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MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 12 March 2024

Attachment 3

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

Attendance

Commissioners: Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Tom Tilberry, Fridley; Jeff Dains, Lauderdale; Randy Stille, St. Anthony Village; and Michael Lukes, St. Paul.

Staff and Guests: Emmy Baskerville, Adam Flett, Shawn James, Abby Moore, Kevin Reich, Nick Busse, Dan Kalmon, and Nancy Stowe, MWMO; Glenda Meixell, Anoka Conservation District, Juli Wiseman, MPRB, for UHT project; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Stille.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Dains, second by Buesgens to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Tilberry, second by Dains to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2024, regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

None.

Reports from Staff

Staff is working with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on the agreements for the Upper Harbor Terminal phasing loan to pre-build the stormwater system for Parcel 3. The loan will be repaid once First Avenue builds the amphitheater on the site because the system is not necessary until the build-out occurs. However, as part of the overall plan, this system needs to be in place for the MWMO above and beyond the overall site system, including the ephemeral stream and ultraviolet treatment system. First Avenue did commit funds for the stormwater pond in their build-out.

Lukes requested staff to organize a walk-through of the project site once it is completed. Staff noted that there will be a groundbreaking ceremony, and the walk-through can be scheduled around that event.

General Business

2024-008: Bottineau Park

In July 2023, the Board approved a feasibility study for Bottineau Field Park in Northeast Minneapolis, which lies about 400 yards east of the Mississippi, with the BNSF railway running down the west side of the park. The study explored habitat, water conservation, and flood risk mitigation features that could be installed during park renovations. The feasibility study estimated the construction cost for a capture and reuse system for the splash pad to be \$1.2 million, which is unfeasible for MPRB. A storage tank for flood mitigation was estimated at \$2–3 million, which is also unfeasible. Further study of the area to determine the cause of flooding and identify more cost-effective solutions may be considered as part of the Phase II renovations.

The MPRB Above the Falls Master Plan identified the BNSF railway as a riverway street, and the Great River Coalition has expressed interest in making the railway corridor a “bee highway” for the river. The Mississippi and areas surrounding the park are also part of the Mississippi Flyway and are important habitats for migrating birds. This area is also a prime habitat for the rusty patch bumble bee, the first bee listed as an endangered species. Habitat improvements proposed within the park incorporate sunny and shady habitat, rain gardens and bee lawn. The habitat improvements will be included in Phase I of the park renovation in 2024 and will replace over half an acre of Kentucky bluegrass with improved habitat and area to capture stormwater runoff from the park. MWMO will include habitat establishment and a three-year maintenance agreement in the grant. Staff is requesting approval of \$284,222 in CIP funding to complete the final engineering design, restore 0.53 acres of native habitat, and install one tree trench in Bottineau Park, along with three years of native habitat establishment support. The goal is to complete construction in 2024.

Motion by Lukes, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2024-008 approving CIP funding for Phase I native habitat implementation at Bottineau Park at a cost not-to-exceed \$284,222. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-009: Fridley HDS

The City of Fridley submitted a Capital Project Grant application for the installation of a Hydrodynamic Separator (HDS) within a residential neighborhood at the intersection of Buchanan Street NE, Lincoln Street NE, and 52nd Avenue NE. The purpose of the HDS would be to reduce pollutants reaching Sullivan Lake, which is on the State Impaired Waters list for nutrients, and discharges into the Mississippi River, as part of a street reconstruction project. The HDS will capture debris, garbage, leaves and sediment from a sixteen-acre watershed. This BMP was identified in the 2019 Highland and Sullivan Lakes Stormwater Retrofit Analysis and is estimated to reduce TSS by 366 lb./year and TP by 1 lb./year to Lake Sullivan. This BMP was ranked twelfth out of 67 for TP removal and nineteenth for TSS removal at a cost of \$2,674/lb. over its lifetime. Final design is almost complete and street reconstruction is scheduled for this summer. The City will complete installation at a cost of \$115,000. Staff is requesting capital grant funds of \$64,000 to purchase the HDS that will be installed during street reconstruction.

Motion by Buesgens, second by Tilberry to approve Resolution 2024-009 approving funding for the installation of a hydrodynamic separator supporting water quality improvements to Sullivan Lake in an amount not-to-exceed \$64,000. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-010: Sylvan Hills Park

In September 2023, the Board approved funding a feasibility study to identify opportunities for water quality and habitat improvements at Sylvan Hills Park in Fridley. The feasibility study is nearly complete, and after a cost-benefit analysis of options, has identified a preferred concept plan for implementation. The concept includes a combination of surface and underground stormwater treatment features and maximizes the amount of stormwater capture through curb cuts, storm sewer pipe redirection, and an underground pipe diversion which will all bring off-site water into the park. The underground features include an infiltration tank with pre-treatment and conveyance infrastructure. Surface features include three infiltration basins and two bioswales that act as ephemeral streams. In addition, native pollinator habitat will be created throughout the park, along with a nature-focused play area that will integrate the natural areas with a more traditional playground. The feasibility study for this plan identified water quality, habitat, and flooding benefits. The project is designed to capture and treat stormwater from a 1.1-inch rainfall event from an approximately 77-acre drainage area upstream of the park. Water quality benefits are estimated at over 5,000 pounds/year of TSS removal and 16.1 pounds/year of TP removal. This concept plan also reduces flooding in and around the park for both 10- and 100-year events, including reduced flooding at nearby intersections. The project will include 12,000 square feet of native plantings associated with the infiltration basins and another 15,000 square feet of native plantings along bioswales and in other areas of the park. Factoring in

maintenance costs and an assumed lifespan of 30 years, the cost is \$3,406 per pound of TP removal. This concept plan represents efficiencies achieved with regional treatment and can serve as a model for future park redesign efforts.

Sylvan Hills Park is identified in the MWMO Watershed Management Plan as a capital improvement project. Staff recommends the Board approve funding this project at \$1,493,000.

Motion by Tilberry, second by Buesgens to approve Resolution 2024-010 approving a grant to the City of Fridley for regional water quality, flood mitigation, and habitat features at Sylvan Hills Park in an amount not-to-exceed \$1,493,000. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-011: Towerside District System Matching Grant

This is a \$140,000 grant to leverage \$420,000 in Met Council funding to complete the purchase of a one-acre park to add to other parkland in the District that will be used to implement a district system that manages habitat, public space and surface stormwater within the Malcolm Yards Area.

Motion by Dains, second by Lukes to approve Resolution 2024-011 approving a grant to MPRB for the Towerside District System in an amount not-to-exceed \$140,000. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-012: Southern Regional Treatment System Grant Increase

The Reciprocal Easement Operating Agreement (REOA approved at the Board's February 2023 special meeting in the amount of \$10,711,931 in grant funding for capital projects, operations and maintenance, and professional services at the Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT) site was put in place to assure successful implementation of a District System throughout the 14 redevelopment projects on this 50-acre site. Included in the REOA was a \$2,000,000 funding commitment from MWMO for the Southern Regional Treatment System (SRTS) and \$1,021,054 for Common Reuse System. The SRTS is central to MWMO's ability to generate and cycle water through the system. Now, at 90 percent design, components not present in the 30 percent design, including a diversion structure, pre-treatment structures, upstream storage and a storm sewer return line, have increased costs from the original estimates. The REOA has a capital grant limit of \$7,884,151 for implementation and a \$2,827,780 limit for professional services and O&M. This overage will put the project in exceedance of the implementation grant limit but not the overall grant limit. Staff requests Board approval to amend the REOA, increasing the MWMO grant commitment for the SRTS to \$3,416,000 and for the Common Reuse System to \$2,336,906 while maintaining the overall not-to-exceed amount for the District System at \$10,711,931.

This Board Resolution will approve US Siteworks, Inc., as the successful responsible bidder at a cost of \$3,400,000.

Motion by Buesgens, second by Tilberry to approve Resolution 2024-012 approving an increase in the REOA's grant commitment for the Common Reuse and Southern Regional Treatment Systems while maintaining the current not-to-exceed of \$10,711,931. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-013: SRTS Agreement and REOA Amendment

This agreement defines responsibilities for installation, management, and costs of the SRTS facility outlined in the REOA, and the agreement will be an amendment to the REOA. There are no substantial disagreements between City of Minneapolis and MWMO staffs on the agreement language. The deadline for all agreements to be finalized and signed is May 1, 2024, to allow for construction notices to be made on May 1.

Motion by Dains, second by Tilberry to approve Resolution 2024-013 approving the Southern Regional Treatment System agreement and first amendment to the REOA. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-014: Action & Planning Grants

Two Action Grant requests and eight Planning Grant requests were received in 2024 and are recommended for approval.

Francis A. Gross National Golf Course

This project will restore native vegetation in two areas of the golf course, replacing 1.28 acres of turf grass with native pollinator habitat and 3,000 square feet of Karl Foerster grass near the front entrance with pollinator-friendly native plants. This area is highly visible with labeled native plants and additional education signage describing the importance of pollinator habitat. This project is recommended for funding as a \$49,950 Action Grant.

Talmadge Triangle Raingarden

This project will remove asphalt on an abandoned city street and create a sustainable landscape, including a rain garden, pollinator-friendly native perennials, trees and shrubs with high habitat value, and a gathering space for community use. This project is recommended for funding as a \$50,000 Action Grant.

St. Clement Parking Lot

This request is to fund an analysis of the site and establish engineering plans to improve stormwater management on the property. This project is recommended for funding as a \$10,650 Planning Grant.

CLCT and Metro Blooms Green Engagement

This request is for a partnership between City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCT) and Metro Blooms to host multiple community focus groups to understand what homeowners want from the green spaces at their homes in relation to green infrastructure, stormwater management and climate resiliency, as well as offer three education workshop and focus groups on environmental topics. This project will lead to commitments to further action with homeowners toward habitat and water quality improvement in yards in the future. This project is recommended for funding as a \$19,900 Planning Grant.

Stormwater Irrigation Usage Feasibility and Design Study, Roof Depot Building

The East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (EPNI) is seeking to incorporate a filtration cistern and pump system to utilize rainwater for irrigation of outdoor farm beds and safely discharge excess in a series of raingardens and restoration plots. This study will engage the community in making a useful, safe, educational and exciting management plan for this property. This project is recommended for funding as a \$20,000 Planning Grant.

Metro Blooms and Urban Homeworks Resident Education and Engagement

The goal of this project is to partner with four to six Urban Homeworks rental units to redesign their outdoor spaces in a neighborhood deeply impacted by environmental injustice. Designs will include filtration and infiltration of stormwater runoff, diminished localized flooding and pollinator habitat. Sites will be prioritized based on opportunities for stormwater infiltration and resident engagement. This project is recommended for funding as a \$19,950 Planning Grant.

East River Flats Park Access and Restoration

MPRB is working to create a new public canoe and kayak launch within East River Flats on the Mississippi River. The usable areas of this park are visually disconnected from the river due to degraded and overgrown bank conditions. MPRB is seeking funding to support ecological restoration and erosion control along the river by controlling invasive species and installing a native plant buffer and the bank edge. This grant will be used for site analysis, public engagement and planning work. This project is recommended for funding as a \$20,000 Planning Grant.

Newgate School Green Infrastructure

The school would like to create green infrastructure beneficial to the community and environment in its green space on East Hennepin Avenue. This grant will develop a plan to create stormwater infiltration areas and add pollinator and wildlife habitat with native plantings. Plans will be designed to take advantage of opportunities for education around the project with students, neighbors and the community at large. This project is recommended for funding as a \$20,000 Planning Grant.

Demonstration Site Water Improvements

The Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) office site has a 750-gallon water cistern that is not being used to its full potential. This grant will be used to explore water reuse options for site irrigation for existing pollinator habitat, ground cover, and potentially food crops. Existing concrete paths and a driveway will be evaluated for conversion to permeable pavers, and plans for additional native plantings will be established. This project is recommended for funding as a \$19,400 Planning Grant.

Community-led Restoration at Sheridan Memorial Park

The Sheridan Neighborhood Organization (SNO) will use grant funds to develop a volunteer-centric Natural Resources Management Plan for 1.5 acres of riverside natural area at Sheridan Memorial Park in Northeast Minneapolis. Currently, much of the site is degraded by buckthorn and other noxious weeds, leading to minimal habitat for pollinators and areas susceptible to erosion, as well as a barrier to recreation on the river. The plan will focus on ways local volunteers and hired contractors can improve ecological functions on-site. This project is recommended for funding as a \$16,100.75 Planning Grant.

Motion by Dains, second by Lukes to approve Resolution 2024-014 approving 2024 Action and Planning Grants in an amount not to exceed \$240,040.75 from the Stewardship Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-015: MWMO Backyard Landscape Improvements

Staff is requesting \$101,200 for a series of improvements to the landscaping on MWMO property. The backyard area has been open to the public for nine years and is a popular site for residents to visit. Resident use has carved a path directly from the corner of the parking lot to the sidewalk about halfway down the hill rather than using the paved zig-zag path from the top of the parking lot. Staff is proposing to formalize this shortcut path to prevent erosion and maintain aesthetics. The amphitheater area has been used for unsavory activities due to the limited sight lines from the parking lot. The amphitheater blocks will be reused as new seating areas. Gravel

areas that have become overgrown with weeds will be repaired, fourteen trees will be pruned and five cedars will be removed to open sightlines.

Motion by Tillberry, second by Dains to approve Resolution 2024-015 approving construction of landscape improvements in the MWMO's backyard in an amount not-to-exceed \$101,200. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Updates and Announcements

Tilberry noted that the Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley would enjoy MWMO staff and board participation in their upcoming fundraiser, which includes a live and silent auction.

The Kasota Ponds cleanup event is scheduled for 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. on April 13. Volunteers representing MWMO will participate.

Meixell asked if the MWMO site could be used for another outing with the Coon Rapids Senior Center. Staff welcome a discussion to schedule a visit.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2024.

Open Public Input

None.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Buesgens, second by Dains to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.