

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

MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011:

Chairman McCann called the committee meeting to order at 8:38 a.m. The following members were present: Mary McCann, Chairman; Donna Kurtz; Pete Merkel; Bob Nowak, Virginia Peschke and Kathleen Bergan Schmidt. Marc Munaretto was absent. Also in attendance: Peter Austin, County Administrator; Donna Kelly and Jamie Rein, State's Attorney's Office; Patti Nomm, Department of Health; Dennis Sandquist, Cory Horton, Alicia Law, Matt Hansel and Cassandra McKinney, Planning & Development; Diane Evertsen, County Board; Jon Hortness, U.S. Geological Survey; and interested public.

Mary McCann, Chairman	
Donna Kurtz	Pete Merkel
Marc Munaretto	Bob Nowak
Virginia Peschke	Kathleen Bergan Schmidt

MINUTES: Ms. Schmidt made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kurtz, to approve the minutes of October 12, 2011. Ms. Schmidt questioned the words "tear or" located at the beginning of the 3rd line on page 3 under "Solid Waste". It was the consensus of the committee to delete these words from the minutes. The minutes were approved, with this noted correction, with a unanimous voice vote of all ayes.

Chairman McCann mentioned that Ms. Kelly and Ms. Rein were in attendance to answer any questions committee members may have concerning correspondence received last week from a constituent. Members were previously provided with a copy of the correspondence. The correspondence mentions stormwater issues the constituent's parents are having for the past several years at their home. Chairman McCann mentioned that County representatives, including County Board and Stormwater Committee member Anna May Miller, have been working on this matter. This is a situation between the private land owner and the developer and it is a civil issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

PRESENTATION:

Real Time Monitoring Wells:

Ms. McKinney and Mr. Hortness joined committee members to provide a presentation on real-time observation wells and stream gauges. There is increasing water use in McHenry County with 34.6 million gallons of water per day used in 2000 with an estimated water usage of up to 67.5 million gallons of water per day by 2030. There is only a sustainable yield of 120 million gallons of water per day. Increased development is increasing the pressures on our water supply leading to potential water supply shortages. A graphic from the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) depicted that from pre-development to 2005, there were areas of identified drawdown meaning that the aquifer levels were decreasing. The areas are being recharged, but they are not being recharged at the rate they are being withdrawn at. The majority of the water in the County is fed by groundwater discharge. If groundwater is over pumped for human consumption, it will decrease the amount of water available to discharge into the surface waters which cause the levels of surface waters to decrease. Perennial streams which used to flow year round may now flow only intermittently because the water levels are decreasing or even worse they could go dry.

Observation Wells and Stream Gauges: Ms. McKinney mentioned that in McHenry County, there is a continuous monitoring of water levels at 44 wells, including real-time telemetry. There are periodic water level measurements at three additional wells of which 41 of these wells are County wells with additional wells upgraded by the USGS. In 2010 water quality samples were collected at 43 wells, 41 of the wells were County wells and two wells were included in the National Water Quality Assessment through the USGS. There are various agencies working together on these water levels including McHenry County, ISGS, ISWS and USGS to ensure the success of this program and network. Real-time telemetry is information collected at a well location which is then relayed through satellites to a computer. The County's observation wells were installed in 2008, but the telemetry did not go live until last year. Surface water in the County is also being monitored and the County has installed two stream gauges. Most of the stream gauges along the main stem of the Fox River are funded through the IDNR. A stream gauge has been installed on Franklinville Creek and on the Kishwaukee River. The real-time telemetry is near real time and uses 13 satellites with an approximate 90 minute delay from the time the information is collected until it is available on computers. Data is transmitted once every hour. The USGS website where this information may be obtained is <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/gw>. The County's website for this information is www.mchenryh2o.com. The methods and standards for collecting, analyzing, verifying, storing and serving the data from the County are consistent with the USGS across the country.

Approved: 1-11-12

Mr. Hortness mentioned that the USGS Water Alert System enables people to set an alert which will send them an email when the water level at a particular well dropped below a certain level, along with rising water levels in surface waters. The Water Alert System is predominantly used by people checking on stream gauge water levels which may lead to flooding or recreational hazards. Ms. McKinney mentioned that the deep bed aquifers in the County are being overdrawn and are being used beyond their sustainable rate.

Mr. Hortness stated that the Department of Interior has a WaterSMART program which is a long-term program to study all of the water resource issues of the country as far as water use and water availability. He was involved in the Great Lakes pilot study. Currently there are three major basins in the country that are being studied in the second round of the WaterSMART program, one at the Colorado River, one located by Atlanta, Georgia, and one at the Chesapeake River in Virginia. The Fox River basin area is on the radar for a major study by the WaterSMART program. All of the information the County has collected concerning its observation wells and stream gauges will assist the USGS when they request the WaterSMART program to do a study of the Fox River basin area. The WaterSMART program examines groundwater, surface water, water quality, water use, water availability in the aquifers and how everything fits together. He mentioned that the funding for the WaterSMART program is based on funds from the Department of the Interior. He will forward the website to Ms. McKinney who will provide it to the committee members.

Chairman McCann mentioned that it would be beneficial for County Board members, along with constituents, to be able to view the real-time monitoring of the observation wells a few minutes before a County Board meeting. This will be scheduled for a future County Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution Authorizing Nunc Pro Tunc a Joint Agreement with the U.S. Department of the Interior/U.S. Geological Survey for Water Resources Investigations and an Emergency Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2011 Ground Water Resource Division Budget: Ms. Peschke made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kurtz, to recommend the County Board approve the above Resolution as submitted. Mr. Sandquist mentioned that this resolution has gone out of order and was reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee yesterday. The joint funding agreement provides the funds to maintain the real-time telemetry equipment, observation wells and the stream gauges. It also will fund the maintenance of a publicly accessible website depicting all of the real-time data, along with funding for field verification of data by USGS staff and any data corrections by a professional hydrologist. Ms. Kurtz encouraged staff to emphasize how this program is benefitting the citizens of McHenry County. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a roll call vote (Kurtz, Merkel, Nowak, Peschke, Schmidt and McCann).

OLD BUSINESS:

REPORTS TO COMMITTEE:

McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD): Mr. Merkel reported that there was an upcoming meeting scheduled for November 17, 2011.

Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan: Chairman McCann reported that tomorrow is the annual review for the Plan. The National Emergency Alert System will be tested today at 1:00 p.m.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Farmland Protection Commission (ACE): Chairman McCann reported that they will have a meeting before the end of 2012. Mr. Sandquist mentioned that there are three positions on ACE that will have terms expiring on January 1, 2012. Two incumbents have re-applied and they will be interviewed at a future meeting.

Northwest Water Planning Alliance: Chairman McCann reported that the By-Laws will be finalized tomorrow and she will provide members with a full report afterwards. She will also provide all County Board members with an update on the NWPA.

NPDES: National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems: Mr. Sandquist reported that Ms. McKinney has had several recent conversations with McDOT concerning the preparation of a calendar in order for the obligations to be met.

Watershed Updates: Ms. Schmidt reported that she has been attending the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed meetings and their next meeting is in December, 2011.

Stormwater Updates: None.

Solid Waste: None.

Green Team: Chairman McCann reported that John Hadley will provide an update at next month's meeting concerning the solar panels installed on the roof of the Administration Building. All of the money from the grant will be spent down by the end of December, 2011.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

FUTURE TOPICS: None.

MISCELLANEOUS: Chairman McCann stated that coal tar legislation was proposed at the last Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (LIA) Committee meeting by Ms. McKinney. Mr. Austin mentioned that on the federal level, Ms. McKinney has requested to meet with Congressman Manzullo's staff requesting their support of this legislation on the federal level. It is in draft form in the state legislative program which will be considered again by the legislative committee tomorrow. There will be further direction from the LIA Committee at tomorrow's meeting concerning this legislation with another review by the Committee at the December 8, 2011 meeting. It is scheduled to be on the December 20, 2011 County Board agenda.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Merkel made a motion, seconded by Ms. Peschke, to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 a.m. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a voice vote.

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RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD ACTION/APPROVAL:

Resolution Authorizing Nunc Pro Tunc a Joint Agreement with the U.S. Department of the Interior/U.S. Geological Survey for Water Resources Investigations and an Emergency Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2011 Ground Water Resource Division Budget

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