

Meeting Notes

Master Plan of Aligned Use and Water Management at the Hiawatha Golf Course Property, a part of Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #2

April 30, 2018 – 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Headquarters – Board Room

Meeting Goal: Get to know the facts and develop the process to move forward.

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Review of CAC Charge

David Kaplan, Chairperson, welcomed everyone and began the meeting at 6:35 pm greeting the CAC members. The members of the CAC were asked to introduce themselves. Members in attendance: Anne Painter, Chakra Sankaraiah, Craig Nichols, David Kaplan, Duane Whittaker, Joan Soholt, Kathryn Kelly, Matt Hilgart, Nathan Shepherd, Roxanne Stuhr, Sean Connaughty, Sean Keir, Sheila Terryll, Tara Olds, and Tim Clemens. Members absent: Damon LeFlore, Teresa Engstrom, and William Means. MPRB staff present: Tyler Pederson, Michael Schroeder, and Cindy Anderson. MPRB staff present in the audience: Debra Pilger, Matt Just, and Robin Smothers. MPRB Commissioners present in the audience: Commissioner Steffanie Musich

David stated that this meeting agenda is a bit different than usual. David laid out the agenda and how it will flow for the evening. David reviewed the CAC Charge.

Tyler reviewed the additional binder materials that were distributed to the CAC and noted the virtual binder will be available soon.

2. Consultant Team Update

Three proposals were received from master planning teams. Tyler explained that there were three proposals from design teams including Barr Engineering, which has consulted on the Hiawatha groundwater study and Berger Partnership, a landscape architecture and urban design group out of Portland; PORT of Chicago and SEH, which is local, as well as 4RM+ULA, a local group of urban planners and designers; and HGA a local design firm. HGA did not have the experience working on this complex of a project and was not chosen for an interview. Before a decision is made, we are waiting see what decisions are coming out of this meeting.

PART ONE: Presentation of the Facts

3. Review of Groundwater Studies to Date

Tyler began the presentation with a project breakdown of where the master plan currently is. He noted that the original master planning effort was put on hold while the groundwater study took place, and

planning continued at Meadowbrook Golf Course. Now that the initial groundwater study is complete, and a feasible pumping solution is available, master planning will continue at Hiawatha Golf Course.

4. MnDNR Involvement in Permitting

Michael reported that he had made lengthy presentations in the past, but tonight the hope was to condense all of that information for the CAC and provide many of the answers to the questions that have been asked. If the CAC has additional questions after tonight's presentation, please send them on to Tyler for compiling and we will provide answers. Michael noted we are significantly out of compliance with the DNR regarding groundwater pumping. We have a permit to pump 36.5 million gallons of water for irrigation purposes according to the DNR. When we met with first-tier homeowners and then held community meetings, our first goal was to protect homeowners; the DNR stated it would not have the MPRB stop pumping but wanted this situation to be fixed.

Michael continued, noting the DNR and MPRB have met and discussed the many factors of groundwater pumping. We discussed the 36.5 million gallons per year for irrigation purposes; we determined at this time that anything less than 242 million gallons of water, and the golf course will eventually become inundated with water so it is a necessity to continue to pump this amount. If pumping is lessened or turned off, it will be flooded; we are trying to understand from the DNR 's perspective what our options are.

Currently, the DNR has stated we can apply for a temporary general permit which allows 242 million gallons a year until we can find a different solution or way of approaching water management or use of the golf course. The temporary permit will be for one-year terms, up to 5 years. During this timeframe, we need to report the process to the DNR each year. At a meeting with DNR leadership a few weeks ago we asked them what they would do if we asked to continue pumping 242 million gallons per year and submitted a permanent permit application. The DNR stated specifically "do not do that." The DNR insists we go through this process to determine what can be done before they consider anything permanent for the future.

Tyler reported that the largest groundwater pumping permit is for 235 billion gallons per year for a nuclear power plant; the golf courses permitted to pump for irrigation over 150 million gallons per year are Bunker Hills, Pebble Creek Golf Courses and Lutsen. Lutsen's permit also includes snowmaking and rural water supplies. Most permits between 200 and 300 million gallons per year are for construction, agriculture, and drinking water.

5. Clarifications Around Resolution 2017-243

Tyler explained what a resolution is. Simply put, it is a decision made by the Board of Commissioners related to the statutory authority of the MPRB. A Board Resolution is made up of a few different parts, including a title, whereas statements (basics facts and reasons), and resolved statements (specific course of action). A background memo is included for information purposes.

As Resolution 2017-243 currently sits, it directs the MPRB to pursue a plan that reduces pumping at the Hiawatha Golf Course property. Board actions can be amended – but the entire process can take a little extra time.

Tyler mentioned that a request was made to the Board of Commissioners to reconsider the parameters of Resolution 2017-243, allowing the CAC to consider uses for a water management solution including perpetuating the current volume of pumping. CAC member Kathryn Kelly noted that was not what she had asked. She had asked that the title of the resolution be changed to remove the language related to “a reduced pumping scenario”.

PART TWO: CAC Discussion of the Facts and a Process to Move Forward

6. CAC Discussion

David stated that the CAC can discuss what has been heard and ask questions. He asked that everyone be polite and considerate with questions.

Several questions were raised that included why the DNR stated we could not apply for a permit for pumping 242 million gallons of water. What is the statutory requirement the DNR uses as its parameters? Another question, if a permit was applied for to continue to pump, we may then have 5 years which then could really equate to a five-year delay? Does that mean we would be delaying mitigation of the stormwater and trash problems?

The answer to the above is that the DNR will give us one year or two years or up to five years for a solution; the DNR realizes that it takes time; finding money to determine a solution takes time; the DNR believes that a conclusion could take 5 years.

Another question as to reinforcing the berm – is that still on the table? If reinforcing the berm around the lake, it was asked to seriously consider the wildlife that live in the berm, including the otters that live in the berm. It was suggested that consideration be part of the process. If the berm is broken, what is the consideration for the current habitat of wild life. Michael stated that he would provide a written response to this.

Another question, why are we pumping groundwater and where is it coming from? Are we expanding Hiawatha to hold more water and why? Why so much? Is the water coming from the neighborhood, from the creek and why is Hiawatha the dumping ground? Are we getting water from the river, from west suburbs, what will happen to the flood plain if we expand it? We are currently pumping 242 million gallons of groundwater and 50-60 gallons of storm water. Why is water coming in from all areas and coming into the course which then means pumping becomes necessary? The elevation of the golf course is 810 or 811 – if the course was above the lake, we would not be pumping anything. Is there any way to mitigate the water from flowing in a different way coming from other areas? Why are we trying to have the golf course hold more? When or if we get another flood – it will not be able to hold it. Michael will provide a written response to this scenario.

As to protecting the homes, pumping 94 million gallons is not a guarantee. How do we know that raising the water level and pumping only 94 million gallons will protect homes? Michael stated he did not guarantee and could not guarantee.

It was stated that pumping to try and put the water back into the golf course will cause Powderhorn Lake to go up in elevation which is 4-5 blocks away from the neighborhood, but we want to increase pumping so that our homes are not affected. 242 million gallons for irrigation purposes, but we are pumping to de-water. 2 million gallons per year are used on each hole of the golf course; how can we be in violation of

permit – because we are not irrigating, we are trying to remove the water. The City is bringing more water onto the golf course; stormwater pumping doesn't need a permit.

The watershed today it is highly developed. A watershed is an area that separates where water flows and the development of more hardscape means greater volumes of water.

Playing conditions in 2013 were dry and 70 acres of ponds were redirected.

What is the feasibility of a golf course – is it not financially viable to have a 9-hole golf course – is there any research now and in the future by those playing the game – has any research been done?

As to the homes concerned with water flooding, is there a direct correlation to why homes are flooding? Research should be done of the homes and possible solutions/assessments. Michael stated that some of the homeowners that we talked with said that they had issues with gutters, window wells, etc. causing basements to experience water intrusion.

A comment was made that continuing to move forward with pumping invites the possibility of bigger analysis for each of those homes; personal watersheds are contributing to larger watersheds; and the larger watersheds flow to the Gulf of Mexico. Depth and breadth should be measured.

A comment was made that a pump was going to be placed on 43rd and 17th – west side. It would be interesting to see if this pumping would affect the neighborhood and how much would it pump – would it be as much as 94 million gallons. What would the plan do to assist the phosphorus – most of the water seems to flow from the creek. What has been done to help mitigate the garbage and chemicals that come from the creek? Love the bike paths but they are not the best for using after large storms. What does the watershed district think about rerouting the creek for a couple hundred yards, would that be short sighted? Why is it necessary to destroy the berm and destroy habitat and rearrange the creek? Is there a half way point on that? What is being done to mitigate the trash flowing with a larger pipe installed?

As to 43rd and 17th, the topography is lower in that area. Installing a small groundwater pump (3 to 4 million gallons per year) to maintain what they are seeing today is necessary.

A consideration – If we decide to pump 94 million gallons, could a permit then be requested if needing to pump more if groundwater increases over time? It may be necessary for us to assess the need for increased pumping of groundwater.

Is there a chart as to what is being pumped every year? What does that graph look like? In 2016 flow meters were installed; no method available prior to that and there are no other records.

Is there any way to know what portion of the 100 million gallons coming in through the berm from the lake as seepage is considered storm water?

We have not measured the pumping before 2016. We know anecdotally that soils have been sinking but no way of measuring historically.

What are the lake depths? Seem to be shallower now? Are there golf revenues by year? Years before flood and then years after flood?

How will the CAC interact with the master planning consultant? Michael and David will continue to work with CAC group and help us to define recommendations.

David noted the course will flood again and has flooded 4 times in 66 years and it is a 100-year floodplain.

Concerns around a significant investment in the earthen berm or any changes to it. There are federal rules around berms. When the lake gets to certain height water is supposed to go to the golf course so as not to go to our homes. No rise certification for flood way; if a change is made in the golf course, there is a huge process to go through to make any changes, and still a permit will need to be provided to continue to pump 242 million gallons;

When looking at Option A or B, is one more important than the other, thinking of this as a floodplain, which it is? Was the berm constructed for that purpose? What is the cost of reconstructing it?

Concern from Nokomis neighborhood. Water management activity, whatever it can be, can affect the neighborhood. Whatever happens at Hiawatha will not impact homes at Nokomis East? Michael states there is a group that is beginning to investigate this. A consultant can hopefully begin to assess if there is a relationship to other areas.

A question about FEMA funds. Michael explained that Meadowbrook's flooding took much longer to recede. Hiawatha was able to be opened without FEMA funds. FEMA funds are still available to us for the damages to Hiawatha but will likely be used in an alternate project. FEMA has an option called an alternate project designation, which will receive a 10% reduction of the funds. Golf staff are working on an alternate project.

Neighborhood continually states that fencing is ugly and is not currently maintained.

Question about the appointment of a Dakota CAC member. Hiawatha is Dakota treaty land and why Dakota were considered to be recommended for the CAC rather than other groups. The Dakota have a say on this land because of this treaty. The Board modified the CAC Charge to include representation of a Dakota tribe member. Michael will be meeting with a representative of Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors group and will be trying to get the vacancy for the Dakota representative filled.

Date for next meeting is postponed. This meeting date is to be determined based on tonight's outcome.

7. Public Comment Period

Ed Felien requested that Michael provide answers to his emails regarding Minnehaha Creek once flowing under the sewer pipes downstream of Lake Hiawatha. Michael noted that he had done so.

Please consider several things: Park Board is a small portion of the entities that impact the watershed district. And watershed district embodies other lakes like Minnetonka. We do not know if the other lakes have mitigated their water flow. We do not know what 9 other areas to the west are doing to decrease their stormwater issues, etc. Hiawatha is at the end of the line; and we are dealing with a bigger issue than the Park Board can understand including the community.

Comment requesting prior years' elevations of the lake and how the levels have increased.

Trash mitigation is very very important. Make this a priority throughout the process.

Comment about asking for resources from USGS to look at soils.

Comment urging the CAC to continue asking questions, and perhaps have a meeting on a Saturday so that others who are not available during the week can come.

Dana Lonn commented that he had worked at Toro in the R & D area. He said that 40 years of chemicals do not run off, this is because the soil is dense and holds the chemicals. There is a lot of research on this. He offered to share it with the MPRB.

Nokomis, Hiawatha, and Mother Lakes were a large swamp before it was dredged and heard there is no direct interconnection anymore because of the creek. Help me understand that there is no connection today between the two areas; I believe there has to be.

Another person lives one half block from course; knows nothing about water management and not sure if it can be maintained as an 18-hole course. But other options such as jogging all around the lake, having restaurants, other types of activity would be nice.

We understand the historical reasons as to why it is desired to remain a golf course, but there are new ideas and understandings that have to be taken into consideration when moving forward on this project. The golf course will not be able to be there forever. So look at the future and determine the best use; work together.

Please use gallons instead of cubic feet for measurement/discussion purposes when talking about volumes of water. There is a significant difference between cubic feet per second and gallons per minute.

Any study done on dewatering at higher elevations and closer to homes? Michael answered yes, that is why the smaller pump was installed at 43rd and 17th.

Will the consultant be at the next meeting for the master planning? Michael answered by stating that the two firms being looked at have strong points in planning and design and engineering. They are both high level design firms.

8. CAC Discussion to Develop a Process to Move Forward

David asked the group what direction does this CAC want to go? We either move forward as with what was provided today – as in Option B? Or is it Option A – should we ask the Park Board to make a decision to allow us to look again at Option A – which will take at least a month. If Option A is decided, then we need to ask about what other things could be considered.

David stated again that the group needs to tell the Park Board which direction this CAC would like to go.

Comment was made as to the nine areas of the watershed that contribute to this water issue. It was stated in light of this fact, both options should be reviewed. Ask the Park Board to revise the Resolution to include both Options A and B. There are no solutions that remove pumping water; we need to let the community make a decision as to what it wants.

David briefly laid out the process. The CAC would make a request of the Board of Commissioners to amend this Resolution and the CAC charge. Then Planning staff would bring this request to the Planning Committee and request the Board to consider the CAC's recommendation of planning for both options

with an urgency to move forward quickly. The action would then advance to the full Board for review, discussion and approval.

Roxanne commented that yes, Option A and B should be included, and also possibly introduce a C or D, or something in between to keep the topic open for other options that could result and be introduced down the road.

Michael stated if the group decides that there should be an option A and B or C and D, or whatever, then those options will become a part of the consultant contract for the Master Plan.

A comment was again made that trash mitigation is absolutely necessary and should be moved forward faster than the other issues of water management at this time.

David reiterated that the charge to the CAC with Option B is presently in play. He stated that the CAC is now considering asking for the Board to allow us to rethink A – to not reduce pumping at all. David stated after this discussion that there are now some on this CAC that would like the Board to allow A and B, and possibly even other options.

Comment was made, asking what do we get by opening this up again to other options after ALL of the investigations that have been conducted and reported? A reply, the Resolution Charge that created the CAC, stated the CAC is to research all options. If the Park Board wants to overrule the request, it has the right to do that.

When looking at this as a Master Plan – the comment was made that it does allow the CAC to look at other possible options, after which it is believed the CAC could make a decision.

Another comment was made, by perpetuating the current pumping scenario – from a staff perspective, is that even appropriate to request? By giving the CAC the option to go back to the Board asking it to clarify the charge and reconfirm it, is this the right process. It is important that the CAC understands the resolution as to why it has been asked to conduct the work it is doing.

Michael stated that from what he has heard this evening, he believes the CAC should ask the Board to amend/revise the resolution to allow for investigation of all uses related to a reduced pumping scenario and other uses that involve reduced pumping scenarios, or scenarios that also may perpetuate the current pumping situation, if all others are found not viable.

A comment from the audience was made that the majority of water has nothing to do with the golf course; it is because of the 9 other areas where water is coming from, and then flowing into the creek which doesn't do anything to manage the water. The golf course is at the end so where is the water supposed to go.

David stated that Choice #2 option is that the Park Board would allow the CAC to consider all pumping options and to ask the Board to allow for revision to the Resolution.

Michael stated that he would present a background statement to the Board of Commissioners that is agreeable to this group without having to have all people make statements individually to the Board. He would have a few from the CAC review the background statement before submitting to the Board.

David then asked for a vote to be taken by the CAC. Formally, a vote was taken by the CAC to ask the Board for an amendment to the prior resolution to allow opening it up to consideration of all options, not

just A and B, but possibly others as well. The motion passed (9 to 6 in favor) to request clarity and amendment of the CAC charge and to expand the options to make an informed decision as to the future of the golf course. Officially, the statement will read, in part, *"The Hiawatha Golf Course Community Advisory Committee is requesting clarity and amendment of its charge and requests the Board of Commissioners to respectfully clarify the existing Resolution 2017-243 to include the exploration of all uses related to a reduced pumping scenario and for all uses related to a circumstance that also may perpetuate the current pumping situation."*

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

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