

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 15, 2008**

The DeKalb County Stormwater Management Planning Committee (SMPC) met on May 15, 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, Joe Misurelli, Roger Steimel, Don Partridge, Donna Prain, Ken Andersen, Joel Maurer, Pat Vary, Tom Thomas, Bill Lorence and Paul Miller. Also present was Assistant Planner Rebecca Von Drasek and Kate Schott.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Mr. Miller noted Mr. Biernacki was absent.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** – *Mr. Nicklas moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Andersen, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** – *Ms. Vary noted one typo on the first page. Mr. Misurelli then moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Steimel, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Review and Discussion of Potential Action Items**

Mr. Miller recapped the discussion held by the Committee at the April 3, 2008 meeting, during which the Committee decided on the Phase II items for the Stormwater Management Planning Committee (SMPC) to address and two items for consultants to complete. Mr. Miller referenced the quotes the County had received from Baxter & Woodman and Christopher B. Burke. Additionally, he pointed out that the County Board was holding a workshop, May 21 at 6:30 p.m. prior to the County Board Meeting, at which the Board would focus on the groundwater issues raised by the Regional Planning Commission, and the stormwater issues that have been raised by the Stormwater Management Planning Committee. The Committee should prepare a recommendation for the County Board to consider. Mr. Miller then handed out a copy of the Baxter & Woodman quote and suggested that the Committee discuss the consultant's quotes. Finally, he noted that Ms. Prain had brought materials from the Kishwaukee River EcoSystem Partnership (KREP), as she had promised at the April 3, 2008 meeting.

Ms. Prain briefly introduced the maps that she had printed from the KREP's web site and explained that the maps, summary sheets, and other pertinent information was available to the public. Ms. Prain then explained that the information comes from various sources and was combined by the KREP group.

Mr. Nicklas asked how old was the information on the maps. Ms. Prain noted that the age of the information varied as to the type of information you are looking at, for example the wetlands and soils generally stay the same over time, while the floodplains and political boundaries might change and these were based on information from 2000.

Mr. Miller asked what funding sources KREP had utilized to gather and prepare the information and what was the approximate cost. Ms. Prain noted that the McHenry County Conservation District, Grand Victoria, and a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources had provided the funding for the approximately \$200,000 project. Mr. Miller also asked if new contouring information was also available, to which Ms. Prain said no.

Mr. Miller observed that the initial quotes from the consultants were taking the project from scratch and not necessarily taking into consideration the amount of information the KREP study had already collated. He stated that many assumptions had to be made when the consultants were determining their rough costs. Further, if the information in the KREP study was too dated, then new data might need to be generated. He asserted that the aim was to incorporate all available data and stormwater information and therefore make any future study costs less prohibitive. He also mentioned the USGS federal matching program where the USGS will pay a 20 percent match to the County's 80 percent to fund the production of new two-foot contour maps. The initial cost to the County under this program would be approximately \$150,000. Mr. Miller repeated that Baxter & Woodman would be presenting at the County Board workshop to summarize the proposed study from the Regional Planning Commission (RPC). Mr. Miller then asked the Committee to tell him what, if anything, the SMPC should present at the workshop in regards to the Committee's recommendation for future actions. He summarized the findings of the consultants and suggested that funding of at least \$400,000 was necessary to complete the comprehensive stormwater maps as outlined by the Committee, and generate the new two-foot contour interval maps.

Mr. Nicklas emphasized that he felt that both the groundwater and stormwater issues should be considered in conjunction.

Mr. Pardridge stated it would be nice to refine the elements of the study rather than make broad assumptions, like those made by the consultants to create the rough cost estimates. He suggested that the specs were critical to these types of projects.

Mr. Miller volunteered that the Committee could forward a null option, that the Committee is not ready to make a recommendation to the County Board.

Ms. Vary stated that she did not feel the Committee was ready to ask the County Board for funding as the project was not specific, she suggested a "pilot project" to approach voters with may lead to referendum success.

Ms. Prain noted that if the study consisted of compiling information, that by the time the County was acting on a proposed information that it would need to be compiled again because the information has a shelf life, for example depressional storage areas.

Mr. Miller disagreed and stated that if the County had a listing of depressional storage areas then regulations could be created to protect them, without an identification of their location a property owner with one could receive a permit to fill it because the County has no rule against it.

Mr. Lorence briefly explained the County's Site Development Permit process and the current requirements. He also stated that compensation to replace depressional storage could only be collected if the County knew the location of the depressional areas.

Ms. Vary asked why the County did not have a "thou shall not fill" regulation and what could the Committee do now to address the issue of flooding. Mr. Miller noted that currently if a property owner takes the appropriate steps the County cannot disallow them to seek a Site Development Permit. Mr. Miller stated that only by altering the current regulations the County could enforce a no fill policy, but argued to change the regulations the Committee needs to coalesce the information about the County's water features at the same time.

Mr. Lorence suggested that the County could impose a regulation that prohibits a property owner from increasing or diverting water, but that information was necessary to determine if a change has taken place. He then provided another example that the discharge rates for projects could be limited to 20 percent runoff rate, again the County would need to know current runoff rates.

Mr. Miller asked Ms. Prain if the information that she had brought with her could be imported into the County's GIS system, Ms. Prain indicated that the format was compatible. Mr. Miller noted that this type of information would need to be evaluated by the County's Information Management Office.

Mr. Pardridge stated that the Committee needed an overall specific project. Mr. Miller stated that he felt that the project was crafted at the April 3, 2008 meeting. He noted that the origin of the SMPC was to ameliorate stormwater management, and that takes money and resources to complete.

Mr. Pardridge agreed but explained that without having an idea of "it" (the study) then the money and resources will not result in solutions.

Ms. Vary agreed that the Committee needed more data, but asked the Committee what could we be doing now to address the issue. She asked when would the Committee ever have enough information. Ms. Prain and Mr. Pardridge agreed that there is never enough information.

Mr. Steimel asked Mr. Thomas what Kendall County had as far as information about stormwater. Mr. Thomas stated that the entire study has taken approximately three years. Mr. Lorence noted that the studies of Sandwich had an arbitrary end point at Chicago Road and therefore was not a conclusive study. Mr. Thomas responded that the flood threats could also be considered arbitrary, as to how one decides which type of flood threat to prepare against.

Mr. Miller stated that the regulations would be created to protect specific features, and that before creating regulations the Committee needed an understanding of the problems and proposed solutions so that the regulations could support these efforts.

Mr. Nicklas stated that the Committee should focus the County Board on the comprehensive map as the first step, and then the Committee can continue to pull together additional information. He suggested though that if the issue were to become a referendum item that it should be for a future general election rather than the November election.

Mr. Miller stated that the data collection and stormwater map generation, as well as identification of problem flooding areas and initial solutions to these problems, could cost anywhere between \$400,000 and \$1,000,000, according to the quotes that the consultants prepared. He suggested either forwarding a recommendation to combine the stormwater study with the ground water study or to recommend the null alternative that the Committee is not ready to request funding at this time.

Ms. Vary noted that the layers of information provided in the KREP information would assure that the maps do not have to be generated from scratch.

Mr. Miller noted again that two-foot contours are necessary, but that information is not available from KREP. He also noted that, while the Kishwaukee River watershed covers approximately 2/3 of the County, there does not seem to be comparable information available for the southern third. This information would need to be generated.

Mr. Nicklas suggested that a thoughtful voter would vote to approve the referendum regarding these water studies, because the information is necessary for the County and the municipalities to make corrections and protect resources. He also asserted that there appeared to be consensus that funding was not available within any of the concerned agencies without a referendum.

Mr. Thomas stated that it would be important to decide on the appropriate amount of funding though because if you ask for too much you will scare individuals, and if you do not ask for enough you're worse off. He also stated that he did not feel a referendum would pass in Sandwich.

Mr. Nicklas suggested that if the Committee felt it needed additional information regarding the study that the suggestion to the County Board could be to fund a smaller RFP creation, he noted that the RPC had done something similar and that it cost approximately \$30,000.

Ms. Prain suggested an intern could be hired through NIU to insert KREP's data into the County's GIS system. Mr. Miller noted that even hiring an intern required some funding and that staff would first need to discuss the issue with the Information Management Department.

Mr. Nicklas noted that the groundwater study was like a car with no gas, and the stormwater study was a car with no frame, explaining that the stormwater study has not formed as completely in the minds of Committee Members.

Ms. Prain provided the example that the Committee Members had never discussed if the 100-year floodplain was an adequate reference or if it even existed. She suggested that the voters might be willing to approve solutions to flooding problems, but that they would not approve something that is just a study. Mr. Nicklas agreed that continuing the education of the Committee Members was important but that the Committee also needed to further the amount of information available to them.

Mr. Miller explained that to gather the information for the comprehensive water maps, funding was required, and offered at a minimum \$400,000 would be necessary to hire the consultants.

Mr. Nicklas suggested that voters needed a personal investment if a referendum was going to pass, and suggested that to have a personal investment the voters would want to know the scope of work proposed.

Ms. Vary noted that voters would also want to know that existing data would be utilized. She then suggested that the consultants be asked to consider the KREP data and discuss if the quotes could be reduced, or if an intern were available if that could also reduce the cost.

Mr. Thomas stated that the Committee was in a "tail wagging the dog" situation, with hiring an intern to input information that has a shelf life which needs to be researched by an engineer.

Mr. Misurelli asked what the voters would want to see if a referendum is passed. Mr. Nicklas answered that solutions to flooding problems is what voters will want to see and then he stated that the Committee needed to determine what those projects are and how to fund solutions.

Mr. Miller stated that there appeared to be two prospective approaches for the County Board Workshop, 1) explaining that it was too early to recommend seeking funding; or 2) to propose adding \$400,000 (half for a comprehensive map creation and half for the two-foot contouring of the county) to the referendum request.

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Vary made a motion to advise the County Board that it was too early to place this issue on a ballot, which was seconded by Mr. Thomas, and the motion passed.

At this time Mr. Anderson and Mr. Pardridge left the meeting.

Mr. Steimel then observed that the motion effectively separated the ground water and stormwater issues.

Ms. Vary noted that the issue needed to go together and stated that maybe funding an RFP creation by a consultant should be considered.

Mr. Nicklas agreed with Mr. Steimel and moved to reconsider and amend the motion to defer action on the groundwater study to the next general election, by which time the Stormwater Management Planning Committee should be ready to proceed with a more specific plan and recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Maurer.

Mr. Thomas noted that some of the issues around stormwater needed to be debated out, and he stated that Sandwich is not located in the watershed that the KREP study has researched.

Ms. Prain stated that she felt that the objectives that the consultants quoted were pie in the sky and need additional refinement. Mr. Miller disagreed and noted that a motion was on the table.

The motion passed with a majority of members voting in favor.

5. Next Meeting:

Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to meet next on June 26, 2008 at 3:00 pm, in the East Conference Room of the DeKalb County Administration Building in Sycamore, IL.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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