

**Minutes of the  
MEETING OF THE LAND USE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

September 19, 2013

**Committee Members Present:** Jon Commers, Bill Droste, Chip Halbach, Andy Hestness, Amy Ihlan, Elizabeth Kautz, Kristina Smitten, Tami Diehm, Elizabeth Wefel

**Committee Members Absent:** Kim Kang, Kathi Hemken, Phillip Klein, Bill Neuendorf, Gregory Boe, Jon Ulrich

**CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Commers called the meeting of the Council's Land Use Advisory Committee to order at 4:05 p.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2013.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

Chair Commers postponed approval of the agenda and minutes, as there was not a quorum present at this time.

**INFORMATION**

**Update on Committee Vacancies – Jon Commers**

Commers discussed the four vacancies currently existing on this committee. He noted the open districts are 1, 9, 13, and 16. The period for applications closes on September 26, 2013. He asked members to encourage people they think would be interested to apply.

**Feedback from Committee of the Whole on Geographic Planning Areas – Jon Commers**

Commers gave an update and stated that the recommendations were received very positively at the Committee of the Whole. He stated that Council Members respected the scope and depth of work that was done. He outlined specific comments as follows:

- Discussion on racially concentrated areas of poverty.
- Interest in getting away from past 'labels' used, i.e., getting rid of the label 'Developed Areas.'
- Enthused discussion regarding water resources.
- Interest in exploring accessibility of jobs.
- Granularity of geographic planning areas – more than one per defined area.

Commers is working with staff regarding the request from the Committee of the Whole for more information. Next steps will be developed after this information is provided.

Commers thanked this group for their work in developing these recommendations.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

With a quorum now present at the meeting, Chair Commers asked for approval of the September 19, 2013, agenda. It was moved by Wefel, seconded by Kautz, to approve the agenda of the September 19, 2013, meeting of the Land Use Advisory Committee. Motion carried.

Chair Commers asked for approval of the July 25, 2013, meeting minutes. It was moved by Hestness, seconded by Wefel, to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2013, special meeting of the Land Use Advisory Committee. Motion carried.

## **INFORMATION (Continued)**

### **Water Supply Issues in the Metro Area – Ali Elhassan**

Ali Elhassan, Manager of Water Supply Planning, gave a presentation regarding groundwater issues in the metro area. He discussed why the Met Council is involved in water supply planning, their role and the 2010 Water Supply Plan. Elhassan discussed the Council's findings since 2005 including:

- Current approach to water supply management and development is unsustainable.
- Aquifer levels have declined or are depleted.
- Lakes, streams, and wetlands are damaged.

Elhassan gave some background on water use in the metro area and noted that 80% is for residential use and about 15% is industrial use. He discussed the history of usage of groundwater versus surface water and how that usage has flipped to where now there is more groundwater being used as opposed to surface water. He reviewed the impacts of this on the aquifers. With groundwater being out of sight, out of mind, people don't think about it; however there is a definite decline in the levels within the aquifers.

Elhassan discussed surface waters impacted, i.e., White Bear Lake, and noted that this lake is not the only lake to be affected and talked about three others that have gone completely dry.

Elhassan discussed modeling being done to show what increased population and demand will do to aquifer levels. He also talked about the DNR's authority to stop pumping from the aquifers once they are depleted (drawn down more than 50%).

Elhassan discussed future directions and noted that 'business as usual' is not a solution. We need to recognize limits on regional groundwater supplies. We also need balanced use of surface water, groundwater, and reclaimed water.

Elhassan discussed the impact if communities starting using more surface water versus pumping groundwater and showed the rebound affect to aquifers where their levels would climb.

Smitten asked if the river system can handle the draw for surface water. Elhassan discussed the long history of the rivers and noted that we are using only 1% right now from the Mississippi River. He further explained that for every 1 million gallons we are taking, we are replacing it with 250 million from waste water treatment systems. So from this perspective, we have the capacity in our river cities.

Wefel asked about the cost. Elhassan stated that it is expensive and they are working on that now.

Droste discussed conservation. Elhassan stated that many communities are looking into this and conservation is good, however, it will not be enough to sustain future populations.

Droste stated there is a Catch 22 because usage is tied to revenue, but we did not have this data before.

Elhassan discussed recharge potential and how it is tied to land use. He showed the locations of recharge potential on a map of the region.

Elhassan next discussed wells within the metropolitan area. Of those, 800 are public community wells that are permitted and regulated. There are 60,000 private wells and of those approximately 55,000 are not permitted and no one knows how much they are pumping. He discussed an upcoming legislative bill to require permitting and monitoring of private wells.

Droste asked if there are any municipalities looking at eliminating private wells. Elhassan did not know of any.

Elhassan concluded his presentation saying that the region needs to:

- Restore balance among water sources;
- Maintain and enhance recharge capability; and
- Increase conservation.

Elhassan also stated that the Met Council needs to, in partnership with stakeholders, develop plans and projects that ensure a sustainable water supply.

Smitten noted that this data is very impressive. Regarding public policy, she asked, if the Department of Public Health is involved in, for example, using gray water or reclaimed water for things like watering. Elhassan

discussed the policy issues, i.e., treated water cannot be used to replenish aquifers. He discussed the work that needs to be done to look at these policy issues. He stated that other cities/states are recycling waste water to recharge their water supply.

Kautz discussed the work needing to be done to get legislation to utilize our water in different ways and discussed streamlining water supply planning regulations.

Elhassan stated that the Council is ready to work with communities to avoid the 2030 scenario they are projecting.

Kautz suggested a fund – if communities come in with a plan – to build partnerships (much like the Livable Communities Act).

Elhassan talked about money from the Legislature, the Clean Water Fund, to investigate and look at challenges and opportunities. He stated that they are looking at 4-5 centers in the metro area where they can change their systems. The big question is who/how will it be funded.

Kautz thanked staff for looking at this issue and also for looking at SAC units.

Commers stated he sees potential for dialogue about ways of financing and also getting a handle on private wells not being regulated.

Elhassan stated that he and his staff are willing to come to any meetings with any cities to discuss these issues.

## **NEXT MEETING**

November 21, 2013, at 4:00 p.m. at the Metropolitan Council in Room LLA.

Commers commented that he will follow up via email after the Committee of the Whole October 2 meeting where discussion regarding geographic planning areas will be continued in order to keep this group informed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary