

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
June 18, 2012

The DeKalb County Stormwater Management Planning Committee (SMPC) met on June 18, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Legislative Building, “Gatheroium,” in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Committee members Ken Andersen, John Laskowski, Joel Maurer, Paul Miller, Roger Steimel, Pat Vary, and Donna Prain. Also in attendance were Marcellus Anderson, Richard Biddle (Union Drainage District 3), Brian Gregory (City of Sycamore), Jeff Hartmann (Union Drainage District 3), Dean Johnson (DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District), Diana Kamysz (Village of Maple Park), Walt Magdziarz (Town of Cortland), Karen Ann Miller (Kane County), Jim Sparber (Baxter Woodman), Nathan Swartz (DeKalb County Engineer), Jeff Wickingham (Hey & Ass.), Michael Yagen (Union Drainage District 3) and Anita Zurbrugg (DeKalb County Community Foundation).

1. **Roll Call** -- *Mr. Miller noted that Committee members Norm Beeh, Mark Biernacki, Bill Lorence, Joe Misurelli, and Tom Thomas were absent. John Laskowski arrived late.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** – *Mr. Andersen moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Vary, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** -- *Mr. Andersen moved to approve the minutes of the May 31, 2012 meeting, seconded by Mr. Maurer, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Introductions** – Committee Chairman Paul Miller noted that several new faces were in attendance and asked that everyone introduce themselves and identify who they represented.
5. **Watershed Study**

Mr. Miller informed the attendees that the Stormwater Management Planning Committee (SMPC), in cooperation with the DeKalb Community Foundation (DCCF), was proposing to conduct a watershed study of the Union/Virgil Ditch Watersheds. Such a study would not only identify existing conditions and problems regarding flooding and water quality within the watersheds, but might identify desirable projects and regulations to address identified issues. He explained that in order to fund the study, the County was considering making an application for Section 319 funds from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. He elaborated upon the steps taken to get that process started, explaining that the County and DCCF would be working with the engineering firm of Hey & Associates, in partnership with Baxter Woodman, on putting together a grant application. Mr. Miller stated that the SMPC, along with representatives of the DCCF and several other local stakeholder organizations, had been invited to the meeting to decide on the details and scope of the proposed watershed study application. He added that the study, if developed, would potentially affect stormwater management and water quality for units of government, businesses, private property owners, and other interests within the watersheds.

Ms. Zurbrugg, representing DCCF, stated that Hey & Associates would be creating the application and submitting it to the EPA, with the understanding that if it is approved and

funding is provided, that those firms would be chosen by the County and DCCF to conduct the study. She noted that the process is similar to that used by Winnebago County when it applied for 319 funds. She also added that DCCF had approximately \$25,000 to \$35,000 to contribute towards this process, which they believe will encourage the EPA in seeing that this community is really invested in drafting a workable plan that will be implemented, rather than one that would languish on a shelf somewhere.

Mr. Miller explained why the various local stakeholders were invited to the meeting. He said that if the a watershed plan was funded and created, it would contain within it recommended projects, which could mean the potential expenditure of public funds, and recommended regulations for new uses and changes. He pointed out that these changes would impact the local units of government, such as the local drainage districts, the Town of Cortland, the Village of Maple Park, City of Sycamore, and the County. He explained that by bringing everyone into the process early on, to provide their input, concerns, and ideas, it is hoped that the watershed plan that gets developed will be something that everyone would endorse and implement.

Mr. Wickingham informed the Committee that Deanna Doohaluk, who is to be the project manager preparing the 319 grant application, had been injured over the weekend and was unable to attend the meeting. He stated that he was attending the meeting in her stead, and that he was the project principal in charge of overseeing the grant application. Mr. Wickingham then gave a presentation giving a brief overview of the 319 grant application program, some examples of past applications that have been prepared, and indicated some of the information that would be needed from the Committee, such as timing, scope, the review process, what kinds of local matching would be available, and time commitments. He also noted that having a watershed plan in place helps with getting more funds down the line for actual projects.

Ms. Vary observed that Section 319 seems to be geared towards pollution problems, where the County's main concern was flooding. She also wondered what would be the pollution problems in the proposed study area that could be used for the grant application. Mr. Wickingham acknowledged that the waterways in question had not been identified as being poor quality. He noted, however, that because the proposed watersheds are part of the larger Kishwaukee River watershed, emphasis should be placed on that connection and on how efforts to improve those sub-watersheds will positively affect the greater Kishwaukee watershed. Mr. Wickingham explained that although the 319 grant doesn't directly related to flooding issues, those issues can still be included into the grant under the rubric of "hydrologic modification". He noted that as long as the core of the plan focuses on water quality issues, there is nothing preventing the inclusion of measures to address flooding and drainage issues into a section of that plan.

Mr. Miller added his concern that while the 319 grant overtly talks about water quality, the County and DCCF's principal concern is on drainage and flooding issues and any benefits towards water quality would be strictly secondary to that. He asked whether the Committee should be looking into this process, and whether this grant would allow them to achieve these goals. Mr. Wickingham stated that the technology of stormwater management is moving towards combining these two issues, however, the language of the 319 grant dates back to when the federal government saw these two issues as separate. He expressed his belief that this has

turned off many potential grant applicants, and added that there is no reason both issues could not be addressed in the application.

Mr. Andersen echoed Mr. Miller's concerns, adding that the agricultural community was also concerned with opening the door to more EPA regulation. Mr. Steimel opined that the water quality of the proposed watersheds, which are primarily agricultural, is quite good, and that he feels that introducing further regulation by the EPA would not be a positive thing. He also indicated that he felt that the Committee's resources would instead be best spent focusing on flooding issues in the urban problem areas, like Evergreen Village and the Sycamore Park. Ms. Vary noted that if the water quality was as good as the agricultural community feels it is, then there should be no issues with meeting the EPA standards. Ms. Prain pointed out that flooding is often seen as being confined to a very localized area, but that it is in fact a much wider regional issue. She stated that while the problem maybe visible at Sycamore Park, the water does not originate there, and that the solutions to those flooding problems will be found in the larger region, such as the watersheds to be studied. She added that the EPA was not to be feared, but that it would be there to assist the Committee in identifying what the problems and what the solutions should be.

Mr. Miller reiterated his concerns that water quality should just be a component in addressing stormwater management, with the final product being a plan that suggests projects and regulations aimed at addressing flooding issues that might be adopted by the drainage districts, the cities or the County. These regulations could be related to water quality, but he argued that the primary focus should be on mitigating flooding problems. He asked whether such a grant application would get much of a look at by EPA, if that agency focuses on water quality. Mr. Wickingham responded that there really are no funds out there for addressing flooding issues alone. However, flooding and water quality issues overlap in many ways, and while the 319 grant is focused on water quality, he said that many projects that address water quality are also beneficial to waterway and flooding issues. He pointed out that if the Committee wants a pure engineering plan that strictly addresses flooding issues, his firm can produce that, but there are no funds out there to pay for such a plan. However, he added that there was nothing stopping them from including many of the Committee's flooding concerns into the grant application, and he believed that the grant could be written to demonstrate how the multiple concerns interrelate to each other.

Ms. Zurbrugg suggested that the ultimate goal was to create a county-wide plan, and that what was being proposed was just a starting point, a learning experience. The things learned in this process could then be transferred to the rest of the County. She also pointed out that Baxter-Woodman and Hays & Associates would not have entered into the process if they did not think they had a good chance of getting the grant, given that they are only paid if the County receives the grant. She then asked Mr. Wickingham to elaborate on their experience working on the Madigan Creek Watershed application.

Mr. Wickingham elaborated on the experience of the Madigan Creek Watershed grant and also provided some comparisons and contrasts to how they would handle the Committee's application.

He suggested that the Committee should consider expanding the project area to include the Sycamore drainage sub-district. The addition of this sub-watershed would make for a stronger application. Mr. Miller voiced his concern that the amount of local funding was very limited and inquired whether they could afford to expand the project area. Mr. Wickingham responded that he would expect that adding a third watershed should not add more than 10% to the overall cost. Also, bringing in the Sycamore area would add an urban element to the study, which would also make for a more attractive application. He explained that the plan is very scalable and can be made to accommodate a variety of funding levels. He stated that part of what the engineering firms would be doing over the next five (5) weeks would be to determine just how much funding is to be expended, how that meets with the goals and objectives, and composing a scope and grant application with which everyone is comfortable.

Ms. Vary inquired as to the number of grants that the firms had received and successfully completed in this area, and what were the chances of the grant in question being awarded. Ms. Zurbrugg responded that most of the applications received by the IEPA do not even have a cash match, and that the fact that this application will have dollars already on the table makes it far more attractive to the IEPA. She also stated that Deanna Doohaluk had suggested this watershed plan would cost possibly \$70,000 to \$100,000, and that between the cash from DCCF and the "in-kind" contributions from the County and others, the local match should be doable. Mr. Wickingham agreed with Ms. Zurbrugg, and stated that the project would be a very good candidate. He elaborated that the IEPA has approximately between \$3 - \$5 million every year to hand out. He warned that it would be impossible to predict the County's chances, because they have no way of knowing what other projects might appear at the same time, and all of the projects are graded against each other.

Mr. Maurer stated that he believed adding the Sycamore sub-watershed would be a good idea. Mr. Laskowski agreed and pointed out that Ms. Doohaluk had mentioned at the last meeting that there was some modeling data that might be used for both flood control and water quality. Mr. Magdziarz also agreed that the Sycamore watershed should be added. He also commented that while he understood what the consultants were saying about needing to make peace with the requirements of the 319 grant, he also understood the concerns expressed by members of the agricultural community. He noted that the Committee should pursue the 319 grant, but that it should do so with its eyes wide open.

Mr. Miller inquired as to the extent the Committee would be obligating itself if it did receive the grant. Mr. Wickingham responded that the plan is whatever the Committee makes it to be. He noted that the IEPA does not generally directly involve itself in the process. He added that what the IEPA is looking for is: quality applications; motivated applicants who are interested in undertaking a genuine planning process; and a successful outcome. Mr. Wickingham noted that the plan will be whatever the Committee makes it to be, and that the effort will pay dividends towards improving drainage and flooding. He suggested that the way to present the watershed plan is its overall goal is to have a healthy watershed. One of the ways to do that would be to not have flooding in these urban areas in that watershed.

Mr. Biddle, Mr. Yagen, and Mr. Hartmann all offered that their main concern was with flooding issues. They believed that the water quality of the watersheds is good.

Mr. Miller noted that the plan will have no regulatory force until, and unless, the governing bodies adopt the recommended changes, whether it be new regulations or actual projects. Mr. Wickingham affirmed this.

Mr. Gregory inquired whether the funding provided by the grant is tied to the adoption of every recommendation in that grant. Mr. Wickingham responded that he had never seen that happen. He said that the plans are not written so as to lock the stakeholders into such a situation.

Mr. Miller observed that the 319 grant was not a perfect match for what the Committee wanted, but that it would be worth while to pursue. He then asked the consultants just what information they would need to compile the grant application. Mr. Wickingham responded that they would need to determine how they are to get feedback, and the process by which they can pass that information on. The consultants would need to determine the deadlines for the process, establish who needs to review what is produced, how soon feedback must be received, set a project timeline, identify who would commit to being a part of the process, estimate how much “in-kind” value to assign to the time that is put into the project, and develop information on what issues or problem areas exist.

Mr. Miller noted that the SMPC represents the County and all of the municipalities within it, and would be a good resource for them to gather and organize the information they may need. Ms. Zurbrugg added that DCCF has a steering committee that is also available. She asked that the consultants provide a list of questions they need answered, and the SMPC and DCCF can pool their resources to respond to those questions. Mr. Miller directed the consultants to communicate through him and Ms. Zurbrugg, who would in turn make sure everyone is contacted.

Ms. Zurbrugg commented that the DCCF wants true engagement by the stakeholders and does not want a plan that’s not going to result in action. She also pointed out that although some of the local stakeholders were nervous about the idea of new regulation, they need to understand that any regulation would be local regulations, created and determined by the local stakeholders.

Mr. Andersen commented that adding the Sycamore watershed is a good idea. He also said that he agreed with proceeding with the grant application, although he still had some concerns.

Mr. Steimel said that he too still had concerns, but was not against proceeding with the grant application. He added, however, that he did not believe those he represented would be in favor of it.

Mr. Andersen inquired whether, if the grant is approved, would be any local ordinances required to be implemented to make the plan work. Mr. Wickingham replied that adoption of ordinances and regulations was just one technique available to use, and detailed a few other possibilities. Ms. Prain stated that the plan will produce recommendations that will then go before the local governments for review and possible adoption.

Ms. Vary noted that the 319 grant program is for water quality, but that if properly put together, it is a very doable option that can also help address local flooding concerns. She added that it was the only real option available at this time.

Dean Johnson pointed out that flooding may never be fully controlled, but that it may be possible to control the areas that are most impacted by flooding.

Mr. Wickingham noted that he would contact Mr. Miller and Ms. Zurbrugg with questions from the engineering consultants in the next few days.

***Ms. Vary motioned for the Committee to accept the proposal from Hey & Associates/ Baxter Woodman in drafting an application for 319 funding (including the addition of the Sycamore Sub-drainage district), seconded by Ms. Prain, and the motion carried unanimously.***

**6. Next Meeting:**

The Committee decided that the date of the next meeting would be deferred until after the consultants had prepared and forwarded a copy of the proposed grant application for the Committee for its review. The Committee members will then be contacted via email to arrange for a meeting date to review the grant proposal.

Mr. Biddle inquired as to whether a dollar amount had been determined for the grant. Mr. Miller responded that the initial talks were indicating an amount in the range of \$70,000 - \$100,000. He explained that the DCCF was offering to contribute \$25,000 - \$30,000, which would be a significant portion of the local match. He added that, at this time, no other local funds were being committed, but that the Committee was planning to contribute staff and committee member time as an "in-kind" contribution.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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