

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Minutes**  
**September 19, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER.** A regular meeting of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order by Chair Joe Baker at 6:05 p.m., Thursday, September 19, 2024, at Maple Plain City Hall, 5050 Independence Street, Maple Plain, MN.

Present: Mark Workcuff, Greenfield; Joe Baker, Independence; Brenda Daniels, Loretto; Andrew Burak, Maple Plain; Pat Wulff, Medina; Peter Vickery, Minnetrista; Roz Davis, Hennepin County Environment and Energy (HCEE); Andrew Vistad, Hakanson-Anderson; Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

Also present: Brad Spencer, Independence; and Mark Klein, Lake Sarah Improvement Association (LSIA).

**2. AGENDA.** Items 4.b. CAMP Agreement, and 4.c. Financial Support of Lake Associations, were added to the agenda. Motion by Daniels, second by Wulff to approve the agenda\* as amended. *Motion carried unanimously.*

**3. CONSENT AGENDA.** Motion by Burak, second by Daniels to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

**a. August 15, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes.\***

**b. September Treasurer's Report/Monthly Claims \* totaling \$8,893.20.**

**4. OPEN FORUM.** Klein introduced himself and discussed the vegetation management plan for Lake Sarah, involving both eurasian water milfoil (EWM) and curly leaf pondweed (CLP). LSIA applied herbicide to treat EWM in the east bay last year which greatly reduced the amount of EWM. LSIA would like to treat the west bay in the next few weeks. The Commission has provided cost-share funding of 25% net-after-grant, not-to-exceed \$8,000, over the past several years to help LSIA treat CLP, along with state grant funds and a contribution by TRPD. For 2024, LSIA was not awarded a grant to treat CLP. Klein would like the Commission to consider additional funding for vegetation management on Lake Sarah. This discussion will continue under item 5.c.

**5. ACTION ITEMS.**

**a. LICA Request for Lake Independence water level study.** Lake Independence has been at or above the "slow/no wake" level nearly all year in 2024. This is not the first year of being above this level for most of a year. At the September 5, 2024 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, Spencer and LICA requested the Commission to contract for a study to determine why the lake levels remain high.

Studies performed in the past have shown that Pioneer Creek, which begins at the Lake Independence outlet, has an elevation drop of less than a foot between the outlet and Pagenkopf Road, a distance of over half a mile. This limited drop in elevation means the water tends to move sluggishly, even in the best of conditions. In 2013 the cities of Independence and Medina, along with PSCWMC, funded a cattail

removal and channel dredging of this area. After this work was completed, the city of Independence and the Lake Independence Citizen's Association (LICA) made an agreement whereby LICA would maintain the channel by clearing cattails and obstructive vegetation to keep the channel clear and free flowing. Due to turnover within LICA and drought conditions, the agreement was forgotten and not upheld by either the city or LICA. Currently the channel is overgrown with cattails, further slowing water flow. LICA has recently completed an herbicide treatment via drone to kill vegetation, but it will take 2-3 years of continued treatments to open a channel. It's also possible that, due to the original dredging being side-cast, the spoils may have slumped back in to fill the channel.

Spencer, on behalf of the City, is requesting the Commission to take the lead on completion of a hydraulic study to determine why Lake Independence does not recover from precipitation events in the same way as other lakes in the region. Every lake has a bounce of increased water level after precipitation events. Most lake levels drop again during dry periods. While Lake Independence rises at similar rates as other lakes, it takes much longer for water levels to drop. This may be due a number of issues, including groundwater or springs within the lake, lower outflow capacity, additional water coming into the lake from other sources, or other unidentified issues. The results of the study that determine why the lake levels aren't dropping could then be used to identify solutions, which would lead to a separate feasibility study to implement a solution. The study may also determine that the ordinary high water level (OHW) should be adjusted.

The City of Independence is willing to contribute to the cost of the study if the Commission takes the lead. Grant funds cannot be used unless a water quality benefit can be quantified. While erosion is a water quality issue, determining the benefit is nebulous. The scope of work should be broad, and up to the hydrologist to decide what needs to be studied to ascertain why the lake levels remain high. This study would not include feasibility for any possible solutions. If the cost to complete the study is prohibitive, other options will be considered.

Baker will take the lead by contacting the DNR Area Hydrologist to discuss this need. Vlach noted that, while TRPD would not be able to undertake the study, he would be happy to consult. If the DNR will not perform the study, a request for proposals (RFP) will be sent to qualified hydrologists.

Motion by Burak, second by Daniels authorizing Baker and staff to contact the DNR and BWSR regarding a potential study, and to issue a generic RFP to solicit proposals for the study. Qualifications should be included in the RFP. *Motion carried.*

1) September 5, 2024 TAC minutes.\*

**b. CAMP Agreement.\*\*** The Commission budgets \$760 for one Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP) monitored lake per year. In 2024 the Commission approved Lake Ardmore for CAMP monitoring but did not sign the agreement. Joel Settles has been performing CAMP monitoring duties on Lake Ardmore since May 2024. Motion by Vickery, second by Daniels to approve signing the CAMP agreement as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

**c. Lake Association Funding Requests.**

1) LICA recently acquired a permit, landowner permission, and contracted an herbicide treatment via drone to reduce the cattails in the Lake Independence outlet channel at a cost of \$1,530.00.

This is an after-the-fact request for cost-share by the Commission. The Commission usually requires cost-share requests to be made in advance and show a water quality benefit. Baker proposed a 25% match of \$382.50. Motion by Daniels, second by Vickery to approve a 25% cost-sharing in the cattail treatment. *Motion carried, Burak and Workcuff opposed.*

2) Lake Sarah is requesting cost share for treatment of EWM in the west bay within the next two weeks. The Commission has contributed to CLP treatments in the past. LSIA would like to contract for the application of ProsellaCOR, an herbicide that kills EWM, at a cost of approximately \$40,000. When asked for advice, Vlach noted that TRPD historically does not treat EWM. EWM does not have the same water quality impact as CLP, which dies mid-year and whose decomposition fuels algae blooms. One treatment was done by TRPD on Lake Rebecca after the alum treatment because the clear water spurred EWM growth and native plants were unable to compete, making EWM 60-70% of all aquatic vegetation. The one treatment allowed natives to re-establish, which is beneficial for the overall aquatic ecosystem. TRPD owns 17-18% of the Lake Sarah shoreline and will contribute to projects that impact water quality, like CLP treatments, at that percentage. TRPD would not be able to contribute to an EWM treatment at this time. More information on impact to water quality and overall aquatic ecosystem would be necessary.

The Commission declined to take any action on this request. Klein was encouraged to return in the future as more information is needed for a decision.

**6. OLD BUSINESS.**

**7. NEW BUSINESS.**

**8. EDUCATION.**

**9. STAFF REPORTS.**

**a. Engineer's Report.** Vistad met on site with the subcontractor but hasn't heard from him in the past month. If the subcontractor does not make the repairs, the reimbursement will be significantly less than the \$30,225, due to BMPs not performing per the agreement.

Vistad also visited the Adelman and Kingston properties and noted that the landscaping is now being installed per approved plan. Due to issues with plan changes and installation not occurring per plan, there is no cost-share approved with these properties at this time.

**b. HCEE Report.\*** Hennepin County recently sent a postcard mailing to landowners in the Lake Independence, Spurzem and Ardmore subwatersheds to solicit potential projects. Ten responses have been received leading to four or five good project leads.

County staff visited the Stotts property on Tuesday to review potential projects. The landowner has equipment and requires that he be the only person to complete any project work on the site and that any project could not affect future development of the site. Some drain tile on the site has been damaged. Repairing or replacing drain tile doesn't qualify for cost-share funding unless it is associated with a BMP. Currently he farms around the broken tile area since it's too wet. The site is landlocked and water from the broken tile doesn't reach Dance Hall Creek.

County staff talked to landowners adjacent to DHC BMP #1, the wetland improvement just north of Highway 55. The only concern expressed is wetland vegetation creep. The DNR has not made a commitment about the BMP, but should be engaged throughout the planning and design project. Pike spawning in the area is less of a concern at this time.

Davis will be performing buffer inspections throughout October.

The Shriners project has been delayed because most of their fields have been under water until recently. Construction may proceed this fall but most likely will be pushed to 2025.

Hennepin County receive a Pollinators Pathway grant and will proceed with a planting on the Flakne property on the northwest side of Lake Independence, including habitat improvements across the whole property and a possible shoreline restoration.

**c. TRPD Report.** Lake sampling will continue through September with one last sampling in October. Stream monitoring will continue until things begin to freeze, typically November.

The second Whaletail alum treatment is scheduled for spring 2025. TRPD will collect sediment cores in October to study the results of the first treatment and determine whether dosing should be adjusted.

**10. COMMISSIONER REPORTS.**

**a. Wulff.** Medina's Celebration Day will be held September 21 from 5:00-7:30 p.m. with fireworks at 8:00 p.m.

**b. Daniels** noted that construction on County Road 19 is still underway in Loretto and will continue through October.


**c. Workcuff** noted that the Greenfield Road project is underway. A complaint was filed that the City had used old asphalt on the public access to Hafften Lake and there was an oil sheen running to the lake. Baker inspected the site with Tom Cook and did not see anything of concern.

**11. OTHER BUSINESS.**

The **next regular meeting** is scheduled for October 17, 2024, at Maple Plain City Hall.

**12. ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business, motion by Workcuff, second by Burak to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Amy Juntunen  
Administrator  
AAJ:tim

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