

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

PLANNING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

1:30 p.m.

SEWRPC Office Building
Commissioners' Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

Present:

Excused:

Commissioners:

Daniel S. Schmidt, Chairman
Jose Delgado, Vice Chairman
Steve Bostrom
Charles L. Colman
Michael A. Crowley
Brian R. Dranzik
James A. Ladwig
Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.
Aloysius Nelson
Robert W. Pitts
Jennifer K. Rothstein
Peggy L. Shumway
David L. Stroik

William R. Drew
Nancy Russell
Jeffrey D. Schleif

Staff:

Michael G. Hahn	Executive Director
Kevin J. Muhs	Deputy Director
Elizabeth A. Larsen	Assistant Director – Administration

ROLL CALL

Chairman Schmidt called the Planning and Research Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared present. Chairman Schmidt indicated for the record that Commissioners Drew, Russell, and Schleif had asked to be excused.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 3, 2016, MEETING

Chairman Schmidt asked if there were any changes or additions to the May 3, 2016, meeting minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Delgado, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the May 3, 2016, Planning and Research Committee Meeting were approved as published.

PRESENTATION ON UPCOMING POTENTIAL AMENDMENT OF THE SEWRPC REGIONAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN TO INCORPORATE TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS DEVELOPED FOR THE ROCK AND MILWAUKEE RIVER BASINS

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Hahn to review with the Committee the Upcoming Potential Amendment of the SEWRPC Regional Water Quality Management Plan to Incorporate Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Developed for the Rock and Milwaukee River Basins. A copy of the presentation had been provided to Committee members for review prior to the meeting.

Mr. Hahn gave an overview of the potential amendment, beginning with the history of regional water quality management planning in Southeastern Wisconsin and the Federal regulatory requirements for preparation of TMDL studies and incorporation of those studies in regional water quality management plans. He described the Rock River and Milwaukee River Basin total maximum daily loads studies within the Region. He then reviewed the compliance timeline and noted alternative approaches for achieving compliance.

During Mr. Hahn's presentation, he responded to the following questions and comments.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Mr. Hahn stated that the definition of TMDL is the load of a pollutant that a waterbody can assimilate and still achieve water quality standards.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Delgado, Mr. Hahn stated that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has not used the Commission's Regional Water Quality Management Plan Update Study as a basis to set State water quality standards. The water quality standards are set by the WDNR and receive approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Ms. Rothstein noted that the farmer-led Milwaukee River Watershed's Clean Farm Families group, the Ozaukee County Land and Water Management Department, and the Fund for Lake Michigan, recently held a Soil Health Workshop featuring Ray Archuleta, a nationally renowned soil expert.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Rothstein concerning problems related to an excessive amount of phosphorus, sediment, and bacteria in waterways, Mr. Hahn stated that too much sediment is harmful to aquatic life. He further noted that an over-abundance of phosphorus present in waterways causes algae blooms and reduces the amount of oxygen in water which again is harmful to aquatic life. He then stated that bacteria, particularly fecal bacteria, is a public health issue and may originate from deteriorating sanitary sewer pipes leaking into storm sewers, illegal cross connections between sanitary and storm sewers, and septic systems.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Delgado, Mr. Hahn indicated that being removed from the list of impaired waterways does not remove the need to monitor pollutant levels in a waterway or body of water, but does signify an improvement in water quality in that waterway or body of water.

In response to a question by Mr. Lipscomb regarding the application of permitting related to TMDLs within a multi-county watershed, Mr. Hahn indicated that permitting for pollutant dischargers would need to be proportionally divided within the watershed.

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Ms. Shumway inquired about the general health of the Region's rivers and tributaries. Mr. Hahn stated that waterways throughout the Region are significantly healthier than they were at the time that the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972, with much of the improvement due to the investment in and consolidation of the Region's wastewater treatment plants. He noted that in 1987, runoff from urban streets, roads, and land uses was designated as a pollutant point source, creating a permit program to address those pollutant sources. Improvements in more recent years have occurred at a slower pace, as further investments in point sources became more expensive and technologically challenging, and addressing diffuse nonpoint sources can require larger systemic changes in the actions of residents and business owners. Mr. Hahn stated that it may be 30 to 35 years before pollution reductions to attain TMDLs result in meeting water quality standards and criteria. Ms. Rothstein noted that nonpoint sources of phosphorus are the major pollutant challenge for the Region's rivers and lakes at this time.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Shumway, Mr. Hahn indicated that the WDNR website contains information regarding the impairment status of waterways within the Region. Ms. Rothstein noted that some waterways in the Region also receive annual report cards from the Milwaukee Riverkeeper organization, which may provide additional information regarding the health of those waterways.

Mr. Schmidt noted that he was the Chair of the Advisory Committee guiding the Regional Water Quality Plan Update, and that the Committee meetings were well-attended and members represented an impressive cross-section of experts on different issues that affected water quality planning.

**PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE
PLANNING REPORT NO. 320, JACKSON CREEK WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN**

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Hahn to review with the Committee a presentation concerning the preliminary draft of SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 320, "*Jackson Creek Watershed Protection Plan.*" A copy of the presentation had been provided to Committee members for review prior to the meeting.

Mr. Hahn gave an overview of the plan, discussing Jackson Creek's current state and the plan's recommendations to improve the Creek and its watershed. He discussed the plan's recommendations for re-meandering the Creek to more closely match its historic path and improving and increasing buffers between adjacent land uses and the Creek.

During Mr. Hahn's presentation, he responded to the following questions and comments.

Ms. Rothstein noted that approximately 20 years ago, Lake Delavan was drained and refilled to improve water quality. Mr. Colman noted that water quality problems continue to be an issue in the Lake, despite the draining.

Ms. Rothstein stated that the cooperation of farmers in reducing phosphorus runoff is critical to the health of a watershed. She noted that excessive phosphorus leads to algae blooms, which reduce the amount of oxygen in the water, particularly as the algae are broken down after they die. She also noted that re-meandering streams is a very effective way to improve water quality in streams, and can save taxpayers money in the long run.

Mr. Colman noted that this topic is highly technical, and that Commission staff should work to provide detailed advice on how to implement the improvements recommended in the plan, the costs of implementing the improvements, and any funding sources that may be available.

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**UPDATE ON COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION
COORDINATION PLANS**

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Muhs to review the public transit-human services transportation coordination planning process, and provide an update on the progress of the plans for each County. Mr. Muhs summarized the coordination planning process, noting that it focused on finding ways to efficiently coordinate human service transportation and public transit services to reduce overlap and fulfill unmet needs for transportation using existing financial resources. He noted that a regionwide public meeting was held in November 2016, and that State and local public officials, users of public transit and human services transportation, and providers of public transit and human services and transportation attended. Attendees participated in small group discussions to analyze unmet transportation needs and develop and prioritize strategies to address those needs.

Mr. Muhs indicated that this is the third time the Commission has completed these plans, and that updating them every four years maintains the Region's eligibility for Federal Transit Administration funds that assist transit operators, local governments, and non-profits with providing transportation services that go above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. He then noted Milwaukee County manages these funds for applicants from Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties; and the State manages these funds for applicants from Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth Counties.

Mr. Dranzik commented that the State previously managed these funds for the Milwaukee area counties, but determined that they would no longer do so after a change in Federal law gave them the option of devolving the program management to a local entity. He stated that the four Milwaukee area counties would not have been able to receive the funds if Milwaukee County had not agreed to take on these additional responsibilities.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Schmidt announced that the next meeting of the Planning and Research Committee would be held on May 2, 2017.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Hahn if there was any correspondence or if there were any announcements. Mr. Hahn stated that there were no correspondence or announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael G. Hahn
Deputy Secretary