

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Union / Virgil Ditches & East Branch of the Kishwaukee River Watershed Steering Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

## **UNION /VIRGIL DITCHES & EAST BRANCH OF THE KISHWAUKEE RIVER WATERSHED STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

November 10, 2015

The Union/Virgil Ditches & East Branch of the Kishwaukee River Watershed Steering Committee (WSC) met on November 10, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the Conference Room East of the DeKalb County Administration Building, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Committee members Dean Johnson, Karen Miller, Anita Zurbrugg, Donna Prain, and Paul Miller. Also in attendance DeKalb County staff Rebecca Von Drasek.

**1. Roll Call** – *Jeremy Lin, Nathan Schwartz, Roger Steimel, and Brian Gregory were noted absent.*

**2. Approval of Agenda** – *Ms. Zurbrugg asked to amend the agenda to include discussion of creating a Watershed Coordinator position.*

*Ms. Miller moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Ms. Prain, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**3. Approval of Minutes** – *Ms. Zurbrugg moved to approve the minutes from October 14, 2015, seconded by Ms. Prain, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**4. South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan Implementation** -- At its meeting of September 9 and October 14, 2014 the Committee reviewed the Prioritized Action Plans in Chapter Five of the East Branch of the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan. The Committee decided among the listed priority items to focus implementation efforts on three areas; bridge signage to identify waterways and the watershed boundaries, identification of site-specific projects (i.e. clearing snags, bank stabilization, etc.) following surveys of waterways in the watershed, and the application of best management practices (BMPs) to the construction of new parking lots associated with the expansion of the DeKalb County jail.

Mr. Miller reported to the Committee that staff has worked with the County Administrator, the County Engineer, and the consultant engineer for the parking lots on the County's Sycamore Campus. It has been agreed that an infiltration basin could be incorporated into the detention area associated with the parking lot currently under construction on the north side of State Rte. 64, between the Library and the gas station. The estimated cost of this BMP is \$18,000. Mr. Miller identified the need to create a grant application to the DeKalb County Community Foundation (DCCF) for the cost of construction of the infiltration basin. Ms. Zurbrugg offered to assist Mr. Miller by pulling together specific questions which DCCF would need answered before considering the grant.

Mr. Miller stated that the grant application could include the cost of signage explaining the infiltration basins to the public.

The Committee briefly discussed the inclusion of best management practices in future County construction projects. Mr. Miller emphasized the receptive nature of the decision-makers toward incorporating BMPs into the jail expansion project.

Ms Prain presented the Committee with three draft versions of the watershed signage. The Committee members agreed that signage would be a good opportunity to raise awareness about the watershed. After a short debate the Committee selected a nature scene background for the signage. Staff agreed to seek confirmation that the cost would be similar for the signage design.

The Committee discussed prospective locations for the watershed signs. It was agreed that five to eight locations would be selected for the initial installation, and called on Mr. Schwartz to price the new signage as well as determine what if any permissions were necessary to install.

The Committee held a brief conversation about the implementation of the additional plan objectives. Mr. Miller noted that the complexity of each item and suggested that the committee discuss each objectives individually.

**5. Selection of Next Watershed Plan Area** – The Committee briefly debated the pros and cons of choosing either the watersheds to the northwest (Kishwaukee River) or southwest (South Branch) of the East Branch Watershed Plan.

Mr. Johnson provided the Committee with a Watershed Map from the USDA.

Mr. Miller emphasized that the watershed to the southwest would give the project higher visibility and increase the likelihood of achieving the cost-benefit ratio necessary for receiving IEPA support.

Ms. Zurbrugg suggested that the watershed to the northwest had more advocates interested in pursuing watershed-wide improvements.

Ms. Miller noted that Kane County had greater success with watershed studies where there was greater buy-in and larger stakeholder involvement.

Mr. Miller recommended that the Committee recommended action to the Stormwater Management Committee.

*Mr. Miller made a motion to recommend the South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed as the area for the next watershed plan once funding is secured, seconded by Ms. Prain, and the motion carried unanimously.*

6. **Watershed Coordinator** – Ms. Zurbrugg explained that she felt it was a good idea to create a position of “Watershed Coordinator” to oversee implementation of the East Branch of the Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan. She suggested that Mr. Johnson of the Soil Water Conservation District would be a good choice to fill the roll. Ms. Zurbrugg also suggested that there may be funding for such a position through the DeKalb County Community Foundation.

Mr. Miller agreed that a staff person would be the best solution to provide the necessary energy to implement the Plan.

Mr. Johnson offered to put together a proposal for consideration of the Watershed Coordinator’s role and responsibilities.

7. **Next Meeting** -- The Steering Committee will next meet on Tuesday December 9, 2015 at 3:00 pm in the Conference Room East.

8. **Adjournment** -- *Mr. Miller motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Miller, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Dean Johnson  
Chairman, DeKalb County Union Ditch/Virgil Ditch Watershed Steering Committee

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