

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
June 26, 2008

The DeKalb County Stormwater Management Planning Committee (SMPC) met on June 26, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administrative Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Committee members Bill Nicklas, Roger Steimel, Don Pardridge, Donna Prain, Joel Maurer, Pat Vary, Mark Biernacki and Paul Miller. Also present was Assistant Planner Rebecca Von Drasek.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Mr. Miller noted Joe Misurelli, Ken Andersen, Tom Thomas, and Bill Lorence were absent.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** – *Mr. Steimel 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. Pardridge, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Phase II Stormwater Management Plan – Next Steps**

Mr. Miller briefly recounted the recent presentation to the County Board at the Water Study Workshop on May 21, 2008, as well as the decision of the Executive Committee of the County Board at its June 10, 2008 meeting not to pursue funding a water study on the upcoming November ballot. Mr. Miller noted that he had also spoken with Joan Berkes-Hanson from the Information Management Office (IMO) regarding the insertion of the KREPs data as an overlay in the County's GIS system, who noted that the disk provided by KREPs contained only PDFs. The IMO needs shape files if the information is to be integrated into the County's GIS system.

Ms. Prain stated that the shape files are available, and that she would provide an Internet link to the information.

Mr. Miller then suggested that the Committee go around the room and provide their responses to the staff report, dated June 12, 2008, in which he summarized his own thoughts on what should be contained in Phase 2 of the Countywide Stormwater Management Ordinance. He indicated that he felt that the County needs better contour interval maps, which will cost between \$150,000 and \$190,000. The County also needs to delineate the southern watersheds, and consolidate all of the water-related features on to the County GIS system.

Pat Vary provided a written memo to the Committee Members which outlined her assessment and suggestions for future actions by the Stormwater Management Committee. Three items she suggested were; 1). Identify 2-3 problem areas and attempt to remediate them through funding which could be written into 2009 budgets; 2). Start recruiting a citizens committee now to assist the Committee in passing a referendum initiative; and 3). Identify and amend the ordinance or to improve oversight of these issues.

Mr. Steimel asked when the next general elections occurred. It was explained that the County Clerk's office lists that the next consolidated general election is held April 7, 2009 for the election of Township, Municipal, Park District, Library District, School District and Fire District officials. Mr. Nicklas thought there was also a State Election in 2010.

Mr. Miller asked who would participate in the new committee proposed by Ms. Vary. Ms. Vary stated that the committee would be made up of citizens who are known in the community, who would have a fair chance of advocating for the funding needed for stormwater management. Mr. Miller clarified his question as to who would do the work. Ms. Prain noted that the Forest Preserve staff only provided data to its citizens committee, which successfully worked to pass a referendum for purchasing additional forest preserve land.

Mr. Nicklas agreed with Ms. Vary that a campaign could be started, but he also understood Mr. Miller's concern that without additional information and staff it would be difficult for a committee to gain support. Mr. Nicklas also stated that the Sycamore budget for the next fiscal year was set, and that a small amount of funds set aside to address this type of issue would be utilized to address an internal NPDES review.

Ms. Vary asked if the Hazard Mitigation project for Evergreen Village would receive funding soon. Mr. Miller answered that the County was still waiting to hear back from the State, and that it is simply unclear when or if there would be sufficient funds to do the project.

Mr. Biernacki stated that he was under the impression that the County had already been denied this year's funding. Mr. Miller explained that no decision on the County's application for mitigating Evergreen Village has yet been rendered.

Mr. Nicklas responded to Ms. Vary's first suggestion that any of the known flood prone areas could be utilized as an example case by noting they would still require gathering data and some funding to complete. At this time, there is no funding.

Mr. Miller agreed that once the referendum is on the ballot, someone would need to bring the citizen advocates up to speed on the issues that have been discussed by the Committee.

Mr. Nicklas noted that with the local population growing, a citizen committee would have a difficult task of getting the information out to the voters.

Ms. Vary also felt that if the citizens committee could show the electorate that something is already taking place, such as a sample project, and that additional funding is necessary for similar projects. The physical example might help the referendum pass.

Ms. Prain noted that there were two major watershed problem areas which could be used as examples, but that a referendum project would only pass if there was significant buy-in that there is a problem and possible solution.

Mr. Pardridge agreed that by addressing known water problem areas the electorate might see a benefit. He also asserted that the flood prone areas were often well known.

Mr. Steimel noted that in comparison to the western Illinois communities, DeKalb County residents are fortunate that the County lies on a ridge and that the water drains generally to the east and west.

Ms. Vary stated that she would like Phase II changes to be in place prior to future developments within the County.

Mr. Steimel thanked Ms. Vary for her memo, he agreed that he did not want to see the issue be dropped and stated that he felt the need to organize for the issue prior to the next election.

Mr. Maurer asked if the County was permitted through State legislation to tax a certain amount for this type of issue. Mr. Miller stated that the County could do so, but taxes related to stormwater management are also subject to a referendum.

Mr. Miller then asked the Committee to identify and invite individuals who might want to be a part of the citizens committee to the next meeting of the Stormwater Management Planning Committee. The idea would be to begin informing them of the issues and what they, as advocates, would be expected to do.

Ms. Vary added that the citizens committee would need talking points once they begin advertising to the public. She highlighted one of her ideas, the slogan "Too Much and Too Little?" The "too much" refers to stormwater, and the "too little" refers to groundwater.

Mr. Nicklas noted that to make it on to the next ballot the issue would need to be ready for the clerk to certify the question by the first week of January, 2009. He also said that he felt this would be sufficient time to gain support. He then drew a diagram for the Committee of a prospective flier which could highlight problem areas throughout the County. He felt the visual would assist the Committee convincing the electorate that there are countywide problem areas.

Mr. Biernacki reiterated his support of funding the stormwater and ground water projects as a combined water project. All the Committee agreed with this point.

Mr. Nicklas asked Mr. Steimel what about the water issue makes him want to see a referendum passed. Mr. Steimel noted the importance of water to agriculture and added that as a combined issue the County could address concerns about flooding and drinking water.

Mr. Miller pointed out that every property owner pays when flooding occurs, even if their property was not flooded because they covered the expense of emergency services, cleanup, etc.

Mr. Miller also emphasized that by investing in contour mapping the County would have a better resources to provide to communities.

Mr. Pardridge stated that he felt the necessity of drinking water also made the issue important. Mr. Miller agreed and added that not knowing the status of our groundwater resources should also be a marketed point.

Mr. Steimel provided the Committee with an example of a well that recently went dry in Oswego.

Mr. Nicklas left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Vary noted that when she moved to the area she found it very flat and she noted that the population and development increases the area runoff causing flooding in more areas.

Mr. Biernacki suggested that Committee members look for individuals who are interested in both storm and ground water issues. Mr. Miller reemphasized that Committee members invite prospective citizen committee members to the next meeting.

Mr. Maurer noted that the “do no harm” planning of new developments is not preventing a worsening of flooding problems, and although he was unsure of all the facts he believed that greater precipitation could also be adding to increased flooding.

Mr. Pardridge agreed that people appear to be speeding up the water.

Mr. Miller stated that all of the increasing ills are the reasons why decision-makers need better information to make more informed decisions.

Mr. Maurer noted that flooding is an absolutely heartbreaking event and alleviating the risk is important.

Ms. Vary again noted that to get the referendum passed the issue would need a strong advocate group.

Ms. Prain felt that if prospective advocates were invited to the next meeting then the Committee should attempt to accomplish something to address the stormwater problems, so that it does not appear to them that the Committee is just trying to pass a referendum. Mr. Miller agreed.

Ms. Vary asked about Bill Lorence’s previous comments of changing regulations to state that the runoff rate from a particular property not be increased and may not exceed 20% in total or define depressional storage areas.

Mr. Maurer stated that he thought there was an existing definition of the term “depressional storage”.

Mr. Miller reminded the Committee that most regulations only regulate new construction. There are existing problems related to existing development that need to be addressed.

Mr. Biernacki asked if the Committee would be better served discussing what next steps could be accomplished if funding were available.

Ms. Prain asked about enforcement of the regulations. Mr. Miller noted that the current Stormwater Management is enforced by the governing jurisdictions.

Ms. Vary agreed with Mr. Biernacki that the Committee should present the projects that need funding.

Mr. Miller asked if Committee members are unable to actually bring the prospective advocates with them to the next meeting, could they at least provide the names of prospective members. He also encouraged Committee members to be blunt as to what was being asked of the advocates so that no one is misled as to the work and commitment associated with advocating funding of water issues.

Mr. Maurer also agreed to define depressional storage areas for the Committee at the next meeting.

5. Next Meeting:

Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to meet at the end of July. *However, due to a conflict staff subsequently rescheduled the meeting to August 7, 2008 at 3:00 pm, in the East Conference Room of the DeKalb County Administration Building in Sycamore, IL.*

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

Respectfully submitted,

Paul R. Miller, AICP
Chairman, DeKalb County Stormwater Management Planning Committee

RGV:rgv

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