

**REGULAR MEETING
OAKDALE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MARCH 20, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The Oakdale Environmental Management Commission (EMC) held a meeting on Monday, March 20, 2023 at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL OF ROLL

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Chairperson: Keith Miller, Chairperson

Commissioners: Noah Gerding, Vice Chairperson
Bonnie Wilson

Also Present: Kevin Zabel, City Council Liaison
Shannon Reidlinger, Sr. Community Development Specialist and City Staff Liaison

Absent: Connor Brown

Quorum Present: YES NO

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER GERDING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WILSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 9, 2023 AS WRITTEN.

**3 AYES
0 NAYS**

MOTION CARRIED

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION REVIEW

a. NEW BUSINESS

i. 3M Settlement Priority 2 Work Group presentation

Monica Stiglich, Oakdale representative from the Priority 1 Citizen and Business Group, presented on the Plan for the Priority 2 3M Settlement. Ms. Stiglich gave background information on the Priority 2 settlement language, stating that awardees will utilize grants for

natural resource restoration and enhancement projects. She explained the role of the Trustees – the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) – in Priority 2. The Trustees will select funded projects through a request for proposals (RFP) process. Ms. Stiglich then summarized the Priority 2 work groups and subgroups involved (Government and 3M Working Group, Resident Work Group, and Ecosystem Services and Recreation Subgroup) and their roles in providing feedback on Priority 2 goals, evaluation criteria, and RFP solicitation scope and language. The work groups will not choose or vote on proposals and members of the work groups are able to develop and submit proposals. Ms. Stiglich relayed communities' concerns about potential conflicts of interest and the need for work group members to not advocate for their communities' projects during work group activities. The RFP process is the only avenue for advocating for projects. Additionally, all work group meetings will be open to the public. Ms. Stiglich then explained the RFP evaluation process. An internal committee of the State Co-Trustees, with the DNR taking lead, will convene to evaluate proposals. She shared that it is unlikely that projects that require long-term monitoring and maintenance are supported. She relayed the past and next steps for Priority 2. In January and February, eligible communities and members were invited and recruited to participate in the work groups. Starting in March and April, Priority 2 work group meetings will be initiated. September through December, the DNR will open the RFP to identify projects.

In response to Commissioner Wilson's question regarding the work group member application status, Ms. Stiglich relayed that the Resident Work Group application was open for a month and was closed the month prior to this meeting. Commissioner Wilson then asked about the application status of the Ecosystem Services and Recreation Subgroup, to which Ms. Stiglich replied that this subgroup does not have applications and participants will be invited. She also stated that this group will not have meetings.

In response to Chair Miller's question regarding timeframe for criteria development, Ms. Stiglich stated that the hope is to have them sorted out during monthly summer meetings. Chair Miller expressed desire to see the criteria once they are determined so that projects can be developed based on the criteria and the information shared in Ms. Stiglich's presentation. In response to Chair Miller's follow-up question regarding the broad scope of work and how priorities will be considered, Ms. Stiglich confirmed the broad scope but expressed that projects addressing direct wildlife and ecosystem impacts from PFAS will be stronger proposals.

Commissioner Gerding expressed gratitude for Ms. Stiglich's time and presentation. In response to Commissioner Gerding's question regarding whether potential guidance will be developed to help proposals consider the intersectionality and timeframes of current projects and goals found in comprehensive plans and work plans, Ms. Stiglich said that she expects there to be much discussion about the proposal scope once meetings start. It has been expressed from Trustees that shorter-term projects with clear beginnings and ends will be favored. The current ambiguity and broad scope will likely be discussed extensively.

ii. Review of 2023 Washington County Recycling Grant projects

Ms. Reidlinger provided a summary of 2022 outcomes, both continued efforts (offering free food scraps drop-off starter kits; sending out BizRecycling postcards) and new efforts (purchasing more food scraps pails because Oakdale is not guaranteed to be included in Washington County's pilot compost pick-up program; promoting BizRecycling during Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction visits; purchasing three dual-stream, 70-gallon waste containers for the Oakdale Nature Preserve; offering pumpkin recycling).

Ms. Reidlinger highlighted the four projects that are part of the 2023 grant application. She shared that the application is still in the review process and that the county has the final say in each project. It will be finalized once the City receives the grant agreement. Ms. Reidlinger emphasized that education is an important theme of the 2023 EMC Work Plan and the four projects will reflect that theme. The four projects are as listed:

1. Promote residential and commercial recycling through simple, high-level education.
2. Promote composting as a means of waste reduction. This will involve continuing to give away compost pails at Farmers Market as well as making educational efforts to help residents better understand backyard compost bins.
3. Encourage strategies to decrease reliance on single-use plastics in conjunction with Plastic Free July. Actions in support of this project include purchasing reusable bags for Farmers Markets and coordinating information on low-waste cooking.
4. Reduce community waste by hosting a fall City-wide cleanup event. Conversations with Public Works regarding this event will be critical.

The City will receive information as to whether the projects have been approved in the coming weeks. An agreement will be drafted for approval. City Council will have the ability to adopt the agreement.

Chair Miller expressed desire to have a fall cleanup event and recounted a previously successful Tanners Lake cleanup event. Commissioner Gerding shared that he has been following single-use plastics and taking action to reduce these plastics would be beneficial.

In response to Commissioner Wilson's question regarding dollar amounts tied to each individual effort, Ms. Reidlinger explained that the Washington County calculates this based on a number of factors (e.g., population size).

iii. Review of draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update project materials

Chair Miller expressed his excitement for this plan and tying this in with the bus rapid transit to ensure that citizens have a car-free option for getting to the public transportation.

Ms. Reidlinger provided an update regarding community engagement for this project and asked that the Commission provide feedback on the draft network map included in the packet materials. She relayed that a traffic stress analysis, a bus stop inventory, focus groups with Tartan High Schoolers, an open house, popup workshops, and a WikiMap informed the draft network map. Ms. Reidlinger noted that the consultant used community feedback to develop actionable pieces. She shared that the next step in the process is to create the draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which will include maps presented at this meeting and a table that

outlines the implementation schedule and factors to consider (e.g., phasing length, other funding sources, context). The draft will be made available to the public and City Council for comment.

In response to Ms. Reidlinger's request for feedback, Commissioner Wilson asked for clarification regarding the draft network map and whether only existing facilities are shown. Ms. Reidlinger responded that the solid green lines are existing shared use paths, the solid yellow lines are existing sidewalks, the dotted green lines represent proposed shared use paths for construction, and the dotted yellow lines represent proposed sidewalks. She noted that Century Avenue is a street that community members desire the construction of any sort of facility, though the ideal is a shared use path. Community members also expressed desire for a facility network close to Willowbrooke and connections to the Gateway Trail. Ms. Reidlinger explained that certain facility proposals are harder to achieve and that the consultant will help the City think through those difficult areas. She also relayed the City Council's particular interest in a shared use path on 10th Street so that Tartan High Schoolers have access to businesses.

In response to Commissioner Wilson's question regarding how these recommendations will be achieved, Ms. Reidlinger said that the consultant will draft an implementation schedule. This will provide information (e.g., length of time, alternative funding sources, internal funding needs for each project) to determine the feasibility of each project.

Chair Miller expressed his satisfaction with the recommendations for 10th Street and Century Avenue. He also expressed concern for Hadley Avenue's existing shared use path switching sides of the street at the busy intersection with Stillwater Boulevard. He then suggested that this might be an area to review. Ms. Reidlinger informed the Commission that the consultant did hear from community engagement feedback that residents are most looking for paths that are separated from the road and have a buffer between the road and path. The consultant is only recommending separated facilities. City Council commented that while connection is important, it might be difficult due to a number of factors (i.e., right-of-way, road width). The consultant is being asked to look at standards for how wide the road is and feasibility in constructing a separated trail.

Chair Miller then shared his support for the recommendations to connect with the Gateway Trail and Willowbrooke.

Commissioner Gerding expressed satisfaction with the recommendation to have more connection with the tri-lakes area (Lake Olson, Lake Jane, and Lake De Montreville).

Chair Miller commented that having separated shared use paths, instead of bike paths in the road, would help to increase users' sense of safety. He also brought up comments from previous meetings about connecting to other cities and relayed that he is happy to see that taken into consideration with the new draft.

Commissioner Gerding seconded Chair Miller's satisfaction with the Century Avenue recommendation.

Ms. Reidlinger then shared the next steps in the project. The consultant is scoped to have one more meeting with the Commission. When completed, the Commission will see the next draft of the holistic plan and have the opportunity to provide feedback.

b. OTHER ITEMS

i. Monthly review of the 2023 EMC Editorial Calendar

The EMC reviewed the themes and dates relevant to the 2023 environmental communications strategy for the months of March, April, and May. Chair Miller highlighted promotional items released in February and March pertaining to the Arbor Day giveaway, the rain barrel and compost bin sale, and the watershed conservation grants for property owners.

Ms. Reidlinger asked that the Commissioners take pictures during their visits to the adopted storm drains around Walton Park in the coming month for social media use.

Chair Miller recommended continued promotion of the Adopt-a-Drain and Adopt-a-Wetland programs. He commented that he would be happy to provide pictures for Adopt-a-Wetland as he has adopted the wetland near his home and will be conducting a spring cleanup.

Commissioner Gerding relayed his support for the March 10 social media post highlighting the conservation grants available to homeowners and residents. He expressed gratitude for staff providing support throughout the process of implementing rain gardens on his family's property.

Chair Miller reminded the Commission that May is National Bike Month and that Bike-to-Work Day and Bike-to-Work Week are in May. These provide an opportunity for Commissioners to share pictures biking on Oakdale trails.

Commissioner Gerding suggested that it would be beneficial to find a time on the editorial calendar to share what the Commission continues to learn about the 3M settlement and projects as the information becomes available. Ms. Reidlinger responded that the calendar is open to editing and August is a possibility to share this information.

In response to Commissioner Wilson's question regarding the Environmental Fair at the Discovery Center, Ms. Reidlinger stated that the fair is still being worked on and it is on the editorial calendar for June.

ii. Commissioner update(s)

Chair Miller shared that the Alliance for Sustainability's Resilient Cities and Communities group has a Zoom meeting on Thursday, March 30 at 6:30 p.m. with Washington County cities. In this meeting, various environmental and resilient city issues will be discussed.

Chair Miller also shared that the 2023 Environment Commissions Conference is Saturday, May 20 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Ridgedale Public Library in Minnetonka. Environment commission members are invited. There will be presentations and small breakout groups on

topics such as solar, recycling, etc. Chair Miller added that this is an opportunity to have conversations and see what other commissions are accomplishing. Commissioner Gerding noted that they are still looking for presentation topics and presenters.

iii. Council liaison update(s)

City Council Mayor Zabel shared that the City Council work lately has been administrative. They have been working on ordinance language, liquor and garden center licenses, moving the annual street project forward, and vacating minor easements along development projects.

Mayor Zabel shared the following upcoming events:

- Arbor Day Tree Giveaway. The City gives out 200 trees to be planted around the City. Registration will open on April 3 and is first come, first served.
- Park Cleanup Week is April 24 to 30. Residents interested in signing up and adopting a park can visit the City website for more information and contact information.
- Community Spring Planting is May 6. More volunteers are needed. Dozens of trees will be planted along 40th Street by Goose Pond Park. The City Forester identified a hole in the tree canopy and the Tree Board is excited to fill it. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and lunch for volunteers will be served from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Mayor Zabel followed up on comments made during the draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update and mentioned that the newly formed Century Avenue coalition will be meeting later this week. The coalition is made up of city, county, and state representatives. Mayor Zabel and City Administrator Christina Volkens will represent Oakdale. This is an organized effort to get the project moving along and consider land use, pedestrian and bike traffic, etc. Chair Miller commented that it is great that the meeting is happening. Mayor Zabel responded strongly that there needed to be elected official and staff representation.

iv. Open Forum

Ms. Stiglich returned to the podium to encourage the City to communicate through every possible medium, including printed matter that is mailed out.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Miller reminded the Commission that the next meeting of the EMC will be Monday, April 17, 2023 in the City Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WILSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GERDING, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 20, 2023 REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAKDALE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AT 8:34 P.M.

3 AYES

0 NAYS

Environmental Management Commission Minutes

March 20, 2023

Page 7

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Dunn

Community Development Specialist