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Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 10, 2023- 1:00 PM

Virtual -Microsoft Teams meeting

Commissioners and (alternates)		
Representing	Name	Attended (yes/no, by phone)
Kenosha County	Andy Buehler Mark Jenks (non-voting)	X
Racine County	Chad Sampson (Jon Grove)	X
Waukesha County	Alan Barrows (Leif Hauge)	X
City of Waukesha	Robins Grams (Doug Koehler)	X
Town of Mukwonago	Katelyn Bratz (Barb Holtz)	X
Town of Vernon	Lee Manthey	X
Town of Waterford	Jim Pindel (Shelley Tessmer)	X
Town of Waukesha	Ken Miller	
Village of Big Bend	Kayla Mastalir	X
Village of Mukwonago	Wayne Castle	X
Village of Waterford	Fred Koeller (Al Sikora)	X
Village of Rochester	Wayne Jensen	X
Town of Burlington	Russ Egan	X
City of Burlington	Donny Hefty	
Town of Wheatland		
Village of Salem Lakes	Bill Hopkins	X
SEWRPC	Tom Slawski (non-voting)	X
WDNR	Sara DeBruijn (non-voting)	
WDNR	Rachel Sabre (non-voting)	X

Guests	
Representing	Name
Greg Horeth	WWMD
Grant Horn	WWMD

Ry Thompson	RES
Tom Ludwig	FOTH
Brian Glenzinski	Ducks Unlimited

Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission Meeting

1. Alan Barrows called the meeting to order at 1 pm.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Roll call and verify quorum
4. Confirm the audio recorder is running
5. Approval of minutes from the previous meetings held January 20th 2023.
 - a. Motion from Jim Pindel to approve minutes.
 - b. The motion was seconded by Chad Sampson.
 - c. Motion Passes. (Bill Hopkins, Barb Holz, Fred Koehler, abstained)
6. Review the Treasurer's Report.
 - a. Bill Hopkings made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report.
 - b. Fred Koehler seconded the motion.
 - c. Motion passed

Old Business

7. Fox River 2023 Summit – Tom Slawski
 - a. The Fox River Summit is next week, so please register asap.
 - b. So far we have over 100 attendees registered and hope to reach at least 125.
8. Report on Fox River Park Project – Alan Barrows
 - a. First phase is the riverbank restoration. Phase one was completed before the end of the year and working through grant reimbursement requests. Completed a drone flight of the project area and will share that video at a future meeting.
 - b. Original project lead Jason Wilke has been replaced by Lynda Fink. Phase 2 deck and canoe kayak launch will be led by Lynda.
 - c. They will be submitting to the commission for funding and Lynda will discuss this at the next Commission meeting.
9. WWMD Project- Grant Horn

- a. Received a bid for the dredging project and expect a second bid soon.
 - b. Continue to work on the off-loading location for disposal of dredge material. Hope to dredge 50,000 cubic yards in 2023 and more in 2024.
 - c. Hoping to have approval to move forward with project by the next meeting.
10. Solberg Slope Stabilization- Chad Sampson
- a. Approved for funding, construction for summer 2023.
11. Ogden Slope and Shoreline Stabilization- Chad Sampson
- a. Approved for funding, construction for summer 2023.
12. SEWRPC Survey from Waterford Dam to Illinois border-Tom Slawski
- a. No update.

New Business

13. Report on activities of the work being done by Foth and RES
- a. RCPP Grant
 - i. RCPP Grant-it is not likely we will be ready for second submittal for a RCPP grant submittal in 2023. Not enough interest and none of the issues brought up in the last meeting have been resolved.
 - ii. Chad noted that new USDA funds particularly EQIP funds will be an easier application than RCPP grants funding, because they have added about \$2.7 Million that is available for projects.
 - iii. Grant Horn and Greg Horeth made comments that they would be interested in continuing to pursue a RCPP grant application in 2023, particularly related to dredging in the Waterford Impoundment. However, RES described that is not a good match for RCPP, but they all agreed to discuss this possibility outside this meeting in the near future.
 - b. NAWCA grant
 - i. Brian Glenzinski, Biologist-Ducks Unlimited, guest, presented an update on the wetland work being conducted as part of the NAWCA grant that is currently awarded.
 - ii. Brian worked in WDNR for 15 years before moving to DU, so is very familiar with the Fox River.
 - iii. The Mukwonago Fox River Focus Area NAWCA grant is working on Phase 3 right now. This grant project includes the entirety of the Commission boundaries and beyond, including all of Walworth County , most of Waukesha County and western half of both Racine and Kenosha Counties. They did receive confirmation that will receive a million dollars from the federal government and will begin implementation of projects as soon as it is obtained.
 - iv. Most projects are land acquisition focused for protection. Such land acquisitions can use state monies such as Knowles/Nelson funds or County funds as match to stretch grant dollars.

However, lands acquired via NAWCA agreements are pretty restrictive. For example, deed restrictions limit any use except for wildlife habitat only (e.g., no structures, no improved trails, no hunting).

- v. There is a separate grant component that allows wetland enhancement on state lands. Vernon Marsh State Wildlife Area lands are great candidate here for future project and may be good opportunity for collaborative partnership/funding with the Commission in the future.
 - vi. There is a separate private lands (i.e., non-state owned lands) grant component, which allows DU to work with municipalities (cities, town, villages) and counties to do wetland restoration enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands.
 - vii. Jim Pindel noted that our implementation plan allows us to purchase properties to project wildlife and water quality. Hence, one of the first projects the Commission ever did was to purchase a Tamarack Swamp just north of Elm Island and donated it to the WDNR a few years later. So, we should remember that this something we need to continue to do within our jurisdictional area.
 - viii. Brian would like us to let him know if there are any land trusts interested in projects to please let him know. Several local land trusts are already partnering with the NAWCA grant, but just wanted to let us know just in case there are others.
 - ix. What makes a good candidate site? Active cropland is the highest priority and we can do wetland enhancement work too, but number one goal is restoration and number one habitat type is emergent marsh restoration followed by forested wetland restoration.
 - x. The NAWCA dollars are funneled through the USFW Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.
 - xi. Would a high quality fen sites be suitable for restoration? Yes, that could be a good candidate, but it would be an enhancement or it could be an easement acquisitions if the land owner was interested in that option.
 - xii. Is farmed wetland on private property a good suitable candidate for restoration?
 - xiii. Note Ry indicated that it would be good idea to highlight DU as part of the Commission story map to showcase activities going on throughout the watershed and greater diversity of projects and partners.
- c. DNR Waterfowl Stamp Grant
- i. RES completed a Waterfowl Stamp Grant for a wetland scrap and habitat restoration for waterfowl for the Fox Bend Park with Waukesha County (Alan Barrows and Julia Robson, County Conservation Biologist) and it was submitted to WDNR for a total of just over \$150,000.

- d. US ARMY Corp 206-519 grants/ Federal Highway Administration (FHA) PROTECT Program Grant
 - i. FOTH/RES moving forward in pursuing each of these grants since approval at the last meeting. Onsite Fox River meeting was conducted to visit multiple high priority sites from Hwy 50 to Wilmot Road in Kenosha County on Monday with USACE, WDNR, SEWRPC, Kenosha County, FOTH, and RES staff on March 6, 2023.
 - ii. Next step is to develop a letter of intent with Kenosha County and that is being completed. This is a long-term process but if the project is funded under Section 206 it is a \$10 Million dollar federal share grant if Section 519 it's a 20 Million dollar federal share, and if special authorization/ appropriation via Congress approval it could be even higher federal dollar matching funds.
 - iii. Once letter of intent is submitted with Kenosha County as the sponsor FOTH will use that to begin working with WisDOT on requesting the PROTECT funds as part of the local match. Will report back more at the next meeting.
 - iv. USACE matching funds rules are more lenient than the RCPP matching funds in that they allow previously purchased lands as matching funds, no matter how long ago such lands were purchased.
 - v. It was noted that there continues to be active and severe erosion among those sites already identified in the Fox River Erosion Study survey.
- e. Story Map Outline
 - i. RES will be proceeding with building and hosting it on their website.
 - ii. Overall, it will start with an overview of the Commission and its vision, mission, goals; what it's hoping to achieve for the Fox River; and, list of projects accomplished so far, and highlight select projects for future. Hope to do demo at the next meeting.
 - iii. RES requested information on projects to feature.
- f. Long Term Finance Framework outline
 - i. Ry Thompson noted that document finalized and shared with the commission.

14. 2021 – 2030 SEWFRC Implementation Plan – Tom Slawski & Alan Barrows

- a. No Update

15. Review and discussion of all projects on the Enum- 24 Waitlist

- a. Wayne Jensen had submitted all projects we paid for to Sara DeBruijn at the WDNR and has requested what the status is on all those reports. Not received a response to date.
- b. Based on our records we are roughly \$77,060.36 dollars committed on ENUM 22 projects that would be moved to the ENUM 24 account. The

Total Enum 24 balance is \$117,439.64

- c. Enum-21 and 22 are due to be spent by June 30th 2023, and we think that we have enough projects underway to meet that requirement deadline.
 - d. Wayne will continue to wait to here from WDNR about these items and will report back as soon as he gets more information.
 - e. Jim Pindel noted that has not seen any checks from WDNR on the money that they owe the Commission. By law and as part of the state budget, the WDNR are required to provide the next \$200,000 owed to the Commission by July 2023.
16. North River Bay Road Shoreline Restoration- Chad Sampson
- a. This is not being constructed until August, so Chad agreed to wait until the next in-person Commission meeting to score and vote on these 3 projects.
 - b. Motion by Fred Koehler to table the three agenda items (15, 16, and 17) to vote on them at the next meeting.
 - c. Seconded by Jim Pindel and recommended that the score sheet be completed and provided in advance of the meeting to save time. Chad agreed to have the scored sheets done before the meeting.
 - d. Motion passed.
17. Willow Court Shoreline Repair- Chad Sampson
18. John Margis Jr. Wildlife Area Restoration- Chad Sampson
19. Village of Mukwonago's Adaptive Management Program- Wayne Castle
- a. Nothing to report at this time and recommended that this be removed from the agenda. Wayne will provide updates whenever there is something to report in the future.
20. Waukesha Diversion Project- Greg Horeth
- a. Nothing to report.

Reports and Updates

21. SEWRPC Survey from Waterford Dam to Illinois border-Tom Slawski
- a. No Update---
22. Report on activities of Fox Waterway Agency of Illinois – FWA or Tom Slawski
- a. They are speaking at the Fox River Summit.
23. Report on future of the Echo Lake Dam in Burlington-Donny Hefty
- a. The referendum was an advisory referendum.
 - i. They voted to modify the dam
 - ii. It was approved by the common council
 - iii. In the design phase.
 - iv. The Burlington website has a virtual look of it.
 - b. Russ Egan-
 - i. The public was very divided.
 - c. Dredging project will be occurring with the decision.
24. Report on Fox River Watershed TMDL progress – Rachel Sabre

- a. Kick off meeting Feb 15th, had a little over 100 attendees at that virtual event and feedback was positive.
 - b. Next steps is modelling and that has begun.
 - c. Chad noted that he is working on the 24 pages questionnaire and is providing that to WDNR in separate chunks as he and his staff get them completed.
 - d. Both Chad and Alan found discrepancies in current land use versus what was indicated and they are both providing updated comments back to WDNR staff. Alan suggested that the
 - e. 2015 wetland
25. Report on the Fox Watershed Mitigation Plan- Tom Slawski
- a. There is an upcoming Fox River Watershed Hazard Mitigation Planning Meeting to discuss/review chapters 1-3 of the draft plan on Monday March 13th from 1-3pm, virtual meeting. The draft plan is scheduled to be completed by fall 2023.
26. Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County- Chad Sampson
- a. Winter Workshop
 - i. February 10, 2023, workshop had 114 people in attendance. Guest Speaker David Brandt 60-65 farmers 55-60 interested public citizens.
 - ii. Next field event in September at Case Eagle Park
 - iii. Always looking for sponsor monies.
27. SEWFRC Website – Al Sikora or Alan Barrows
- a. No Update

Correspondence

- 1. 3/10/2023, Tom Slawski, email- FW: SEWFRC Deliverable - Long Term Capital and Financial Plan Framework, with attached report, was sent to Commissioners.

Miscellaneous Issues

- 2. Next Meeting and Location
 - a. Next meeting was scheduled for April 14th , 1 pm, DPW Community room located at 2200 S. Pine St, Burlington, WI 53105
 - b. Fred Koehler made a motioned to adjourn the meeting.
 - c. Jim Pindel seconded the motion.
 - d. Motion was approved.

3. Close Meeting

* If you have any question about the Agenda, please call Secretary Tom Slawski at tslawski@sewrpc.org or (262) 953-3263.