

NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
McHenry County Administration Building
667 Ware Road, Woodstock, IL 60098

MINUTES OF FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2009

Chairman McCann called the committee meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following members were present: Mary McCann, Chairman; Yvonne Barnes; Pete Merkel; and Barb Wheeler. Anna May Miller, Virginia Peschke and Scott Breeden were absent. Also in attendance: Cassandra McKinney, Groundwater Resource Manager; Pete Austin, County Administrator; Mark Phipps and Dennis Sandquist, Planning & Development; John Hadley, Facilities Management; Cathy Link, Purchasing and Randy Stowe, River Monitoring Studies.

Mary McCann, Chairman	
Yvonne Barnes	JS "Scott" Breeden
Pete Merkel	Anna May Miller
Virginia Peschke	Barbara Wheeler

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Committee members reviewed the committee minutes the Natural and Environmental Resources Committee of July 10, 2009. Ms. Barnes made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wheeler to approve the committee minutes of July 10, 2009 as submitted. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PRESENTATIONS

River Monitoring Studies – Randy Stowe: Mr. Stowe joined committee members to provide information on the River Monitoring Study. The existing plan was originally written in the mid to late 1990's. The USEPA changed the parameters to include more specific goals. Through a grant, an updated plan was created and published in 2008. The plan is extensive and costs \$165 to print one copy. The plan is available on the internet and they are working to place the plan on disc. The principle author of the plan included a part time Lake Manager of Wonder Lake and a part time Nippersink Creek Waster shed Manager, under the Illinois EPA Section 319 grant. The Nippersink Creek Watershed covers 25% of McHenry County. Issues are largely rural with significant high quality natural resources. The County has experienced more growth along the South and South East areas of the watershed. Downstream of Wonder Lake the Nippersink is listed as impaired by the EPA due to excessive fecal coliform bacteria. Buffers need to be created to keep livestock away from the rivers. Agricultural Land use needs to include the use of Best Management Practices and Nutrient Management Planning, which is critical. This proactive approach, the Green Infrastructure Plan includes the connectivity of all stream corridors. The Plan would be to lay out where the corridors should be, not for regulatory issues, but to bring awareness for land planning. 150 best management practices were identified. The cost would be \$23,000,000 which is eligible for Section 319 funding, which would provide 60% of the federal cost share. Funded projects need to demonstrate a measurable outcome. Watershed planning efforts began over 15 years ago and because of this they have reduced the annual sediment load from the creek from 33,000 cubic yards to 12,000 cubic yards. The flow has been determined for 12 years. A stream gauge refers to a site along a stream where measurements of volumetric discharge (flow) are made. It continually monitors what is happening to a stream and when. A list of other gauges being maintained in other counties was listed. Most partner with others for share cost benefits. Benefits of the stream gauge were identified. Gauge costs were reviewed. Costs increase as a project is broadened. Most gauging projects cost share with the USGS. It is hopeful that the County recognizes the need to start and fund a long term, county wide stream gauging network and recognize the benefits of partnering with other government agencies on the project to properly manage streams and rivers. Partnerships were suggested with planning efforts with local watershed groups, governments, advocacy groups and landowners in order to protect and enhance our streams.

Chairman McCann noted that this is not in the budget at this time, but, would complement what Ms. McKinney is doing with her Groundwater Resource Plan. It was stated that a stream could be gauged for a couple of years first before reviewing the data and then the trends could be phased in. Ms. McKinney disagreed stating that by immediately analyzing the data, as it comes in it is more beneficial as she has found some of the data she received was inaccurate and they had to go to all the wells to make sure they were monitoring correctly. If she had analyzed the information immediately it would have saved time and money. Committee members stated they would like to see slides put together with the plan which shows, in clear terms, the benefits of investment over time. There would be some opportunities to capture funds from development as well. Part of the impact should be cost shared from development and get money up front.

Committee members questioned if there were any funds available in this year's budget to use for a stream gauge project. Mr. Austin stated that the budget is currently in maintenance mode. They won't know until meetings held next week how much, if any funds are available. He stated the capital budget will be reviewed next week and they will review the budget to see if anything is available for well monitoring for hydro geological study. It was suggested that one gauge per year be considered, though these do have ongoing costs. The suggested locations for the gauges were 173 – west of Hebron, Silver Creek and the North Branch of the Nippersink. It would be a value to work with local Municipalities where there would be the most impact. Committee members were informed that there are limits to impact fees and what they could be used for.

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CMAP has requested support of the Upper Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan and the Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan. Committee members stated they would like to know where the funding would come from for the plans and what the total impact would be to the County. They also need to find out how much the County can afford. Target areas need to be prioritized as well as looking at the groundwater impacts to the watersheds. It was stated that an overall plan is needed to look at the whole picture. This is something that needs to be put on the radar to create awareness of the future needs and costs for the project. It was suggested that a Resolution of support for stream water gauges and support of the concept to explore and look at all watersheds, documented into the plan included for the September meeting. It was also suggested that a list of project and funding already allocated provided for review.

Chairman McCann stated she would like to see all three Resolutions to go to the County Board at the same time.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution supporting the Upper Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan and Resolution supporting the Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan: Chairman McCann stated that CMAP received funding in order to complete the above studies. They targeted the Lawrence Creek Watershed and Upper Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan. Mr. Merkel made a motion, seconded by Ms. Barnes to recommend approval of the Resolution supporting the Upper Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan and Resolution supporting the Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a roll call vote (Barnes, Merkel, Wheeler, McCann)

Mr. Phipps, Stormwater Engineer, stated that both plans include suggestions for implementation. Part of the recommendations should be pulled out from the plan to include into the various ordinances. It will be hard to adopt the plan as a whole as they affect various ordinances. It was noted that we are just supporting the plans and not adopting the plans.

OLD BUSINESS

None

REPORTS

Green Team: Ms. Link and Mr. Hadley joined committee members to provide an update of the Green Team. At yesterday's meeting each of the sub-committees, as identified by NACO, were assigned a leader and requested that each sub-committee come up with at least two goals for the NACO campaign. They also discussed how to get information out on the light bulb campaign. The County came in 10th during the past campaign the goal is to come in first. Only 85 have registered for the campaign to date. They suggested trying to get all employees to sign up.

Tomorrow is the County auction to be held at the old Valley Hi facility. The viewing starts at 9:00a.m. and the auction begins at 10:00a.m.

Only 22 have registered for the drive smart campaign. The website provides great information on how to reduce gas consumption.

Committee members suggested getting the schools involved in the light bulb campaign. This could be accomplished with school newsletters.

Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: It was reported that there is no movement on the plan. Mr. Valentine is trying to get funding from FEMA.

Water: Ms. McKinney informed committee members that she has various events that she has been invited to be a speaker. She will be speaking at the Chicago Wilderness Mitigation Workshop at the Chicago CMAP in August. Boone County Water Protection Preservation Alliance – Boone County SWCD office in September. Beginning Bioneers Symposium at MCC in November. Upcoming events that we will be hosting is the Snow and Ice Workshop at MCC October 2nd and 3rd. This will be held to get the word out on safe snow removal. Next year they would like to require certifications for all snow removal personnel. Some levels of chlorides exceed Federal Guidelines. This will be a challenge. Ms. McKinney reported that she is the co-author of a presentation being given by the Illinois State Geological Survey at the Geologic National Conference in Portland Oregon in October.

Committee members questioned if the State is looking to certify plowers. It was noted that there has been some discussion at the Federal level. They are looking at the McHenry County standards for possible adoption. Committee members questioned what options are available for homeowners. Committee members stated there are other solutions available for use and the chloride is safe as well if they use the salt responsibly. Ms. McKinney stated that the goal is to have the groundwater protection program completed by September 10th or 11th for presentation to the County Board on September 15th. She will ask the County Board to acknowledge and address topics one at a time. The items will be prioritized based upon importance. Snow removal

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is the first topic that will be discussed. Municipalities will get the same information by CD which includes PDF forms and Word forms. She stated that she will speak with each municipality and at each council meeting and state that this is a model policy with a voluntary process. They will need to make the documents to meet their needs. Committee members voiced concern that she would be presenting this information to the municipalities before the County Board members understand the plan. They get questioned by municipalities regarding policies etc all the time and it would be helpful if they were provided information first. It was also suggested that the local ordinances be reviewed to see how the suggestions would affect current ordinances. Ms. McKinney stated that municipality staff has been involved since the beginning and all the information has been posted on the website. Committee members stated they are concerned that municipalities will receive their cd's and place them on the shelf and forget about them. They need to think about a gradual influx to bring everyone together on the plan. It is important to keep everyone informed and let them know what they are being told. Presentations will be provided to the Council of Mayors and McCog as well. All of the policies are voluntary.

Ms. Wheeler reminded committee members to save the date of September 11th. That is the day the Creating Thriving Communities will be held.

The next meeting scheduled for August 28th will be cancelled.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

FUTURE TOPICS

Wonder Lake Phosphorus ban.

Water quality testing with the EPA and Health Department and what has been found.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Barnes made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wheeler to adjourn at 10:30a.m. The motion carried with all members present voting aye.

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RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD/COMMITTEE ACTION:

Resolution supporting the Upper Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan

Resolution supporting the Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan

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