

DRAFT

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES August 30, 2012

The DeKalb County Stormwater Management Planning Committee (SMPC) met on August 30, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administrative Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Committee members Tom Thomas, Pat Vary, John Laskowski, Bill Lorence, Joel Maurer, Paul Miller, Joe Misurelli, Ken Andersen, Roger Steimel, and Donna Prain. Also in attendance were Rebecca Von Drasek, Deanna Doohaluk, Nathan Schwartz, and Anita Zurbrugg.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Mr. Miller noted that Committee members Norm Beeh and Mark Biernacki were absent.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** – *Mr. Lorence moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Prain, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** -- *Mr. Lorence moved to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2012 meeting, seconded by Mr. Andersen, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Maurer and Mr. Laskowski arrived.

4. **Section 319 Grant Application**

Mr. Miller detailed the history of the 319 Grant application. He explained that the Stormwater Management Planning Committee, in partnership with the DeKalb County Community Foundation, reviewed at its meeting of May 30, 2012 the idea and details of seeking funding through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to undertake a watershed study. The watershed under consideration is the headwaters of the East Branch of the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River. Representatives of the engineering firms Hey & Associates and Baxter Woodman explained how Section 319 funds could be utilized to create a watershed plan that focuses both on water quality and water quantity. It was agreed that the engineers should write the grant application and file it with the IEPA prior to the August 1, 2012 deadline.

Mr. Miller further explained that staff had received a communication from a representative of IEPA regarding an alternative funding possibility for the watershed study. The alternative is in the form of funds that remain from a US EPA grant to IEPA from a previous fiscal year. A draft Financial Assistance Agreement based on this opportunity was provided to the Committee. Mr. Miller stated that this option has deadlines that probably cannot be met, including a completion date for the study of September 1, 2013; however, staff and Hey & Associates are in the process of working with IEPA on exploring whether extensions to these deadlines can be granted.

Ms. Doohaluk explained that the funds which were being offered were from Fiscal Year 2011 funds and are supposed to be used before September 1, 2013. She estimated that the proposal from Hey & Associates would take 18-24 months to implement because it includes community programs, field tours, etc. She suggested that the September 1, 2013 deadline was too aggressive and stipulated that an extension would be necessary. She noted that in her experience with IEPA has always granted extensions when requested.

Mr. Miller noted that request for an extension would only be appropriate after the County Board agrees to seek the funding.

Ms. Prain inquired as to how long of an extension would be requested. Ms. Doohaluk responded that extensions are generally two years.

Mr. Miller reported that Winnebago County was funded similarly with “remainder” funds. He also noted that there was not a financial risk if the extension is not granted the County can choose to continue with the application for the 2013 funding. A representative with IEPA has verified that DeKalb County’s application would “remain in the queue” for consideration for Section 319 funding for FY 13.

Ms. Vary supported accepting the 2011 funding and requesting the extension.

Mr. Lorence indicated his belief that the extension would be granted.

Mr. Steimel expressed concern about the project and the resulting Watershed Plan. He explained that the majority of land owners within the watershed for the study are agricultural producers and he felt that the EPA and water quality studies would result in unnecessary regulation. He asserted that recent enforcement of the Clean Water Act was already causing a burden on farmers and that he disagreed with the requirement that material dredged from drainage ditches be removed from the floodplain.

Ms. Prain responded that this Watershed Plan was intended to be a win/win for everyone in the watershed because the methods and techniques were meant to eliminate or reduce erosion and sedimentation.

Mr. Lorence noted that the removal of the material from the floodplain was required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Mr. Miller stated that if the watershed study occurs, the study group would include property owners as important stakeholders in the process. Their needs and concerns would be part of the evaluation and the recommendations that would come out of the watershed study.

Mr. Steimel noted that the creation of best management practices (BMPs) put a magnifying glass on the farmers within this watershed and may make them guinea pigs for regulations. He stated that he was concerned that discussing water quality is far from the intent of the Committee to control water quantity. He explained that the channelized ditches were designed to generate crop production and that any requirements from the Watershed Plan would result in regulations.

Mr. Miller emphasized that Mr. Steimel was a representative for the agricultural community and that the Drainage Districts would also be included in formulating the Watershed Plan. He reiterated that the Watershed Plan was intended to address farmer’s concerns as well as incorporate methods and techniques that will achieve results and minimize disruption to the property owners.

Stormwater Management Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Ms. Doohaluk echoed Mr. Miller that the Watershed Plan would address water quality by reviewing water quantity as a detrimental factor. She also stated that the BMPs put in place would be practices the stakeholders would want.

Ms. Zurbrugg stated the DeKalb County Community Foundation would support agricultural needs and that there might be funding options through the DCCF in the future for farmers if projects were identified within the Watershed Plan.

Mr. Thomas asked for confirmation that the available funds would actually be provided and are not just awarded. Ms. Doohaluk responded that the money was there, and that IEPA needs to use it or lose it.

Ms. Doohaluk reminded the Committee that the creation of the Plan would make them eligible in the future to apply for project funds for future 319 grants.

Mr. Miller asked the Committee members for additional comments. The Committee members indicated their general support for continuing to pursue alternative funding for the Watershed Plan creation, with an understanding that the Plan's creation would involve as many stakeholders as possible and that the funding deadlines would need to be extended before the process moves forward.

Mr. Andersen motioned for the Committee to send the agreement to the County Board to accept the IEPA grant match, seconded by Ms. Vary, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Next Meeting:

The Committee decided to wait to schedule a next meeting until after the vote by the County Board on September 19, 2012 and for the response from the IEPA in October, 2012 regarding the extension of the timelines.

The Committee briefly discussed the creation of a subcommittee or separate committee charged with creating the Watershed Plan and reporting back to the Stormwater Management Committee.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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

RGV:rgv

P:\Grading\CountywideOrd\Minutes\2012\Aug30.wpd