

DRAFT
Policy Advisory Group
Minutes of January 28, 2002

Members present: Chair Lee Gustafson (Minnetonka), Bill Joynes (Golden Valley), Marcia Glick (Robbinsdale), Jeannine Clancy (Golden Valley), Sally Velick (St. Louis Park), Dan Donahue (New Hope), Jodi Polzin (Minneapolis), Dwight Johnson (Plymouth), and Commission staff Charlie LeFevere and Len Kremer

Mr. Gustafson updated the group on the current status of the planning process and the various funding proposals previously made by the Policy Advisory Group. Those funding proposals were reviewed by the Commission at their November 13, 2001 workshop and recommended for approval by the Commission.

Mr. Gustafson indicated that based on Commission discussions and PAG discussions, maintenance and repair projects along the Main Stem needed to protect the capacity of the stream and prevent damage to structures would most likely be fully funded by the Commission and those on other parts of the trunk system would likely be partially funded. This issue will be discussed further by the Commission.

Mr. Gustafson pointed out that the Commission recommended funding for a half-time education coordinator that would be hired on a consulting basis. That position would be responsible for implementing the education plan proposed by the Citizens Advisory Group and for the education programs proposed as part of the water quality projects.

Mr. Donahue asked if there was a reserve for situations where the Commission would need funds that could not wait to be raised through the assessment process. It was pointed out that the construction account has a large enough balance that funds could be borrowed and then paid back through the assessment process. Mr. Johnson recommended that the Commission adopt a specific 5-year Capital Improvements Plan and consider the Capital Improvements table to be a budget-planning document. He indicated that more information should be considered to develop the 5-year Capital Improvements Plan such as the recommendations recently prepared by the City for Parkers Lake.

Mr. Gustafson indicated that the Commission needs feedback from the cities on the long-range plan as soon as possible so that a specific 5-year plan could be developed.

Mr. Gustafson pointed out that after review of many funding options, it was decided by the Commission to use the existing options in the Joint Powers Agreement and that the Commission would fund 80% of the project cost and the city where the project is located would pay 20%. Mr. LeFevere indicated that the funding options in the JPA provided the Commission with lots of flexibility to raise funds for projects. He also indicated that the Capital Improvements Program does not have to include all the details, but does need to have enough information to consider the costs.

Mr. Johnson indicated that 25 years of assessments at this level would significantly restrict Plymouth's ability to complete needed projects in three other city watersheds. It was pointed out that the Commission had submitted a request for funds from the Capital Bonding Bill in the amount of \$8.5 million at the suggestion of watershed legislators. It was also indicated that the Commission worked with the city in submitting a request of about \$2.5 million from the CWP program. Copies of those applications were included in the information distributed to the PAG. Mr. Gustafson said that the Commission will continue to work to identify funding assistance to reduce the impact on the cities.

Mr. Joynes indicated that the timing of the possible tripling of the assessments by the Commission is difficult because of the State's budget crisis. All of the cities expect to lose the majority of the funding assistance they expected from the State, which will require significant cutbacks.

Jodi Polzin indicated that Minneapolis would need time to implement a stormwater utility, which would be the likely funding mechanism.

Mr. Joynes suggested that a funding program that starts with lower assessments in the first few years and then reaches a certain level may be easier to accommodate in light of current budget problems.

Mr. Gustafson indicated that he would draft a memo to the PAG members after the next Steering Committee meeting and outline when comments are needed and who should receive them. In that memo, he will indicate if another meeting of the PAG is needed before a draft plan is prepared.