Item 4A.
BCWMC 8-21-25

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

DRAFT Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 17, 2025
8:30 a.m.
7800 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley MN

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

On July 17, 2025 at 8:32 a.m. Chair Cesnik called the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (Commission) to order.

Commissioners, city staff, and others present

City	Commissioner	Alternate Commissioner	Technical Advisory Committee Members (City Staff)
Crystal	*Absent*	Terry Schultz	*Absent*
Golden Valley	Paula Pentel	Wendy Weirich	Drew Chirpich
Medicine Lake	*Absent*	Shaun Kennedy	*Absent*
Minneapolis	Jodi Polzin	*Vacant*	Liz Stout
Minnetonka	*Vacant*	*Vacant*	*Absent*
New Hope	*Absent*	*Absent*	Nick Macklem
Plymouth	Catherine Cesnik	*Absent*	Talori Duckworth
Robbinsdale	*Absent*	*Vacant*	Jenna Wolf
St. Louis Park	*Absent*	David Johnston	Erick Francis
Administrator	Laura Jester, Keystone Waters, LLC		
Engineers	Stephanie Johnson, Meg Rattei, Jessica Olson, Gabby Campagnola - Barr Engineering Co.		
Recording Secretary	*Vacant Position*		
Legal Counsel	Dave Anderson, Kennedy & Graven		
Guests/Public	Greg Koch, Winston Wildebush, Stu Grubb – Graffiti Mill LLC		

2. PUBLIC FORUM ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Greg Koch with Graffiti Mill reported that his consultants and team members are finalizing a variance request for the Commission's consideration at the August meeting. He noted a letter of support for the Mill's redevelopment project is expected from the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development department. Administrator Jester noted that a potential variance request is likely to come ahead of the complete redevelopment plans in a two-step review process. She noted that Commission Attorney Anderson will be involved in helping the Commission understand their authorities and

options. Commission Engineer Johnson reported that Commission Engineers have reviewed a draft of the variance request documents and submitted comments back to Graffiti Mill. She noted that Commission Engineers also commented on a DNR permit request regarding pumping and discharge to the creek.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Polzin seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 6-0. The cities of Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Item 4A was removed from the consent agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve the revised consent agenda. Commissioner Polzin seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 6-0. The cities of Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda.

- Acceptance of July Financial Report
- Approval of Payment of Invoices
  - Keystone Waters, LLC – June 2025 Administration
  - Keystone Waters, LLC – June 2025 Administrative Expenses
  - Barr Engineering – June 2025 Engineering Services
  - Triple D Espresso – July Meeting Catering
  - City of Plymouth – June 2025 Accounting Services
  - Kennedy & Graven – Legal Services
  - Stantec – WOMP Services
  - Bolton and Menk – Parkers Lake Chloride Reduction Project
  - S Kennedy – Reimbursement for MN Watersheds Summer Tour
- Approval to Set September 18th Public Hearing
- Approval of Commissioner Attendance at Annual Salt Symposium

Item 4A: Approval of Minutes – June 18, 2025 Commission Meeting

Commissioner Pentel requested that item 4D in the June minutes be amended to include her recommendation to consider increasing the insurance deductible as a way to decrease the insurance premium for next year.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve the June 18, 2025 meeting minutes with the revision. Alternate Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 6-0. The cities of Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

5. BUSINESS

A. Consider Approval of 50% Design Plans for Main Stem Bassett Creek Restoration Project and Discuss Project Budget (2024-CRM)

Commission Engineer Johnson introduced Commission Engineer Olson noting she is the project manager and lead project designer for this project. Engineer Olson presented the draft 50% project designs, first noting the project location along Bassett Creek in Golden Valley from Regent Ave to Golden Valley Rd. She reviewed the approved project budget and funding sources and provided project background noting the feasibility study was completed in June 2023, the agreement with the City of Golden Valley for project implementation was approved in December 2024, and the scope/budget for engineering services (including designs) was approved in March 2025.

Engineer Olson reviewed differences between project concepts included within the feasibility study and the 50% designs including removal of some J-hooks to improve navigability, refinement of access points, an increase in the number of eroding sites since the feasibility study was completed, and a requested expansion of the vegetation management and restoration areas. She reported that estimated construction costs for the 50% design are about $1M higher than was estimated within the feasibility study due to the age of the earlier estimates (more than 2 years old), the total restoration length going from 7,370 linear feet to 8,585 linear feet, and the expansion of the vegetation restoration area. Engineer Olson noted that total phosphorus pollution reduction estimates were

originally 82.4 lbs/year and now are estimated at 86.1 lbs/year.

Engineer Olson noted that permitting for the project continues along with landowner outreach to get approvals for work proposed to occur in backyards and access to the stream in some locations. She noted that the recommended project schedule has shifted for a number of reasons including permitting timelines and the likeliness of a better bidding environment in the winter months.

Commission Attorney Anderson reminded commissioners that the agreement with Golden Valley indicates that when 90% plans are presented, they will be accompanied by a comprehensive update on landowner participation. Golden Valley staff noted that landowner outreach continues and that it's an iterative process because landowners often want to review final plans before granting access or permission to work on their property. Drew Chirpich, Golden Valley staff, also noted the city is working on refining some internal processes.

Administrator Jester reported that a Conservation Partners Legacy Grant from the DNR might be possible for the expanded vegetated restoration work.

Commission Engineer Olson reviewed the recommendations including approval of the 50% plans and direction to work toward 90% plans along with direction to Commission Engineers to bring back options for reducing construction costs or revising project budget such as: re-prioritizing eroding sites to consider eliminating low priority sites; gathering information on areas where expanded vegetation management has been requested by the city; and gathering information on grant opportunities.

Discussion amongst commissioners included an acknowledgement that it is a good project but there are significant concerns about the new cost estimate – a new cost benefit analysis is needed along with clarity and justification for increased budget. It was noted that the expanded vegetation management work adds approximately $500,000 to the construction estimate. It was noted that additional information and a reprioritization of eroding sites is needed before the 90% plans come to the Commission. It was also noted that engineers should clearly delineate expenses related to required buffers and expanded vegetation management. There was discussion about how to discuss uncertainty with landowners. TAC member Chirpich noted they could start a dialogue with landowners and explain the situation. He advocated for approval of the 50% designs so the project could continue to move forward while ideas for cost savings were being developed.

MOTION: Commissioner Pentel moved to approve 50% designs for the Bassett Creek Restoration Project Regent Ave. to Golden Valley Rd. and to direct the Commission Engineer to reprioritize the eroding sites, provide cost estimates for each priority level, provide cost estimates on vegetation management, and assist with landowner outreach, as needed. Alternate Commissioner Schultz seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 6-0. The cities of Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

[Chair Cesnik called a 5-minute break.]

B. Consider Plan Steering Committee Recommendation to Submit Draft Watershed Plan for 60-day Review

Plan Steering Committee Chair Kennedy opened the presentation on the draft watershed planning, noting the long plan development process that included 26 Plan Steering Committee meetings, 6 Commission workshops, and 3 Plan TAC meetings. He noted the committee's recommendation to begin the formal review phase of the plan update process. He reviewed the committee's recommended revised mission statement and noted that a reversal of the phrases within the statement might be warranted. There was consensus that the Commission's revised mission statement should read: Stewardship of the Ȟaȟá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek Watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce flood risk.

Administrator Jester continued with the presentation including a list of major sections in the plan and she described the various appendices. She noted that the Commission has reviewed and discussed all of the important content of the plan at prior workshops. She briefly reviewed the various tools for implementation and noted that education and engagement is a tool that is useful across all issues.

Committee Chair Kennedy reviewed the trajectory of the operating budget and CIP budget noting that while there's

an increase expected, it is not a significant departure from current spending trend lines. Administrator Jester went on to review significant changes between the current watershed plan and the draft plan and she reviewed the steps and timeline for the review and adoption process.

MOTION: Alternate Commissioner Kennedy moved to approve submitting the plan for official 60-day review. Commissioner Polzin seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 6-0. The cities of Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

C. Receive Presentation on 2024 Water Quality Monitoring Results

- **i. Cavanaugh Lake**
- **ii. Parkers Lake**
- **iii. Westwood Lake**
- **iv. Medicine Lake**

Commission Engineer Johnson introduced Meg Rattei, senior biologist with Barr Engineering with a long history of water monitoring in the watershed. Ms. Rattei presented the results of 2024 monitoring. She reported that Cavanaugh Lake (also known as Sunset Pond) met state/BCWMC water quality standards for chloride but did not meet chlorophyll-a standards and had lower numbers of phytoplankton compared to previous years. She noted that the lake has a healthy plant community and that curly-leaf pondweed (first reported in 2019) is not yet a problem but should be closely watched.

Ms. Rattei went on to present results for Westwood Lake noting that it also met chloride standards, nutrient standards, and water clarity standards. She noted the phytoplankton numbers were in line with previous years and that while the plant community is healthy, curly-leaf pondweed was problematic in 2024 and bearded stonewort abundance significantly increased in frequency. She reported that the MnDNR considers bearded stonewort to be a protected species and advocates against controlling its growth. Ms. Rattei recommended management of curly-leaf pondweed.

Ms. Rattei reported that Parkers Lake met chloride standards in 2024 and showed signs of increasing nutrients (although not significant). She noted that water quality and phytoplankton/zooplankton numbers have been relatively stable over the years. She noted the lake has a good plant community despite having both curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil. She recommended reducing chloride pollution to the lake.

Ms. Rattei completed the 2024 reports with Medicine Lake noting it met chloride standards but continues to have elevated levels of nutrients. She reported that zebra mussels have had a big impact over the last 10 years including reducing chlorophyll-a concentration and improving water clarity. However, she noted that zebra mussels primarily eat beneficial green algae and don't eat blue-green algae. This harms the entire food web including zooplankton and the fish community, and results in more frequent blue-green algae blooms. She reported that curly-leaf pondweed remains an issue in the lake and is treated with herbicides, and she reported that starry stonewort has increased in frequency. Ms. Rattei reported that despite the invasive species, the overall plant community is considered good. Her recommendations included implementing a whole-lake alum treatment and results of the street sweeping prioritization study. She also advocated for an adaptive management approach to invasive species management. There was some discussion about how an alum treatment might improve water clarity even more and result in a significant increase in starry stonewort.

D. Appoint Delegates to MN Watersheds Annual Meeting on Resolutions

Administrator Jester reminded commissioners that MN Watersheds will meet virtually on August 25th at 10:00 to consider and act upon proposed Legislative Platform updates and proposed Resolutions, including the resolution from BCWMC. She noted the Commission should appoint two delegates and one alternate to attend the meeting and represent the BCWMC. She reported that she will also attend the meeting to speak about the BCWMC resolution and answer questions.

MOTION: Chair Cesnik moved to appoint Alternate Commissioner Kennedy and Commissioner Hauer as delegates and Commissioner Pentel as an alternate. Commissioner Polzin seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion carried 6-0. The cities of Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale were absent from the vote.

E. Receive Report on MN Watersheds Summer Tour

Administrator Jester and Alternate Commissioner Kennedy gave accounts of the MN Watershed Summer Tour in Roseau, noting it was a great tour with interesting stops and good networking. Administrator Jester noted the event included a quarterly meeting of watershed administrators and an education session with multiple presentations. She commented that a short documentary on sturgeon reintroduction was particularly interesting and said she would send a link to the video.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Administrator's Report
   i. Update on FEMA grant application – Final pieces of the documents needed for the grant application to be considered complete were filed. No further update is available.
   ii. Administrator Approval of Archeological Survey Scope for Bassett Creek Restoration Project within Contingency Budget – The administratively approved scope and budget were included with meeting materials for commissioner information.

B. Engineer
   i. Update on Fruen Mill Variance Request – This item was covered under public forum at the start of the meeting.
   ii. Update on Schaper Pond Monitoring – Commission Engineers installed monitoring equipment but a maintenance issue in the manhole housing the equipment necessitated it be removed. This may impact the viability of monitoring the pond this summer.

C. Legal Counsel – No report

D. Chair – No report

E. Minnesota Watersheds – Reminder of August 25th meeting and annual meeting in December

F. Commissioners – No report

G. TAC Members
   i. Appoint Liaison to Aug 6th TAC Meeting – TAC Liaison Pentel is able to attend.

H. Committees
   i. Education Committee Meeting is scheduled for July 21st and the Budget Committee meets July 30th.

7. INFORMATION ONLY (Information online only)

A. Administrative Calendar
B. CIP Project Updates www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects
C. Grant Tracking Summary and Spreadsheet
D. WCA Notices Minnetonka and Golden Valley
E. Starry Trek Event
F. MN Watersheds Newsletter June 2025
G. We Are Water MN Exhibit and Events, Minneapolis

7. **ADJOURNMENT –** The meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

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