

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Committee Members Present:

Peter Lindstrom, Chair; Kris Fredson; Phillip Sterner; Susan Vento; Wendy Wulff, Vice Chair; Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent:

None

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Lindstrom called the regular meeting of the Council's Environment Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 27, 2021 with the following roll call:

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Absent: 0

Chair's statement was read at the beginning of the meeting as follows:

NOTICE: The Metropolitan Council Chair has determined it is not practical or prudent to conduct in-person meetings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, committee members will participate in this meeting via telephone or other electronic means and the meeting will be conducted under Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021 at the date and time stated above. We encourage you to monitor the meeting remotely. If you have comments, we encourage members of the public to email us at public.info@metc.state.mn.us. We will respond to your comments in a timely manner.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Without objection the agenda was approved.

It was moved by Sterner seconded by Wulff to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2021, regular meeting of the Environment Committee.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

CONSENT BUSINESS

Approval of the Consent Agenda (Items 2021-184 JT)

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Vento to approve the consent agenda business items.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

1. 2021-184 JT: City of Lexington 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Sewer Plan, Review File 22410-1
Requests that the Metropolitan Council adopt the Advisory Comments and Review Record attached to the business item and take the following actions:

Recommendations of the Environment Committee:

1. Approve the City of Lexington's Comprehensive Sewer Plan.

NON-CONSENT BUSINESS

2. 2021-143 2021 Unified Budget Amendment – 2nd Quarter

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Vento

1. That the Metropolitan Council amends the 2021 Unified Budget – Authorized Capital Program (ACP) with a reallocation of \$21,000,000 as indicated and in accordance with the Unified Capital Program – Environmental Services (Table 10) and the Capital Program table (Attachment 3).
2. That Environmental Services return \$668,444 of unused Stormwater Grant funds to the Metropolitan Council General Fund (Table B-1), AND
3. That the Metropolitan Council place a restricted use on the \$668,000 of returned Stormwater Grants funds and repurpose to Environmental Services to help fund projected future shortfalls (2022-2024) in water supply planning operations.
4. That the Metropolitan Council amends the 2021 Unified Budget – Environmental Services Operating Budget to account for unbudgeted pay raises for RA Services in 2021 (Table B-1).

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Vento, Sterner, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

3. 2021-202: Hopkins System Improvements, East Isles – Contract G, Contract 21P018

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Fredson that the Metropolitan Council authorizes its Regional Administrator to award and execute a construction contract 20P018, for Hopkins System Improvements, East Isles – Contract G, MCES Project No. 819015 with Minger Construction for their low responsive, responsible bid of \$4,839,294.00.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Vento, Sterner, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

4. 2021-203: L46 and L49 Lift Station Improvements Real Property Acquisition

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Vento that the Metropolitan Council adopts Resolution 19 authorizing the acquisition and condemnation of real property for the L46 and L49 Lift Station Improvements, MCES Project No. 802831.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Vento, Sterner, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

5. 2021-204: Lake Elmo West Connection Real Property Acquisition and Condemnation

It was moved by Vento, seconded by Wulff that the Metropolitan Council adopts Resolution 20 authorizing the acquisition and condemnation of real property for the Lake Elmo West Connection, MCES Project No. 806325.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Vento, Sterner, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

INFORMATION

1. Communicating with Employees - During and After the Pandemic

Staff provided a summary of how Environmental Services increased communication with employees during the pandemic to support pandemic goals. In addition, new ways of communicating were used that will continue post pandemic.

Comments and Questions:

Chair Lindstrom stated the presentation was very impressive and that no stone was left unturned citing 16 town halls, videos, newsletters, text messages, virtual meetings, and surveys.

Committee Member Vento inquired how long plans for COVID-19 communications will continue considering the new variants and their challenges. Staff stated there is no specific end date at this time for COVID communication. There is an incident command structure in place that guides Environmental Services pandemic response and informs what we need to communicate. Incident command receives information from the Minnesota Department of Health to stay on top of community infection rates and recommendations.

2. Update on MCES Wastewater COVID-19 Monitoring

Staff provided an update on the monitoring of SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA in the influent of the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant. Wastewater viral RNA data is proving to serve a useful role in monitoring of Covid-19. Updates on the overall presence of SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA and new results on the monitoring of variants of concern in Metro Plant influent wastewater were provided. MCES participation in State and federal wastewater epidemiology projects was also described.

Comments and Questions:

Chair Lindstrom asked what the Department of Health uses for actionable items related to the results provided. Staff stated our understanding is results are circulated among staff and they are interested in the variant monitoring. They are using it for confirmation of what they're seeing in clinical case data. The information is unbiased gauge of what we are seeing.

Chair Lindstrom encouraged the team to keep up the good work.

3. Metro Plant Solids Management Improvements Program Update

Staff provided an update on the Metro Plant Solids Management Improvements Program which will add a fourth incinerator then renew existing solids treatment facilities at the plant. The presentation covered the following current work items: preliminary design of the fourth incinerator, air permitting and environmental review, the selected design-build procurement approach, and feedback from the June 15th and June 16th public outreach. Construction of the 4th incinerator will occur 2024 through 2026, following completion of air permitting and environmental review.

Comments and Questions:

Chair Lindstrom stated he has been part of public engagement processes and has heard similar types of presentations and has been impressed every single time.

Committee Member Wulff stated her understanding is we are making things cleaner if we build this incinerator by delaying it by a year and half or more. Won't pollution increase because we have to wait to make things cleaner. Staff responded because of the permitting process that is very rigorous for incinerator facilities, we did need to work with the Pollution Control Agency to get additional data in order to complete the required modeling; however, now we are positioned to move through the permitting as quickly as possible. The year and half delay in the long run may be time well spent due to the quality and the completeness of the work.

Committee Member Sterner inquired about the reasoning of adding a 4th incinerator versus looking at other options. Staff stated there was a solids management plan prepared many years ago that helped us look at our solids processing throughout our system. The Metro Plant Solids Management Plan looked at other alternatives and determined that incineration was the most cost-effective process for this application. The Metro Plant serves 75% of the region in terms of solids capacity and capacity is needed to treat the solids. Energy recovery is important as well and is achieved through this project. There are also site constraints in terms of space for solids processing facilities and proximity to agricultural fields for land application activities.

Chair Lindstrom asked for clarification on tons of solids each day. Staff stated on average the Metro Plant incinerates 240 dry tons per day of dry solids. The Plant processes 850 wet tons of solids resulting in 40 tons of dry ash.

4. General Manager Report

The capstone for our info items agenda today is that staff are innovating and adapting to make a positive difference for our region.

1. ES has been and will continue to adapt and innovate in response to the changing situations with Covid19.
2. Our Metro Solids project and the incineration technology that we are using raised the bar for solids handling nationally and locally vastly improved air quality for our neighbors to the plant and the region.

And we couldn't do this innovative approach to the project delivery without our MC partners helping us, especially Procurement and OEO.

If Committee members have items they would like brought before this committee, please let leisa.thompson@metc.state.mn.us know.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Environment Committee Meeting of July 27, 2021.

Susan Taylor
Recording Secretary