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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 9 July 2024

Attachment 3

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418

Attendance

Commissioners: Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights and Hilltop; Tom Tillberry, Fridley; Jeff Dains, Lauderdale; LaTrisha Vetaw, Minneapolis; Randy Stille, St. Anthony Village; Billy Menz, MPRB; and Michael Lukes, St. Paul.

Staff and Guests: Emmy Baskerville, Nick Busse, Dan Kalmon, Kevin Reich, Emily Resseger, and Nancy Stowe, MWMO; Glenda Meixell, Anoka Conservation District; Zach Robinson, Spark-Y; and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Chair Stille.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Vetaw, second by Dains to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

None.

Reports from Staff

Robinson with **Spark-Y** described the educational activities of the organization and its partnership with MWMO in working with youth. Spark-Y is headquartered in Northeast Minneapolis and provides hands-on math and science-based education to students, which can include topics such as carpentry, plumbing, and aquaponics to teach communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Spark-Y works with students in K-8 grades and focuses on youth activation from 14–24 years old. Spark-Y designs its own curriculum to meet state standards with a mix of text and practical, hands-on elements.

[Buesgens arrived 3:11 p.m.]

The MWMO **green roof** was determined to no longer be functioning as planned. A two-year rehabilitation plan was created in conjunction with Spark-Y. In 2023, new modular trays and soil media were installed on the roof. In 2024, youth from Spark-Y built and installed the irrigation system and 550 plugs of native prairie vegetation. The new plantings consist of 20 different species that will be monitored for establishment, overwintering success, and sustainability. While the soil depth is only about five inches, heat from the roof should help with successful overwintering.

For the past two years MWMO staff have been serving on planning committees of the **Mississippi Centennial Celebration** occurring in 2026. The event is meant to celebrate 100 years of water quality improvement. In the early 1900s, the state of the Mississippi River was terrible, with only three fish found between St. Paul and Hastings. Raw sewage sent directly to the Mississippi impacted the river with sludge and offensive odors, among other pollutants. Since the sanitary/storm sewer separation, wastewater treatment plants opening, the Clean Water Act, etc., the river has improved immensely. The goal is to coordinate and promote a broad and inclusive series of events for the celebration. A brand will be created as an umbrella to use at regular events where outreach is performed annually, such as Share the River, Aquatennial, and Stone Arch Bridge Festival. For 2026, branded outreach materials will provide a venue for outreach about water quality, telling the story of how the river became so polluted and how it has been improved. The goal is to create a brand identity and visual outreach materials inclusive enough for all partner organizations (watersheds, neighborhood organizations, local partners, Met Council, event hosts, etc.) to use to tell their part of the story about how they are making the Mississippi a better place. The cost of the brand and material creation is estimated at \$50,000. Met Council has committed \$5,000 to the branding and materials, with another \$2,000 received in private donations. Staff have tentatively committed up to \$10,000 from MWMO. This cost covers the branding and community engagement process to ensure the messaging is inclusive.

Further funding will be needed for production of banners and such. Staff believe fundraising will be easier once the branding package is complete. An RFP has been sent to six firms.

Kalmon described how the Upper Harbor Terminal regional treatment system will work to convert stormwater to a **living ephemeral stream** and how the ecosystem is designed with considerations of material, slope, shape, etc., to be attractive habitat for macroinvertebrates. This system will be remotely monitored on a regular basis to inform operations of any changes needed. This will be the first living ephemeral stream in the region. Data gained from this project can be shared with other organizations that may implement future living streams. MPRB has begun construction, which should be completed by the end of 2024. Pumps to operate the stream will be installed in 2025.

General Business

2024-021: Ramsey Boundary Change

Staff have reviewed a proposal by Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) to revise the jurisdictional boundary between MWMO and RCWD within Ramsey County. Staff reviewed each parcel proposed for transfer based on LiDAR, elevation data, hydrologic delineations completed by MWMO, storm sewer infrastructure, and communications with member cities as appropriate and propose adjustments to the border per Attachments 1 and 2 in the meeting packet. The overall result of the border adjustment transfers 131 parcels totaling 35 acres from MWMO to RCWD and 176 parcels totaling just over 52 acres from RCWD to MWMO. This equates to a net gain of 45 parcels and roughly 17 acres, a nominal gain in tax base. There was a small area in the city of Roseville that was found to be within the MWMO hydrologic boundary and a small portion of Minneapolis that drains to Rice Creek. However, because the cities are not already members of the respective organizations, it was decided to leave those parcels as-is. Staff are requesting approval to submit the boundary change to BWSR. Motion by Vetaw, second by Tillberry to approve Resolution 2024-021 approving concurrence for watershed boundary change/adjustment. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-022: Universal Plating Inc. Site LOI

Flooding in 1997 severely impacted Edison High School and the surrounding area, resulting in the Green Campus Initiative that incorporated many BMPs and stormwater infrastructure on the school site. Spark-Y and Edison High School also incorporated these stormwater practices into the school's educational programming. Some aspects of the Green Campus Plan were not incorporated because they required additional land from the former Universal Plating (UPI) site located south of the school, then owned by Hennepin County, due to pollution issues on the site. In 2023, MWMO applied for and received a State brownfield grant to revisit the status of the UPI site. Site partners Clare Housing, Spark-Y, MWMO, and Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS)

created a provisional plan and agreement with Hennepin County to transfer the land to MWMO at a cost of \$50,000, which allowed for project opportunities to be refined and land use determined. This Letter of Intent (LOI) outlines the terms by which Clare Housing agrees to maximize the efficiency of their building and fully integrate with the unified water systems of the Green Campus as public purpose terms for the potential nominally priced purchase option of one dollar. While these are the agreed conditions, the LOI is not a final binding agreement but is needed to show possession of the land to obtain funding from the Minnesota Housing Division. The deadline for Clare to submit this to Fair Housing is this coming Thursday. The final agreement will be brought to the Board when conditions have been met. Motion by Buesgens, second by Tillberry to approve Resolution 2024-022 approving the terms of the letter of intent with Clare Housing regarding a portion of the former UPI site. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Updates and Announcements

Staff are working with Buesgens to drum up excitement for improving Sullivan Lake, one of the few lakes within the MWMO's jurisdiction. The community is excited to find a way to clean the water coming into the lake through a district stormwater system.

Staff will contact Board members regarding scheduling a Board retreat in October. The retreat would be a three-hour event scheduled for an afternoon.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2024.

Open Public Input

The Coon Rapids Senior Center will have a group touring the MWMO facility on July 31.

Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.