Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

Committee Members Present:

Wendy Wulff-Vice Chair, Harry Melander, Lona Schreiber

Committee Members Absent:

Sandra Rummel-Chair, Marie McCarthy, Edward Reynoso

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Vice-Chair Wulff called the regular meeting of the Council's Environment Committee to order at 4:05 p.m. Tuesday, October 27, 2015.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Lona Schreiber, seconded by Harry Melander to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Harry Melander, seconded by Lona Schreiber to approve the minutes of the Tuesday, September 22, 2015 regular meeting of the Environment Committee. **Motion carried.**

CONSENT BUSINESS

It was moved by Lona Schreiber, seconded by Harry Melander to approve consent business items 2015-263 through 2015-266. **Motion carried.**

1. **2015-263:** Authorization to Negotiate and Execute Cooperative Agreement with the City of Crystal for Inclusion of 1-BC-453 Force Main Improvements in Street Reconstruction Project

   That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a cooperative agreement with the City of Crystal for inclusion of 1-BC-453 force main improvements in the City's phase 15 Twin Oaks Street reconstruction project.

2. **2015-264: Authorization to Hold a Public Hearing on the Draft Facility Plan for the St. Paul Area Interceptor Rehabilitation Project**

   That the Metropolitan Council authorize the General Manager of Environmental Services to hold a public hearing on the Draft Facility Plan for the St. Paul Area Interceptor Rehabilitation Project.

3. **2015-265: Authorization to Award and Execute a Contract for Construction of Wayzata Area Interceptor/Forcemain 7113 and Meter M435A/B Improvements**

   That the Metropolitan Council authorizes its Regional Administrator to award and execute a contract to construct Wayzata Area Interceptor/Forcemain 7113 and Meter M435A/B Improvements Project 802841, Contract 15P207, to SM Hentges and Sons, Inc. for their low, responsive bid of $8,437,810.

4. **2015-266: Authorization to Award and Execute a Contract for Security Officer Services, Contract 15P069**

   That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a contract with Securitas Security Services USA, Inc. to provide Security Officer Services for MCES Locations and 390 North Robert Street from December 1, 2015 through November 30, 2018 in the amount of $3,395,222.00.

NON-CONSENT BUSINESS

5. 2015-250 SW: City of Landfall Village Comprehensive Plan Update, Review File No. 20781-1, Tier II Comprehensive Sewer Plan

It was moved by Harry Melander, seconded by Lona Schreiber That the Metropolitan Council adopt the Advisory Comments and Review Record and take the following action to approve the City of Landfall's Tier II Comprehensive Sewer Plan. **Motion carried.**

6. 2015-262 SW: Authorization to Amend a Contract for Assessment of Reliability and Sustainability of Water Supply in Metropolitan Region

It was moved by Harry Melander, seconded by Wendy Wulff that the Metropolitan Council authorizes, its Regional Administrator to amend contracts, totaling $2,800,000 with SEH, Barr Engineering, HDR and CDM Smith for assessment of reliability and sustainability of water supply in Metropolitan Region. **Motion carried. Abstain: Schreiber**

INFORMATION

1. Comprehensive Water Quality Assessment of Metropolitan Area Streams –
Staff presented the final results of a 3 year project called Comprehensive Water Quality Assessment of Select Metropolitan Area Streams. Staff recognized and thanked those who were involved in the project including Judy Sventek, Joe Mulcahy, Emily Resseger, and Jennifer Kostrzewski as well as the monitoring group and Communications staff.

   Initially, MCES began monitoring and studying the impact of wastewater treatment plants and major rivers to look at water quality in the rivers**,** with the most recent monitoring program starting in 1976. In 1989, staff and the Council, along with local partners, began monitoring the streams draining in to the major rivers.

   The watersheds of the monitored streams encompass 8% of the state of Minnesota and approximately 50% of the metropolitan area. Streams vary greatly in size – Eagle Creek encompasses 2 square miles whereas the Crow River encompasses 3,600 square miles (3,000 square miles are in the Metropolitan area). They are unique in quality and character: 3 are Minnesota State water trails and canoe routes (Cannon, Crow, and Rum River), 4 are DNR designated trout streams (Valley Creek, Browns Creek, Eagle Creek and Vermillion River), Rum River has wild rice and rare plants, and Silver Creek has limestone springs and rare plants.

   There are also varied pollutant sources. Urban streams can be affected by stormwater runoff from paved surfaces; rural streams can be affected by runoff from farm fields, feedlots, and draintile systems. Approximately 90 small non-MCES municipal wastewater treatment plants discharge to these streams. Nineteen discharge to the Cannon River, thirty nine discharge to the Crow River, seventeen to the Rum River, and four to Sand Creek.

   A web-based, ADA-compliant report has been created and can be found at *www.metrocouncil.org/streams*. The report contains plain language fact sheets and individual sections for each stream, as well as technical and support sections.

   Data from 21 streams was collected between 1989 and 2012 and continues to be collected. Over 9,000 samples were collected with over 54,000 laboratory tests conducted in our lab. Average flow was collected each day as well. Samples were evaluated for nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, sediment, chloride found in road salt, and beneficial water insects.

   Many water quality assessments were completed in the study. Two examples were provided. In general, the highest nutrient concentrations were found in agricultural streams

such as Sand Creek and Crow River. In general, the highest sediment concentrations were in Minnesota River streams such as Sand Creek and Bevens Creek. In general, the highest chloride (road salt) concentrations were found in urban streams such as Nine Mile Creek and Bassett Creek.

The key finding discovered during the analysis was a regionwide improvement in water quality between 2008 and 2012. Sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen improved (meaning the concentration of those pollutants decreased) in most streams during that period.

The team has been working with the US Geological Survey and the Pollution Control Agency on a statistical trend analysis. Results of the trend assessment was shared for total suspended solids, total phosphorus, and nitrates for the period of 2008 - 2012. Across the region there is an improvement in water quality. Those streams showing declining water quality are being further investigated to determine causes by us and our partners. Combinations of improvement practices, such as homeowner education, the 2002 phosphorus fertilizer ban, installation of raingardens, pervious pavers, green roofs, other practices, and improvements in agricultural practices, have likely led to the water quality improvements. Improvements in the smaller wastewater treatment plants, such as phosphorus reduction, likely also resulted in water quality improvements in the larger streams. MCES plans to repeat the trend analysis in five years to assess further changes in water quality. Chloride trends will also be evaluated at that time.

Study results have presented at local and national conferences, to state agencies, and to local water management organizations. Results are being communicated to the metro region through newsletter articles and social media. Lastly a similar study is being conducted using MCES river data.

Comments/Questions:

The non-MCES wastewater treatment plants may have different requirements for discharges to the rivers.

Committee Member Melander appreciates the information provided in the report. The information is important. Staff stated the Communications staff was critical in helping to pull together the materials.

Vice Chair Wulff inquired if there has been any impact on chloride levels depending on the road salt mixture. Staff stated trend analysis was done for Nine Mile and Bassett Creeks. Chloride levels are increasing in those creeks which indicates declining water quality. It is suspected chloride mainly from use of road salts is being stored in the watershed and released throughout the year. MNDOT, cities, and counties are aware of the issues and limitations with road salt application and work is being done to reduce the amount of salt being applied, while still providing for acceptable levels of public safety. Training is occurring and is at the forefront of discussions. The chloride trends analysis will be redone in 5 years. Hope to see decreased chloride at that time.

Committee Member Melander asked what is causing the decline in Browns Creek. Browns Creek shows declining water quality in suspended solids, total phosphorus but improving in nitrates. There have been stream restoration projects to reconstruct the trout habitat during the trend analysis period of 2008-2012 that may have resulted in delivery of sediment and phosphorus to the stream. The stream water quality will be re-evaluated in five years.

Committee Member Schreiber stated this is very important work. How far has the distribution occurred? Has there been any buzz on stricter standards on smaller municipal treatment plants and how far has it gone in legislative circles? Staff stated the report is complete and information has been shared in an informal format. Staff desired guidance

from this Committee before broader distribution. The material has currently been presented to the Pollution Control Agency, the sub teams of the Clean Water Council, a number of watershed districts, and at several conferences. What other avenues should this be presented?

Would like fact sheets to be distributed. Newsletter will be sent to cities, policy makers, and other interested parties on the Council's mailing lists. For the smaller wastewater treatment plants, there may not be the economy of scale. Smaller plants are being asked to do phosphorus removal via chemical additives. Watershed districts should receive a copy of this report.

General Manager Thompson stated she was in a meeting where MPCA Commissioner John Stein commented on how lucky we are as a state because of the information the Council has been collecting over the years and our ability to use this information to make good planning decisions. He said other states are envious of us because of our availability of data. The issues with the small treatment plants comes down to dollars and how best to address the environmental challenge and make sure money is not spent on benefits not being sought.

Water quality is a complex thing. Good to have long term data and ongoing collection to see if we are making the right choices.

2. General Manager's Report –
   Nothing new to report.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Susan Taylor
Recording Secretary