

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2008**

The DeKalb County Stormwater Management Planning Committee (SMPC) met on January 24, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Committee members Bill Nicklas, Pat Vary, Mark Biernacki, Roger Steimel, Don Pardridge, Donna Prain, Ken Andersen, Joel Maurer, Tom Thomas, Bill Lorence and Paul Miller. Also present was DeKalb County Assistant Planner Rebecca Von Drasek.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Mr. Miller noted that all members were in attendance except Joe Misurelli.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** – *Mr. Anderson moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Nicklas, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** – *Ms. Vary moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Steimel, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Web Resources:**

At the meeting on November 8, 2007, it was suggested that a list of stormwater resources online would be of use to the Committee as it works on Phase 2 of the Stormwater Management Plan. Staff generated a list of websites for the Committee's review. Mr. Miller noted that the list is by no means comprehensive and asked if any additional resources should be added at this time.

Ms. Vary noted that both the McHenry and Boone County stormwater plans are posted online. Ms. Vary also noted that Lake, DuPage, and Kane could be checked for Stormwater Plans.

5. Discussion of Potential Action Items for Phase 2:

At the November 8, 2007 meeting of the Stormwater Management Planning Committee the Committee reviewed their mission, by-laws, and held elections. Mr. Miller, the newly appointed Chair, opened this the second meeting the question as to what the Committee wants to do as part of Phase 2 of the Stormwater Management Plan. He pointed out that the existing Plan has three suggested items: 1). define the limits of the watersheds in the County. This would likely require actual surveys of properties at the boundaries of the watersheds; 2). identify what if any stormwater management regulations need to be redrafted to reflect a watershed-based approach; and 3). identify and prioritize specific regional stormwater management projects.

Ms. Prain noted that the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership (KREPS) has studied one of the major watersheds in DeKalb County. She expressed concern that implementation of any stormwater management projects will likely require participation by private property owners, including those that straddle watershed boundaries.

Mr. Nicklas stated that delineating watersheds will naturally cross property lines, but prior to concern over compliance, the projects themselves need to be identified.

Mr. Biernacki also responded that floodplain regulations are already being addressed on properties throughout the County. Mr. Miller reported to the Committee that digital maps are being created by FEMA and IDNR, which will eventually allow the County's GIS to have an overlay of the floodplain.

Mr. Nicklas suggested one way to initiate the efforts for Phase 2 of the Plan would be to create an inventory of potential or needed stormwater management projects.

Mr. Maurer commented that other counties have created plans and that the Committee might benefit from contacting them to identify issues and generate project ideas.

Ms. Prain asked whether the focus of the Committee would be watershed quality and/or a quantity issue.

Mr. Miller cautioned that there should be no rush to solutions. He noted that another issue could be a menu of best management practices related to stormwater management. He noted, for example, Bill Lorence's idea to create a fee-in-lieu program so that rather than each development having its own stormwater detention pond, upstream facilities could be made larger and thus be more effective.

Ms. Prain noted that fixing some of the existing problems may require removing pavement or replacing pavement. Costs might be prohibitive.

Ms. Vary noted that there is a difference between remediating existing problems and pursuing solutions for new developments.

Mr. Nicklas noted that the Committee would eventually need to tap into additional resources to provide some solutions. He stated that he did not think the Committee needed to reinvent the wheel and that using other communities plans may save the Stormwater Management Committee time. He noted that as Ms. Vary and Mr. Maurer had suggested there are other county-level organizations tackling this issue.

Mr. Pardridge suggested that the Committee begin with the problems that were highlighted in the August 2007 flooding.

Mr. Miller pointed out that the Committee had previously discussed the idea of creating a stormwater management wish list of projects, needed information, possible regulations, and funding mechanisms.

Mr. Nicklas responded by referring to the Kishwaukee River flooding in the August 2007 event. The last significant flooding had been in 1996. As a consequence of stormwater management facilities that have been constructed since 1996, aerial comparisons showed some improvement in the degree and locations of flooding, but more is clearly needed. He noted that Heron Creek improvements worked well, however, the surrounding properties were still flooded. A culvert that was replaced at Route 23 and Swanson moved the water faster into other areas. Heron Creek detention provided some relief for

the Blue Heron Creek flooding. As detention was not created for old areas of town these areas still had some water, and the City golf course was substantially impacted by the 2007 flood.

Mr. Biernacki reported that, similar to Sycamore, the City of DeKalb had problems in the older residential sections. Basement backups due to power outages also occurred. A pump was placed at 2nd Street to pump the sanitary sewer out onto the street and prevent additional basement flooding. Mr. Biernacki noted that the City has had some success with dormant Special Service Areas (SSAs) on newer developments. These SSAs are intended to kick in only in the event that the homeowners association fails to maintain stormwater management facilities within their developments. This saves the City from ultimately having to take over the costs of maintenance.

Mr. Pardridge reported on the Village of Shabbona's success with new facilities. For example, he thought that an agreement had been reached with Mullen's Grain facility which was a solution accepted by the Village and the affected residents. The Village still wants to update the entire village's facilities. He also noted that big storms drain to Lake Shabbona.

Mayor Thomas stated that the City of Sandwich has been very aggressive in their approach to stormwater management. Standing water used to be very common following a storm, and the City has installed large basins which have helped alleviate some of the problems. Originally the City was taking title for the detention areas but now uses SSAs for developments to defray the costs. Additionally, for the last 10 years the City has required developers to oversize detention facilities in new developments. Mayor Thomas agreed with the need for future regional detention, and agreed that the old parts of town still have issues. He also highlighted that the large detention areas on the north and south areas of City; when these overflow the streets carry the water to sewers. He indicated that he would talk with Hinckley regarding the problem areas in that Village.

Mr. Anderson highlighted that Cortland's stormwater issues should also be researched as they are in proximity to DeKalb and Sycamore and are a growing population center.

Mr. Miller informed the Committee that the County's All Hazard Mitigation plan was passed by the County Board in January, noting that this is the first step toward mitigation of Evergreen Village, which could eventually alleviate some of the flooding of the Sycamore golf course if the trailer park property is converted into some kind of detention/retention facility.

Mr. Nicklas stated that after retaining Christopher Burke Engineering, the soils were reviewed at and around the golf course and it was concluded that these soils are incapable of the flood retention necessary to save the northern holes. The golf course plans to change to the course layout.

Mr. Steimel asserted that he would yield to the experts but noted that the DeKalb Airport is also a wet area in storm events.

Ms. Prain briefly explained the historical solutions used for stormwater management such as channelization and detention. She noted that, in addition to detention, there are options such as regional

detention, widening/dredging existing channels, cleaning the Kishwaukee River of trash/debris, and building attention around stormwater issues. Ms. Prain advocated consideration of the river and streams in the rural, farmed areas of the County and the need to allow these to go back to a free, more meandering state. This would help slow the rate of stormwater going downstream and add stormwater detention capacity upstream.

Mr. Maurer highlighted the option of pervious parking lots, which drain water rather than diverting it.

Mr. Thomas noted that no two storms are alike, and different projects will have different effects.

Bill Lorence entered the meeting at 3:45 pm

Mr. Nicklas suggested that the Committee create a roadmap for the stormwater projects.

Ms. Prain and Mr. Lorence agreed that the 1973 topography maps need to be updated.

Ms. Vary suggested that she had benefitted from reviewing the Kishwaukee River Watershed booklet prepared by KREPS. She thought that the aim to use native plants to maintain soils was a good idea for floodplain areas as the plants naturally slow down the movement of the water. She also briefed the Committee on a recent tour of the Morton Arboretum and their newly renovated grounds, and iterated that she enjoyed seeing first hand all of the various water management options the Arboretum had employed. She added, however, that some of the improvements were quite expensive.

The Committee continued to discuss its mandate and the various approaches to managing stormwater.

Mr. Miller stated that it is easier and less expensive to establish standards for future projects versus remediating existing problem areas. He then committed to discussing with the State's Attorneys office the rules governing the establishment of a tax on new developments to pay for improvements in older areas, since these are where most of the communities have repeated flooding issues.

Mr. Lorence concurred and stated that it is not easy to reverse 150 years of development.

Mr. Nicklas stated that all viable options should be reviewed and that the Committee needed to better define its scope, so that it is not too simplistic and not too unrealistic.

Mr. Miller also offered that staff can endeavor to collect stormwater management plans from surrounding counties so that the Committee can get a handle on their approaches.

Mr. Nicklas asked if staff would also contact the company that took aerial photos of the flooding event in August to determine if their services would be of use to the Committee.

The Committee then discussed the issue of payment for the various projects. Mr. Lorence spoke briefly about the fee-in-lieu program which could result in funding for larger projects upstream rather than on a case-by-case solution. He noted that, under the current policy, the County would be filled with what amounts to "potholes" (in reference to retention ponds) instead of large scale solutions. He then stated

that since the County is primarily agricultural, the Committee should realize the difference between recharge and diversion. He explained that the tiling systems most farms have were created to move water off the fields. He suggested row crop runoff was approximately 40%, while grass is only 20%. So recharge in the agricultural areas of the County by Mr. Lorence estimation was more difficult.

Mr. Miller pointed out that the State's Water Survey also could be used as a resource and that the Committee might want to approach IDNR or other state agencies for assistance and possibly seed money.

Mr. Biernacki suggested asking the surrounding counties to speak to the Committee.

The Committee recognized that the implementation of any idea would require some form of funding.

Mr. Anderson suggested that the communities which suffered flood damage this past August should share with the Committee the estimated costs. Mr. Biernacki stated the approximate cost to the City of DeKalb was \$285,000. Mr. Nicklas said the golf course alone (loss and reseeding) was \$350,000. Mr. Anderson suggested that these dollars could be spent in advance rather than as a response.

Ms. Vary suggested that the Committee review the Kishwaukee River Watershed booklet prepared by KREPS to familiarize themselves with the issue facing them. All agreed and Mr. Miller stated that copies would be sent out to members with their next meeting packet.

6. Next Meeting:

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to meet next on February 28, 2008 at 3:00 pm, in the East Conference Room of the DeKalb County Administration Building in Sycamore, IL.

*** PLEASE NOTE THE MEETING HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE LIBERTY ROOM IN THE DEKALB COUNTY LEGISLATIVE CENTER DUE TO ELECTIONS.**

10. Adjournment -- *Mr. Biernacki motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Nicklas, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Paul R. Miller

Chairman, DeKalb County Stormwater Management Planning Committee

RGV:rgv