Minutes

Brown’s Creek Watershed District
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting
Monday, February 10, 2020 at 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Location: Stillwater Public Library – Margaret Rivers A Room

CAC Members Attending:
George Vania
Anne Maule Miller
Matt Crain- Stillwater High School

Others Attending:
Angie Hong, East Metro Water Resource Education Program
Cameron Blake, BCWD Assistant
Sharon Schwarze, BCWD Board Liaison

1) The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

2) The agenda was amended to add updates about the Stillwater Water Board reorganization, the Brown’s Creek Park Water fountain, and the restoration work recently completed at the BCWD Conservation Area. The agenda was approved as amended.

3) The minutes from December 9th, 2019 were approved.

4) Educational Topic: EMWREP
   Angie Hong presented some background information for EMWREP. She explained that EMWREP was formed as a way for small communities to meet their MS4 education requirements. Bayport is the newest partner addition. EMWREP is landowner focused, involving Local Government Unit staff and elected officials, rather than K12 education. EMWREP creates events and workshops, has been involved in the creation of the Adopt a Raingarden, Adopt a Drain, and the Master Water Stewards programs. Sometimes EMWREP can create partner specific projects but usually can’t. Angie Hong presented the executive summary of EMWREP’s 2019 report. The report is attached to the minutes. Some highlights of the discussion include: 1W1P agricultural producer workshops and outreach. George Vania asked about silviculture workshops and animal husbandry he was hearing about. The Sustainable Farming Association is having a conference March 5th/6th. The group asked more about SMART salting and Angie discussed the continuing efforts to engage private applicators, which have not been as successful as public entities. Part of this may be due to the failure of recently proposed legislation that

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would have addressed liability concerns for businesses and contractors. The group asked how Angie promotes EMWREP activities. Angie said she uses word of mouth, Facebook ads on social media, city newsletters, and direct mailings. One goal of the 1W1P is to create shared resources including additional staff to create an EMWREP-like program in the Northern half of the Lower St. Croix Watershed. George told Angie about Stillwater’s irrigation SMART controller efforts which includes financial contribution from the BCWD. The goal will be to expand the program. The controllers require Wifi, and will be installed and inspected annually by a contractor. The installation will require a backflow protector and the data will be useful to the City.

5) Stillwater Water Board Reorganization

George Vania updated the group on the recent decision by the City of Stillwater to incorporate the Stillwater Water Board into the city’s public works department. This decision was based on a consultant’s report. Until now the Water Board has been an independent organization who coordinates all of the billing, maintenance, etc. on their own. Theoretically, the budget and staff structure is supposed to remain separate after the incorporation but in practice this may not remain true. The water department of public works will continue to have a board to guide their decisions, and the manager will likely be called a “water supervisor”.

6) Brown’s Creek Park Water Fountain

George explained that the fountain placement will be on the south side of the trail to avoid having to go under the trail. This brought the cost down. There will also be a bench installed. The bid process is 2 to 3 months and there is an active GoFundMe page. The group all agreed that a fountain would add a lot of value to the park, and would also be helpful for the BCWD Community Event in September.

7) BCWD Conservation Area winter restoration work

Cameron Blake gave a brief update of the restoration work completed at the BCWDCA this winter. The group requested a more thorough update at the next CAC meeting, as well as an update on the 1W1P process. Great River Greening is managing the restoration work with Prairie Restorations Inc. as the contractor. This winter there was large amounts of tree removal including buckthorn with a forestry mower in the lowland areas. Cedars were thinned in Unit 3 and removed in Unit 1.

8) Newsletter Input

The group selected their preferred example graphic designs. Cameron will compile those with feedback received via email from the CAC members who were not able to attend the meeting. This design will be used for the BCWD 2020 newsletter. Cameron discussed potential topics to include in the newsletter and the group gave feedback on the water softener/chloride pollution section. They asked for a watershed general information section

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with Lake Grade information. The group expressed concern that some of the topics may have to be cut in order to prevent the newsletter from being too wordy and cramped. George discussed the City of Stillwater’s water supply and treatment strategy. The City doesn’t soften the groundwater on a whole. Lime and CO2 are added but this doesn’t remove the hardness either. Phosphate can be added to wells to get rid of scaling.

9) 2020 Events (remaining time)
Cameron asked for volunteers for the sign up sheet for tabling events in 2020, and the group made progress in setting dates for the Open Yard Series. Cameron will contact Jyneen about the open yard events she is leading in June and July (the Brown’s Creek Nature Preserve Tour and the Raingarden workshop).

- Anne and George will coordinate a migratory birding event at the end of April. April 18th was suggested as a date. They discussed whether the location would be Anne’s house or a certain point along the Long Lake trail, but expressed concerns about parking needs. Cameron will make sure they have postcards to advertise the event.
- Sustainable Stillwater is having a Migratory Bird Day event on May 23rd. George and Bob Bystrom will lead a birding tour that day. Bob’s birding events will be added to the BCWD calendar as soon as they are sent out.
- George suggested his stormwater event occur on August 15th from 10am-12pm starting at the Brown’s Creek park as in previous years. He would like to engage the Lakes of Stillwater as well for this.
- Pollinator Friendly Alliance have not yet selected dates for their Citizen Science Event at Pine Point Park.
- The group asked if two buckthorn removal events could be planned for the west side of Long Lake to continue the progress made in fall of 2019. The group suggested September 23rd and October 3rd from 9am-12pm.

10) The meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM