

Commission members present:

Al Sikora (Village of Waterford) (Chairman)
Don Scott (Town of Vernon) (Vice-Chairman)
Doug Koehler (City of Waukesha)
Jon Grove substituting for Chad Sampson (Racine County)
Francis Stadler (Village of Big Bend)
Alan Barrows (Waukesha County)
Barb Holtz (Town of Mukwonago)
Randy Craig (Town of Vernon)
Robert Bartholomew (Town of Vernon)
Randy Meier (Town of Waterford)
Jim D'Antuono (Wisconsin DNR)
Mary Pindel (Town of Waterford – Alternate)
Jim Pindel (Town of Waterford) (Secretary/Treasurer)

Commission members absent:

Dean Falkner (Village of Mukwonago)
Ron Peterson (Village of Big Bend)
Shelley Tessmer (Town of Waterford)
Any representative from the Town of Waukesha

Also present: Jim Ritchie, Benjamin Heussner, Christina Wolbers of the WDNR, Tom Slawski of the SEWRPC & Southeast Fox River Partnership, Dan Treloar of Kenosha County and Michael Schwar a resident of the Town of Vernon.

At 1:00 PM, 11/30/12, Chairman Al Sikora called the meeting to order.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Minutes The minutes from the October 12, 2012 meeting were reviewed. It was motioned by Doug Koehler and seconded by Randy Meier that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer Reports – The Treasurer's Report for October 2012 was reviewed. In summary we started with \$129,560.97 in our money market account and made \$33.02 in interest resulting in a final amount of \$129,593.99. . It was motioned by Randy Meier and seconded by Francis Stadler that the Treasurers Reports be approved. The report was approved unanimously.

Old Business

- a) **Mill Creek gully erosion repair project (active)** – Alan Barrows reported that the County had received the check from the SEWFRC and would certainly be cashed soon. Alan also reported that the hoses that had been used during the dry conditions to get the vegetation going had been removed and the grass/vegetation was doing well. Alan said he thought that the project should be considered completed at this point and we decided to remove it from the

agenda as soon as the check clears the bank. Alan did say that they will continue to monitor the project site to make sure everything goes well.

- b) Mukwonago River Restoration within Rainbow Springs – Benjamin Heussner made a Power Point presentation providing an update of what has been accomplished and what the future plans are. The project objective was to improve navigability, provide bank stabilization, enhance wildlife and fisheries habitat and to protect and enhance water quality. Ben then enumerated the permitting, zoning and surveys required and completed. The equipment and materials required included two dump trucks, two excavators, a skid steer, aqua-barriers, sandbags, fieldstone (70 tons), jute mats, waddles, seed, straw, three six inch bypass pumps, a dewatering trash pump, brush bundles and large woody structures. The work already accomplished was done at culvert #1 the most downstream culvert and culvert #7 the most upstream culvert. These were the first ones done because the river had to be completely bypassed around them to do the work in dry conditions. The conditions this last September/October were ideal because of the drought conditions making it easier at this time to bypass the river than would be possible normally. Culverts #2 through #6 can be bypassed using the alternate stream channel. Along with the photo slides showing some of the work being done, there were also before and after pictures showing the existing culverts #1 and #7 and photos of the streambank after the removal and shoreline restoration. Ben pointed out the importance of building partnerships with local government, Trout Unlimited, Friends groups, Educational Institutes and the WDNR. Future plans for the project include installation of log jams and brush bundles where culverts #1 and # 7 were located, removal of culverts #2 through #6 including the removal of sediment and stabilization of the streambank, involvement of schools and volunteer groups as well as fisheries and mussel sampling. Randy Meier asked when the project is completed will they abandon the alternate or back channel and Ben said not immediately because there are flood plain issues in this area of the river. Ben said they will let the area have some time to repair itself and then see how it behaves before they make any long term decisions about the back channel. Barb Holtz asked if they had taken precautions when using Buckthorn in the brush bundles because if the berries float downstream they will replant themselves. Ben thought that the Buckthorn had dried out sufficiently to prevent this but noted that they will take care in this regard in the future.
- c) Fox River Partnership Summit – Tom Slawski was present and made a report. Tom provided a handout to all the commissioners which outlined the Summit objectives of
- a. Re-establishing the existence of the Southeast Fox River Partnership and develop a framework to support ongoing efforts within the watershed.

- b. Begin a dialogue on shared challenges concerning recreation, economics, sustainable flows, surface water-groundwater interactions, sediment, and ecosystem services.
- c. Develop relationships/build trust among stakeholders (individuals, organizations and states) of the Fox River watershed.
- d. Identify commonalities, project successes, and future challenges facing communities within the watershed.
- e. Create a declaration/agreed statement of key issues on important questions and/or Current & Emerging Issues between the states of Wisconsin and Illinois.

Tom expects to charge a \$20.00 advanced registration fee to encourage people to show up for their commitment. The location for the event will be Veterans Terrace at Echo Park in Burlington WI. The proposed date for the all-day event is Friday March 22, 2013. After some discussion the date was agreed upon by all. Tom then went through a preliminary agenda for the Summit. Of special interest to the commission is a speaker from the commission during the morning session. Tom was very keen on getting a top notch Keynote Speaker and will try to get Jerome Delli Priscoli who is well known nationally and internationally for his work in river basin organization. Tom provided a synopsis for Mr. Priscoli. One of Tom's hopes is that through the shared declaration coming out of this summit we will be able to leverage funds from both Wisconsin and Illinois; this would include local municipalities and counties as well.

- d) Ecosystem Restoration Project (Sediment Sampling) –No one from the WWMD was present and so Jim Pindel advised that as far as he knew all the data from the sediment sampling had been given to the WDNR and now they were in the process of analyzing the data. The results of the data should be what can be done with the sediment. Jim D'Antuono agreed that this is the situation at this time.
- e)

New Business

- a) Consideration of expanding the Commission's jurisdiction south to the Illinois border Al Sikora reported that Chad Sampson had advised him of the name and contact information for the City Clerk for the City of Burlington and the Clerk for the Town of Burlington, Al said that he had talked to the Clerk for the Town of Burlington and she seemed to be very interested in what the commission has to offer. The town clerk suggested that we meet with the town and city at the same time. The goal is to make a presentation at the Burlington town hall with the City present. Jeff Thornton volunteered to do the same presentation he made to the Village of Rochester. Al reported that he had sent an email to both Clerks this week without a response, so he will follow up by phone next week.

- b) Possible request for grant funds for Mukwonago shoreline restoration: Dean Falkner was not present. Alan Barrows said that he had received a short email from Dean and he was not certain what the context of the revisions to the design are. Alan did say that he received the AutoCAD files from Ruckert Mielke and they are fine and he has printed them out, but needs clarification on what the changes will be, so he needs some direction on what WE Energies wants to do.
- c) Possible diversion of City of Waukesha water treatment plant discharge away from the Fox River: Jim Pindel started by saying that he read an article in the Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel stating that a deal was close between the City of Waukesha and Oak Creek, for Oak Creek to sell Lake Michigan water to Waukesha. Subsequently another article in the Journal/Sentinel stated that a deal had been made. Our concern is that especially in a year like this last one where the water levels are so low, the 10,000,000 gallons per day that Waukesha's water treatment plant discharges into the Fox River is the majority of the flow. If this water or 110% of this water is sent to Lake Michigan we would lose our navigability and recreational use. After some discussion, it was decided that Jim Pindel would fashion an email to send to Eric Ebersberger pointing out that we want to be sure that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) not only considers the effect on the environment of the conveyances of the water to and from Lake Michigan but also the effect on the Fox River. It was further decided that this email would be first sent with appropriate explanation to the WWMD and the Fox Waterway Agency of Illinois, imploring them to send similar supporting correspondence to Eric Ebersberger. Jim D'Antuono made the suggestion that the email should ask Eric Ebersberger to have a staff member attend one of our meetings as soon as the EIS process starts to explain the process and hear our concerns. This will of course be implemented. Bob Bartholomew said that from the farmer's perspective low flow was desirable because high flow/ water level caused crop damage. Jim Pindel pointed out the that proposal from the City of Waukesha was to return 110% of the volume taken from Lake Michigan under normal circumstances, but to dump water into the Fox River under high flow or flood conditions, sort of a worst case scenario. Bob thought that better control of the Waterford dam would be a better help to his situation. It was noted that automation of the Waterford Dam was part of our Implementation Plan but that at two meetings ago it stated that at a meeting between Racine County and SEWRPC it was decided that economically this was not a good idea, because it would cost Racine County to implement this automation and they would still have to have people visit the dam twice a day to visually inspect the dam condition for debris or other problems. Probably the only way we could address the dam automation would be from a storm water of flood control point of view. Jeff Thornton reiterated that there was no financial benefit to the County to implementing automation and that the first attempt failed partially due to the fact that the telemetry system failed twice due to lightning strikes. Another consideration was the fact that if they dropped the water level in anticipation of rising water level and the water did not rise, and then those using the river for navigational purposes would complain. Jeff Thornton stated that he had asked the

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District if Underwood Creek and the Root River were capable of handling the return flows from the Waukesha water treatment plant and they told him that they were both capable of handling the flow. Alan Barrows said he asked the same question and received the same answer.

- d) Christina Wolbers Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist: Christina (Tina) introduced herself as the Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist from the Plymouth office of the WDNR and she had recently started in this position. She does educational outreach and monitoring in the eastern portion of the state. She intends to focus on organizations such as ours and offer her services as far as doing educational workshops or presentations as required. She works with youth groups and does work that promotes clean waters as well as watercraft inspection programs. She will be doing an intern program with the WWMD this coming summer. There is an early protectors program which uses volunteers to find new invasive species and map them out. Tina brought along numerous pamphlets and brochures which she offered to those in attendance for informational and educational purposes. Jeff Thornton pointed out that the recent survey of the Fox River showed some new growths of phragmites an invasive species. This comment brought about the question of who is responsible for the removal of such a new invasive species. At the end of the day it is probably the responsibility of the landowner, who can be assisted by local municipalities or organizations such as ours. Tina mentioned that there are grants available through her office to assist as well. She pointed out that they like to take a watershed approach rather than addressing one particular infestation, because it will re-infect itself if upstream infestations are not eliminated.

Reports and Updates

- a) Report on activities of Fox Waterway Agency (FWA) of Illinois – Ron Barker of the Fox Waterway Agency of Illinois was not present. Jeff Thornton said SEWRPC had nothing to report at this time.
- b) SEWFRC Website – Al Sikora said that he had nothing to report at this time except to ask Ben Heussner for a copy of his Power Point presentation so he could use part or all of it for the Website. Ben responded that he has already sent a .pdf file of the presentation to the commission.

Correspondence –

- a. 10/17/12 through 10/22/12 Emails to/from Jim Ritchie confirming we can pay for Mill Creek Gully Erosion repair project and with Alan Barrows confirming who to send the check to.
- b. 11/13/12 and 11/16/12 Emails to/from Jim D'Antuono regarding diversion of City of Waukesha water treatment plant discharge.

- c. There was phone calls and emails back and forth between Al Sikora and the City and Town of Burlington in an attempt to set up a meeting to introduce ourselves.
- d. Jim Pindel reported that he had called Bob Langmesser of the Town of Waterford requesting new letters of appointment for Mary Pindel and Shelly Tessmer.

Miscellaneous Issues –

There were no miscellaneous issues.

Francis Stadler motioned to end the meeting and the motion was seconded by Randy Meier, the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Closed at 2:07 PM

THE NEXT OFFICIAL MEETING AND WILL BE Friday, January 11, 2013 at 1:00 PM. (Meeting Location: Big Bend-Vernon Fire Station #3, W233 S7475 Woodland Lane, Big Bend, WI 53103.)