

Policy Advisory Group

Minutes of June 11, 2001

Members present: Chair Lee Gustafson, Jodi Polzin, Dan Donahue, Ginny Black, Bill Joynes, Bill Deblon for Dennis Kraft, Charlie LeFevere, and Len Kremer

The meeting was convened by Chair Gustafson at 8:38 a.m. at Minnetonka City Hall.

The chairman asked if there were questions regarding the ongoing recommendations list and noted that similar summaries would be prepared for the TAG and CAG. It was noted that in the first bullet on the second page, it should state that funding of work needed to restore or limit structural damage will be based on an assessment of benefits. Ginny Black asked where water quality improvements will fit in the list. It was recommended that another category be added under number 1 which would be "C. Water Quality Improvements" and a similar category under number 2. Water Bodies. It was also noted that some additional definitions of the categories should be added to the Recommendations List.

A copy of 103D.631 Maintenance of Projects was distributed to PAG members for background information regarding watershed district maintenance programs.

The chairman introduced the issue regarding the homes in Golden Valley that are still in the floodplain and were previously proposed to be floodproofed as part of the Corps' flood control project. The TAG has recommended that the Commission fund the floodproofing of these homes. He asked Mr. Kremer if there were other homes in the watershed that were in the floodplain and not considered by the Corps for floodproofing as part of their project. Mr. Kremer indicated that there were at least six, three upstream of Golden Valley Road and three along the Main Stem upstream of Highway 100. There were six homes that were floodproofed upstream of Highway 100 as part of the flood control project constructed by the Commission before the Corps' project started construction. He also indicated that there are several around stormwater ponds where the Commission had decided prior to the Corps' project that the municipalities would be the responsible party. Mr. Gustafson asked Mr. Kremer to provide the PAG with background on the homes downstream of Highway 100. Mr. Kremer distributed maps showing the homes and a table listing the homes and an estimate of floodproofing costs. Mr. Kremer indicated that the project that was selected was the result of an extensive public participation for the area downstream of Highway 100. It included flood storage in Bassett Creek Park, larger structures at Regent and Noble, removal of Minnaqua Avenue, and floodproofing of about 20 homes. This project was selected instead of a channel enlargement project or a much larger flood control reservoir in Bassett Creek park. When the Corps submitted the plan to their headquarters office for review, it was decided that much of the benefits would be achieved with the new crossings, the removal of Minnaqua Avenue and the storage upstream in Bassett Creek Park, and that insufficient benefits were left to justify all the floodproofing costs. The Corps then eliminated floodproofing of the homes downstream of Highway 100 from the plan. Mr. Kremer indicated that homeowners still in the floodplain occasionally have flood problems and are required to buy flood insurance. They recently asked the City of Golden Valley to resolve the flood problem. After discussion, the PAG indicated that they concurred with the recommendation of the TAG and that Commission involvement be limited to homes along the conveyance system that is the responsibility of the Commission. It was agreed that language would be added to include a third bullet under 1A. that would be generic and apply to the area along the conveyance system where the Commission has assumed responsibility across the watershed.

Chairman Gustafson introduced the topic of the Water Quality Improvement Projects and the need for the PAG to discuss the prioritization and Commission involvement in the projects. He suggested that the group start this issue by reviewing the programs proposed for Medicine Lake and indicated that it is obvious that because of the regional significance of Medicine Lake that the Commission will be involved.

Ginny Black indicated that Plymouth has an active group that has been appointed by the City to study the Medicine Lake issue. She indicated that they had, for example, decided against herbicide treatment of aquatic vegetation in the lake and in lake alum treatment at least until all other measures had been implemented, particularly watershed education. She passed out an educational piece prepared for the citizens of the Parkers Lake watershed intended to make them aware of the watershed they are in and what they can do to improve water quality. The following issues were raised by PAG members relative to lake water quality improvement projects:

- What happens if the city and citizens have different goals and ideas on how to achieve those goals?
- What is the role of the city and the Commission in the decision process?
- How will the Commission react to projects completed by cities on their own?
- Who pays for annual operating costs of treatment facilities?
- What if the city wants higher water quality? Who pays?
- Will the Commission take the lead or wait for the city to petition for the project?
- Who is responsible for land acquisition?

It was suggested that the list of projects for lakes and the list of lakes be evaluated based on their public benefit and that those with the highest benefit be funded first. Jodi Polzin indicated that there needs some provision to take projects out of order because situations will occur where there is an economic benefit to tie the water quality improvement project to some other multi-purpose project. Charlie LeFevere suggested that an assessment of benefits/costs would permit the Commission to fund some percentage of total project cost. Chairman Gustafson indicated that he would work with staff to outline some benefit examples for the July meeting.

Chairman Gustafson suggested that the Commission needs to take initiative to complete these projects where there is city support because of regional and state agency expectations. An appropriate role for the Commission would be the planning and coordination with the city implementing. The Commission could implement the public education component because in several cases, multiple cities are involved. A written criteria needs to be prepared which outlines where the Commission will take the lead and where cities need to petition the Commission. It was agreed that the involvement of the Commission and the cities would be discussed further at the July 16 meeting and that funding and cost sharing issue would also be discussed at that meeting.