathering input from partners and stakeholders. In spring/summer 2020 the District is discussing issues and goals prioritization and communicating with partners regarding shared priorities in overlapping boundaries. Summer/fall 2020 will involve drafting the plan, with a target of publishing the draft plan for 60-day review and comment period in fall/winter. The District aims to go through the final review with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) next spring and finalize the plan by next summer.

**4. Issue Areas in the Context of Coordination between CLFLWD and Wyoming**

Ms. Heinz presented an overview of the District boundaries overlapping with city boundaries, with City of Wyoming comprising the northwest quadrant of the District and the downtown area located just outside CLFLWD boundaries.

**a) Lakes (Comfort Lake): water quality/quantity aquatic invasive species, shoreland preservation**

Ms. Heinz provided an overview of lake issues and the District's progress toward in-lake water quality goals. As of 2020, five District lakes are meeting their 2030 goals (i.e. ten years ahead of the original schedule): Comfort Lake, Bone Lake, Forest Lake, Heims Lake, and Lake Keewahtin. She explained Comfort Lake is at the bottom of the watershed, so improvements to upstream lakes, especially Little Comfort Lake, benefit Comfort Lake. Administrator Kinney described capital improvement projects in the Comfort Lake and Little Comfort Lake subwatersheds, or "lake management districts." Several projects have been completed in recent years, and there are a few more in progress which should bring these two lakes to their long-term water quality goals. One such project is a wetland restoration on the District-owned tax forfeit property situated near the Sunrise River which is estimated to reduce phosphorus loading to Comfort Lake by 87 pounds per year.

Councilmember Nanko Yeager indicated she had received some concerns from residents about the tax forfeit project. Administrator Linwood confirmed he also communicated with a concerned resident on this topic and provided Administrator Kinney's contact information to the resident. Councilmember Nanko Yeager explained the residents' concerns were about flooding of the properties and a culvert going under the bike trail. Manager Schmaltz indicated these questions are very important to the District, but there is limited time during this meeting to cover this topic in detail in addition to the other topics on the agenda. Manager Anderson agreed and noted the District would want to give residents plenty of time to air those concerns. Administrator Kinney explained the District mailed letters to the landowners adjacent to the project with information about the project and associated survey work. He noted the District will perform extensive engineering and modeling work to address concerns about flooding, and that he is happy to meet with residents and discuss further. Ms. Heinz explained how the District can be divided into four lake management districts: Bone Lake, Forest Lake, Little Comfort Lake, and Comfort Lake. These smaller districts help with budgeting, prioritizing projects, and conveying information to key stakeholder groups.

Manager Anderson explained water quantity is a significant issue and that the District works with developers to ensure adequate stormwater management is being built into development projects. Councilmember Nanko Yeager asked if the District has been noticing higher water levels in and around Comfort Lake recently. Manager Anderson explained precipitation levels in the region have been above average in recent years; more rain is coming down and the soil is saturated. The District's regulatory standards were recently adjusted to accommodate this pattern of increased rain events. She explained this topic is a foundational element of the new 10-year plan, and that the

wetland on the tax forfeit property could be used to hold back some of that water. Manager Anderson noted the District is in favor of sustainable development. Administrator Kinney noted since 2014 the Twin Cities area has seen above average precipitation each year, and as such, the District is in the process of updating its hydraulic and hydrologic (H&H) model. The District will share this model with City staff which will help run scenarios for high water events. This will inform policy makers and the public what could happen in the event of, for example, a 10-inch rainfall event in the area. The model would estimate which areas would be subject to flooding and how to prepare emergency management.

Manager Schmaltz explained the District has observed tree loss and shoreline erosion in some local lakes and that this is an area on which the District would like to work with the City more closely in the future. He indicated this is high on the District's list for collaboration, and partnership is key to making progress in this area. Administrator Kinney explained the District has completed some assessment work on Heims Lake and would like to survey Ashton Lake as well. He explained how, as the District gets closer to reaching goals on its larger more popular lakes, it will be able to focus more on smaller lakes such as Ashton Lake.

**b) Stormwater Management: rules/ordinances, operations & maintenance responsibilities**

Ms. Heinz explained regulatory programs are a key component to stormwater management. She indicated District and City staff will begin meeting quarterly to coordinate on issues such as this. She thanked City staff for their continued assistance and high level of communication on various issues in the area, such as unpermitted work and permit noncompliance. Manager Anderson expressed the Board's appreciation for cooperative work. Administrator Linwood noted the collaborative effort for an enhanced street sweeping program. He explained the Council discussed this at their budget meeting, and staffs worked together to submit a grant application yesterday. Administrator Kinney explained how the District worked with University of Minnesota to study how to maximize street sweeping efficiency and prepared a plan for the City of Forest Lake a couple years ago. The District worked with UMN and the Pollution Control Agency staffs to evaluate the results of the program and track progress. The Forest Lake program is producing even better pollutant removal results than expected. The District estimates the program costs about \$150 per pound of phosphorus reduced, which is a very favorable number compared to other phosphorus reduction projects. Mr. Kinney explained another benefit is reduced maintenance on infrastructure; less sediments/particles on the streets means City sumps/pipes/ditches won't fill up or be clogged as fast. Sweeping with a vacuum sweeper has shown to increase the longevity of the roadways. Mr. Kinney indicated such a program could potentially be a net sum zero cost with savings on maintenance and roadways equal to the costs to buy the sweeper and run the program.

**c) Wetlands and Open Spaces: WCA roles, yard waste, greenway corridors, parks**

Ms. Heinz explained this topic is multifaceted, ranging from Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) to residential yard waste dumping issues to potential collaboration on greenway corridors and parks. Manager Anderson indicated she had some initial conversations with City staff on how to incorporate City-designated natural parks into areas that can be used to benefit water resources. She noted there appears to be interest from the county commissioner on this topic as well. Such a project would provide a number of different benefits such as water quality improvement, wildlife habitat, and public education. Administrator Linwood indicated City staff is interested in this topic and the Council and/or Park Advisory Commission may be in favor as well.

**d) Groundwater: Lake Keewahtin, key recharge areas**

Ms. Heinz displayed a map of groundwater recharge areas and wellhead protection areas. Manager Anderson asked the Council to consider how the District can support the City's work to protect groundwater, especially drinking water supply. Administrator Kinney provided further explanation of underlying geology composed of deposits laid down after the glacial periods. This area is a transition zone containing a lot of complex geology within this small geographic area. Councilmember Nanko Yeager asked about the groundwater sensitivity under the City's wellhead protection area. Mark Erichson explained this information is part of the City's wellhead protection plan and it has generally low vulnerability.

**e) Floodplain: floodplain assessments**

Ms. Heinz explained how floodplain protection relates back to the discussion about increased precipitation patterns and the District's updated H&H model. Dr. Funke provided an overview of the H&H model update which started with the Comfort Lake Management District. Land cover, topography, and on-the-ground survey work feed into the model. This effort is coordinated with the City and MnDOT. The model will help predict the flow responses to weather scenarios. Dr. Funke explained the District can't monitor every stream channel and culvert, but the model can help make predictions and estimations for un-monitored areas. She noted the District supplied the H&H model to MnDOT as part of the Highway 8 redesign near Comfort Lake and Little Comfort Lake. The District and MnDOT will run large rain event scenarios to evaluate areas at high risk of flooding and areas to be used for water storage.

**f) Resiliency Planning: risk assessment, climate adaptation**

Ms. Heinz explained this is another key topic for the 10-year watershed management plan update. The District wants to know how it can be an effective partner during emergency events (e.g. severe weather and heavy rainfalls). Administrator Linwood noted the City has been active with the Green Steps program and is working on the third step now. Assistant City Administrator Dumais explained she has been leading this

effort and has had conversations with the Park Advisory Commission and City Council regarding long term planning for parks. The City is especially considering the role trees are playing in that vision. Ms. Dumais explained the City is preparing information as part of its comprehensive plan update regarding where to add foliage, how to programmatically identify and address areas with tree diseases, how to maximize infrastructure to meet goals, how to prevent groundwater pollution, etc. Zoning Administrator Weck explained the Planning Commission hopes to finish the comprehensive plan update by the end of the year.

**5. Closing Remarks**

There was discussion about collaboration on incorporating greenway corridors into the City’s natural park plan. Councilmember Lugar indicated she is the council liaison for the Park Advisory Commission which will meet next on September 14<sup>th</sup> via online video conference. Manager Anderson and District staff indicated they would attend the next meeting and provide more information on the topic. The District Board thanked the City Council for its time and indicated it was looking forward to future collaboration.

**6. Adjourn**

**a) Next special board meeting – August 20, 2020**

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

<b>Manager</b>	<b>Aye</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich			X
Jim Dibble	X		

Jen Oknich, Secretary \_\_\_\_\_