

**Commission members present:**

Don Scott (Town of Vernon) (Vice-Chairman)  
Randy Craig (Town of Vernon)  
Robert Bartholomew (Town of Vernon)  
Ron Peterson (Village of Big Bend)  
Chad Sampson (Racine County)  
Alan Barrows (Waukesha County)  
Barb Holtz (Town of Mukwonago)  
Doug Koehler (City of Waukesha)  
Dean Falkner (Village of Mukwonago)  
John Marek (Town of Waukesha)  
Jim Ritchie standing in for Jim D'Antuono (Wisconsin DNR)  
Tom Slawski (SEWRPC)  
Mary Pindel (Town of Waterford – Alternate)  
Jim Pindel (Town of Waterford) (Secretary/Treasurer)

**Commission members absent:**

Al Sikora (Village of Waterford) (Chairman)  
Randy Meier (Town of Waterford)  
Shelley Tessmer (Town of Waterford)  
Francis Stadler (Village of Big Bend)

**Also present:** Barbara Baron, Don Baron and Andres Peekna of the WWMD, Geoff Parish, Ron Londre of Graef Engineering and Dan Treloar of Kenosha County.

At 1:01 PM, 02/14/14, Vice-Chairman Don Scott called the SEWFRC meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

**Minutes** The minutes from the January 10, 2014 meeting were reviewed. It was motioned by Alan Barrows and seconded by Randy Craig that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Treasurer Reports** – The Treasurer's Report for January 2014 was reviewed. In summary we started with \$92,442.88 in our money market account. We made a payment of \$146.40 for the three panel display unit we purchased, \$1,657.70 to Graef Engineering toward the GIS mapping survey and \$15,227.62 to the KMNHA for the culvert removal project within Rainbow Springs. We received interest payment of \$14.53 leaving us with a final balance of \$75,425.69. There were no real changes to the grant funds sheet and we are waiting for proof of payment for the Mukwonago Culvert Removal project and the Big Bend boat launch retaining wall project paperwork has just been completed. It was motioned by Doug Koehler and seconded by Ron Peterson that the Treasurers Reports be approved. The report was approved unanimously.

**Old Business**

- a) Mukwonago River Restoration within Rainbow Springs – Benjamin Heussner was not present. Jim Pindel pointed out that the entire project including documentation has been completed and that we were only waiting for the proof of payment for the KMNHA to close out the project. We have already cash advanced the entire \$50,000 for this project to the KMNHA.
  
- b) Fox River Partnership Summit – Tom Slawski stated that the program is locked in and he passed around paper copies of the two page brochure advertising the summit as well as including the agenda and time table for the day. Tom pointed out and was very grateful to Al Sikora for setting up the Pay Pal account for him so that he doesn't have to handle all the cash and personal checks that he had to last time. Tom said that they would accept on site registrations at the door at probably a slightly higher fee. At this time we have only three people registered and we are hoping for another 150 or so. Tom has attempted to send the brochure to all of us electronically. The advance registration fee will be \$35 per person, just like last year. The fee includes coffee breaks, lunch and a copy of Bruce Kingsbury's, one of the speakers, book titled "Habitat Management Guidelines for Amphibians and Reptiles". At this point Tom requested that we provide a 75% cash advance so that he can make the payments required before the summit commences. Chad Sampson motioned that we make the cash advance and the motion was seconded by Barb Holtz. The motion carried unanimously. Tom asked if we had any ideas on how to promote additional table top displays. Tom asked the WWMD if they wanted to provide a display and they seemed to indicate they did. Later Don Baron asked if there was a charge to have a table top display and Tom told them it was at no charge. Tom asked Alan Barrows how much table space our commission would require and Alan said about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a table. Tom mentioned that he would target all the legislators who might be involved hoping to get their attention for the Summit. Jim Pindel suggested that Tom send the Summit brochures to the municipalities that we have approached to join the commission. Dan Treloar asked if there was a cutoff date for preregistration and Tom said that the caterer allowed him to make changes up until the last day last year and he expected the same this year. Last year the commission compensated commissioners who attended the summit in an attempt to encourage attendance. Dean Falkner motioned and Barb Holtz seconded the motion to compensate commissioners the registration fee, if they attend. The motion passed unanimously.
  
- c) Shoreline erosion mapping and stabilization planning with invasive species mapping – Graef Engineering. Geoff Parish and Ron Londre of Graef made a Power Point presentation that outlined and summarized the mapping project that we commissioned Graef to do. They performed the mapping of the river from mile 141.7 to 178.75. These mile markers refer to the distance from the point at which the Fox River flows into the Illinois River. They performed GIS mappings for soil type, apparent 10-year changes in the shoreline, areas of erosion, locations of targeted invasive species and the existing

environmental corridors along the river. The GIS soil mapping indicated the locations of cohesive, granular and organic soils. The mapping of shoreline shift (possible erosion) showed the change in shoreline location from aerial maps taken in 2000 and 2010. This mapping also showed the areas of deposition where eroded material has caused the shoreline to grow out into the river channel. The next mapping taken from a canoe indicated by color code along the shoreline areas of minor erosion, moderate erosion, colonies of phragmites and areas of stable shoreline. In subsequent individual slides covering our entire area of jurisdiction they showed areas of moderate erosion, areas of minor erosion and areas infested with phragmites. These overview maps indicated that most of the erosion occurs in the northern (Waukesha County) section of the river, most of the deposition occurs in the southern (Racine County) section of the river and almost all of the phragmites was limited to Vernon Marsh and the area just south of the marsh. The last GIS mapping set displayed indicated the location of the Environmental Corridors around the Fox River. Then Graef showed slides that summarized the findings of the different GIS maps. For the GIS soil mapping they determined that granular and cohesive soils were equally likely to have moderate erosion and that the aerial photography indicated that granular soils were 1.6 times more likely to erode compared to cohesive or organic soils. Regarding the shoreline shift aerial photography comparison there were 210 locations of possible shoreline shift, 85 locations that are likely stable, 46 locations of possible erosion at a rate of 1.0 foot/year, 48 locations of likely erosion at a rate of 0.8 feet/year and 31 locations identified as depositional areas growing at a rate of 2.0 feet/year. A slide summarizing the shoreline mapping indicated that 1.0% or 1.23 miles of the river exhibits moderate erosion, 16% or 8.13 miles of the river experiences minor erosion and 83% or 77.12 miles of the river has a stable shoreline. A slide that summarized the findings regarding invasive species indicated that there were 48 locations with phragmites amounting to 7.56 miles out of the total of 93 miles of shoreline surveyed. Geoff then showed two slides that prioritized the 19 worst locations of erosion. Clearly we need to address these areas of erosion in a top down manner to maintain the quality of the river. The presentation concluded with 15 photos of the worst locations of erosion taken from the canoe they used to do the physical survey.

Tom Slawski asked if there was anything special about the areas where the phragmites was growing and Ron Londre said that for the most part the phragmites occurred in areas where the river bank was low and in the flood plain. These are the same locations where you will find reed canary grass and small growths of cattails. This habitat occurs mostly in the Vernon Marsh and the area just south of the marsh. Dan Treloar asked if the stands of phragmites stabilized the shoreline and Ron Londre said that none of the stands were populated enough to make a difference and there was no indication that phragmites had a stabilizing effect. Alan Barrows asked if they observed any logjams and Ron responded that there was only a minor logjam under a railroad crossing somewhere north of the Vernon Marsh. Geoff and Ron said

there were a number of trees in the water but the logjam they mentioned north of the Vernon Marsh was the only place where they had to get out of the river and portage around the obstruction. Jim Pindel pointed out that in the presentation Graef only provided a single slide of each of the types of mapping but the official report by Graef includes multiple frames of sections of the river showing every bit of the river within our boundaries. Jim Pindel then expressed some concern with finding out what the county, municipality and property owner was for each of the designated areas of concern. Dean Falkner asked Graef if the county plot maps could be superimposed on the GIS map to identify the ownership of the particular locations. The indication from the group seemed to be that this was possible. Chad Sampson commented that the two main causes of erosion he encounters in Racine County are wave action from motor boats and ice damage to the shorelines. Geoff could not comment on the effect of these two factors causing erosion from his observations but did indicate that the areas of greatest erosion seemed to be location without any sort of vegetative buffer. Jim Pindel asked if the project would come in within budget and Geoff indicated that it would.

d) Big Bend boat/canoe launch retaining wall – Ron Peterson said that the project was completed and they were waiting for a quote on a fence along the top of the retaining wall. Jim Pindel then said that he had discussed the project with Francis Stadler and we concluded and agreed that the fence was a separate issue or after thought. Therefore we would consider the project completed and can close it out. If the fence requires funding from the commission Ron or Francis would have to present a cost and apply as if this were a separate project which we could vote on funding.

### New Business

- a. Wood Drive Erosion Control Project – Chad Sampson Chad said that he would be meeting with the farmer who owns the land for this project and another farmer nearby where some additional work has to be done. Chad also pointed out that the new US farm bill was signed last week and this will provide additional federal funds to pay for these types of projects. Chad expects that these new federal funds will make it easier to convince the land owners to participate in these projects. Jim Pindel asked how much money would the commission be asked to provide and Chad felt it would still be in the neighborhood of the \$5000 he originally indicated.
- b. Consideration of expanding the Commission's jurisdiction south to the Illinois border Tom Slawski said that he had re-contacted the City of Burlington asking that we could be put on their meeting schedule. Tom has not heard from the City and will get after them more aggressively after the summit. Jim Pindel asked Dan Treloar if he could provide the contact information for the municipalities in Kenosha County to Tom so that he could start contacting them once we finish with the City of Burlington.

- c. Consideration of how we operate with a larger membership base: Jim Pindel pointed out that we had agreed on some changes in the past, most obviously was the change to go to one commissioner and one alternate commissioner per municipality to keep the size of the commission manageable. He asked for any ideas or input from the commission and since none were forthcoming we moved on. This is an ongoing point of discussion.
  
- d. Possible request for grant funds for Mukwonago shoreline restoration: Alan Barrows said the he and Dean Falkner met with WE Energies on Monday and they tried to define the role of each of the tenants in the project. Dean said that he has been trying to figure out how to channel the money through the organizations and the contractor. He has talked to the village's public works committee and will meet with the finance committee this coming week. Dean said that this must have been worked out when the Village did the similar project on the opposite shore of the river some years ago. Jim Pindel then gave to Dean the project folder containing all the records from the shoreline restoration project we did a few years ago. Jim indicated that with a quick review of the materials in the file it appeared that Steve Brunner a contract engineer had orchestrated the previous project for the Village. Alan Barrows said that he had put together a step by step project process some time ago and step one was identify a project sponsor and this has still not been done. Alan said that he was not able to provide this function on the county level and WE Energies was unwilling to perform this role so hopefully the Village can do the job. Once we accomplish this task we will have to be on a fast track through the permitting bidding and construction phases of this project to be done by the end of June. From a planting standpoint we want to be doing this project in May. Alan said that there will be state and federal permitting as well as working through bidding procedures of the village and county. At the end of the day the village will be the sponsor and the county will be the project manager doing the site showings, bid packages and construction oversight and inspection and closure.
  
- e. Possible diversion of City of Waukesha water treatment plant discharge away from the Fox River: Jim Ritchie indicated that the city has presented its formal application to the WDNR and there has been ongoing communication to answer some questions, so it is an ongoing process. Everyone else said that they have not heard anything recently.

### **Reports and Updates**

- a) Report on activities of Fox Waterway Agency (FWA) of Illinois – Ron Barker was not present and Tom Slawski said that he had not heard anything to report.

- b) SEWFRC Website – Al Sikora was not present, so nothing was reported. Tom Slawski again expressed his gratitude to Al for establishing the Pay Pal means of collecting the registration fees.
  
- c) Highway 164 Construction update: - Don Baron said that there had been a meeting with the WWMD the WDNR and the WDOT concerning the new flow of sediment into Tichigan Lake, which was reported on by Jim Pindel and Chad Sampson at our last meeting. There is a possibility that something can be done to stop the runoff from the Malchine property, which is being investigated. Don also said that Chad Sampson will be reviewing the ravine that runs down into Tichigan Lake to see if anything needs to be done there. Chad added that he has to wait for the snow to melt so he can inspect the ravine.

Correspondence –

- a. 1/13/14 Email from Jim Pindel to KMNHA explaining what is needed to close out the Mukwonago River Culvert removal project. Joicelyn Schwager responded that she will provide canceled checks and bank statement as proof of payment.
- b. 1/21/14 Jim Pindel emailed the Presentation made by Tim Lizotte of WDNR on the Vernon Marsh dyke repair/replacement to all commissioners.
- c. 1/22/14 & 1/24/14 Emails from Julie Simmons of WE Energies and others concerning vegetation clearing along power lines on WE Energies property.
- d. 2/4/14 Emails between Alan Barrows and Dean Falkner regarding the WE Energies shoreline restoration
- e. 2/7/14 Emails between Jim Pindel and John Marek of the Town of Waukesha, requesting the Town to assign a commissioner.
- f. 2/7/14 Email from Tom Slawski requesting a cash advance for the Fox River Summit.
- g. 2/10/14 Email from Paul Kling of the WWMD advising of several future projects.

Miscellaneous Issues –

There were no miscellaneous issues.

It was motioned by Bob Bartholomew and seconded by Ron Peterson that the meeting be closed. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Closed at 2:35 PM

**THE NEXT OFFICIAL MEETING WILL BE Friday, March 7, 2014 at 1:00 PM. (Meeting Location: Town of Vernon Fire Station #1, W233 S7475 Woodland Lane, Big Bend, WI 53103.)**