City of Afton

Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC)

Agenda
Tuesday, August 1, 2017
5:00 PM

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Roll Call**

3. **Approval of Agenda**

4. **Approval of Minutes**

   A. Meeting Minutes from May 2, 2017

5. **Business**

   A. Development of a Template for the Committee's Review of Future Major Subdivisions and Particularly PLCD's

   B. Well Testing Update

   C. Comprehensive Plan Update Status

   D. Work Planning for 2017 Goals

   E. Natural Resources and Groundwater Management Organizations Updates

   F. Update on Council and Planning Commission Business – Council Member Palmquist

6. **Adjourn**

Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee minutes
May 2, 2017

1. Call to order 5 pm.

2. Roll call. Present were: Bake Baker, Mayor Richard Bend, Perry Eggers, Mark Have, Keith Hoffman, Jack Kollmer, Susan Winsor.
Absent were May Bend and Annie Perkins.
City Council liaison Bill Palmquist arrived later.

3. Agenda approved
Motions to add items from Perry and Susan

4a. April 4, 2017 NRGC minutes approved

5 Business
a. Template development for future PLCD review
Discussion of template subcommittee progress:
Bake advocated the merits of having a succinct, organized, methodical PLCD review checklist that streamlines and simplifies the NRGC review process, set reasonable expectations for all concerned, and expedite things. Keith wants to be sure that the final product enables NRG committee to hand off a product to PC with everything completed. Keith asked whether there's a ceiling on the number of houses that can be built in Afton; of the 20 proposed Carlson lots, given 1,100 Afton dwellings, is there concern about a potential ceiling of future Afton total lots? Mayor said yes in theory but extremely difficult to calculate in practice. The Met Council has set 1 house per 10 acres as the average Afton density and will likely change it by the time that becomes an issue. Decided that we should not dwell on historical issues, legal minutiae. Mark added that we are a technical committee not intended to get bogged down by legal issues. Jack added that we should hone in on natural resource and groundwater issues per our mission. Susan mentioned the challenge of simultaneous governing watershed, with its technical expertise and legal authority, deliberating in the same time frame as NRGC. Bake suggested consolidating a related document he prepared with one that Mark prepared and submit at the next NRGC meeting, Jack agreed.

5b. Water sampling request (added to agenda). Susan passed along a volunteer request to sample St. Croix River water for St. Croix River Association in volunteer Jill Lucas' absence 7/14-8/1 and perhaps other times this summer; Jack Kollmer volunteered. Sampling is related to alga blooms and nutrient loading.

5c. Well testing update from Keith and Mark. Keith reports there will be a well testing Afton newsletter item this month. The county asked for a firm sampling cutoff to avoid stragglers. June 13 and June 20 at 7 am. will be the two citizen sample dropoff dates at City Hall. Last October, 90 sampling containers were requested and distributed; 60 were submitted. Keith presented an Excel checklist of people who participated in October that we can use to update this time around. Keith wants to encourage people using the sampling container they may have left over from last time around. Mayor Bend will serve as volunteer backup for the June 13 sample dropoff date.

5d. Organization updates
Valley Branch watershed/Mark: reported that Belwin was granted VBWD permit for a bridge over wetlands. VBWD also approved four additional septic system inspections in the Kelle's Creek watershed program. At the April 27 VBWD meeting, payments for inspections of five more septic systems in the Kelle's Creek watershed were approved. Four of those five were not compliant. Out of 19 Kelle's Creek septic inspections so far, eight have been compliant and 11 non-compliant. Only two of the 11 non-compliant have tapped the cost-share program option to upgrade their system. Most failures lie in the drainage field. Non-compliant inspected systems have 12-18 months to upgrade; 90 days if there's an immediate health threat.
Middle St. Croix Watershed/Annie: absent so no report.
South Washington Watershed District: Perry replaces Jill Chezik at the liaison and has not attended a meeting yet.
Washington County Water Consortium/Keith: Afton was one of the top recyclers per capita in Washington County. The group toured the Newport recycling plant.

Washington Soil and Water Conservation District/Susan: One Afton resident received a second cost-share payment for erosion remediation.

5e. City Council report/Mayor: Road construction coming along well. Bids came in lower than expected, so added other roads previously unexpected. The 15th St. culvert's been replaced ahead of road reconstruction, Joe Richter says.

5f. Proposed addition to NRGC recommendation to Planning Commission from Perry Eggers: Perry proposed ammending what we submitted at the April meeting to reflect that the Trout Brook on Will Carlson's proposed PLCD is not just a waterway, but a SWWD-designated watershed, he says. As a result the setback is 1,000 ft. instead of 100 ft. Ron Moorse will follow up to verify this. (This agenda item was added and approved at the meeting's beginning.)

5g. Joint Work 2017 goal-setting session with Afton City Council began at 6:20 pm: Jack summarized NRGC accomplishments and proposed 2017 committee goals to be prioritized by the CC. Jack suggested well testing for every household well, and the Mayor and City Council agreed. Randy suggested someone reach out to citizens who test their wells privately to incorporate those findings into the aggregate NRGC data. Susan asked Randy Nelson, who farms, whether farmers need educating on conservation farming practices (one of the suggested 2017 NRGC goals). A discussion followed on a voluntary farmer-led watershed program that the Mayor, Jack Kollmer, Bill Palmquist and Susan Winsor are familiar with, where farmers in a given watershed voluntarily work with technical/University or Extension support to identify areas where they can both save money/inputs while conserving nutrients, through changes in application timing, method, form, soil, water and cornstalk-testing. This ended up being the #2 CC/NRGW-determined 2017 priority.

Jack's list was (meeting discussion follows in parens):
*Continue and expand well testing throughout Afton (yes, great idea);

*Complete conservation farming practice recommendations to reduce nutrient, chemical and soil leaching into groundwater and the St. Croix River. (yes, consider voluntary farmer led watershed idea and others);

NRGC May 2, 2017 minutes, continued

*Review Park Dedication for possible updates (that is the Park Committee's role, the NRGW can recommend parts of plats that might be optimal for park dedication);

*Review Comp Plan revisions as directed by the CC;

*Review Septic System ordinances for possible updates and revisions (this is a hot button issue, Jack says. Stan Ross suggests searching for updated technologies which may facilitate this. Bill Palmquist says we did just tighten the inspection regulations to be more frequent);

*Review Afton Surface Water Management Plan (we covered this in MIDS review);

*Review Afton Natural Resources Inventory and Stewardship Plan for proposed updates and recs to CC (great idea, the present plan is 15 years old. Perhaps require a review of key property attributes if/when a parcel is proposed for development, to save the time of cataloging all of Afton);

Susan added these possible NRGC 2017 goals:

*Define Conservancy Overlay districts to streamline future reviews (good idea but perhaps other priorities more relevant);

*Identify potential future wildlife corridors (Randy and Bill suggest this could be merged with Park Dedication process. As Afton develops GIS capabilities this might get easier and facilitate a number of planning activities, the Mayor says);

*Someone suggested: previous discussions around using city-provided lawn signs and other ways to recognize citizen conservationists, native prairie over cultivated lawn, bee friendly habitats etc. Bill Palmquist suggested an annual conservation award.

*Randy Nelson suggested adding DNR North and Metro Groundwater Management Project to the list of meetings for NRGC to cover because it tracks groundwater use, and neighboring communities use a lot of groundwater; disturbing trend.

The Mayor suggested that all present vote for their top three goals, and majority rules. The resulting 2017 NRGC goals, determined by this vote, will be:

1. Continue and promote Afton citizen voluntary well testing.
2. Complete conservation farming practice recommendations to reduce nutrient, chemical and soil leaching into groundwater and the St. Croix River.
3. Review Septic System ordinances for possible updates and revisions.

6. Adjourned at 7:12 (Keith motioned, Perry seconded).

NRGC Memo

Meeting: August 1, 2017

City of Afton
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

To: Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee Members

From: Ron Moorse, City Administrator

Date: July 27, 2017

Re: Comprehensive Plan Update Status

During several meetings in 2016, the NRGC discussed the topics the Committee should address as part of the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan. The attached minutes from the October 19, 2016 meeting of the NRGC include a summary of these discussions. The Planning Commission has set the goal of completing a draft of an updated Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2017. They need any updates from the NRGC in the next couple of months in order to accomplish this goal. The Committee may want to revisit the specific tasks it wants to accomplish as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, the current status of these tasks, and a timeline for completion.

Natural Resources Groundwater Committee
Afton City Hall
10/19/16

Members in attendance:
Keith Hoffman
Susan Winsor
Jill Chezik
Jack Kollmer
Richard Bend
Mark Have

Mae Bend – Recent applicant for NRGC. Recently returned resident of Afton. Nutrition coach for Lifetime. Looking into food sourcing, learning from Grandparents.

Additional items to add to agenda?

Last meeting we had was in July due to lack of quorum in past two scheduled meetings.
Susan attended a meeting with MN USGS Atlas Findings to identify vulnerable water quality areas in Afton. Is there a need, is it a valuable tool?
Jack made motion to approve new agenda with above, Mark seconded it.

1. Business:
   a. Proposal to change NRGC meeting date and time to just before the City Council meeting. Keith proposed the first Tuesday of the month, at 5:00. That follows the Planning Commission and just before the Council meeting. Keith proposed motion; Jack seconded it. Annie proposed to limit to no more than 90 minutes. Accepted as a friendly amendment. Called to question – all in favor; no opposed. Jill will contact Kim to let her know.
   b. Meeting quorum requirements. Kim presented to the Council and approved. Now changed from 5 members, to a majority of active members. So, next meeting will be November 1.
   c. Update from Richard Bend. Update from MIDS; Planning Commission voted against the approval of the newly proposed MIDS recommendation. Only one voted to approve adoption. Ron Morse is to forward MIDS packet and info to the NRGC members for review. This needs to take place prior to City Council reviewing MIDS. Jill will request he send this info to us.
   d. Well testing project – Keith: 90 people called for testing. Drop off is October 25 at City Hall.
   e. Comprehensive Plan update: Environmental Resources Plan section – follow up on this? Richard gave update, nothing has been happening on this. This is an opportunity for committees to tweak the Com Plan according to the new requirements. The Met Council updated requirements to include two new aspects; addressing Sustainability and Resiliency. Annie – look at current comp plan, review specifically with an eye to resilency and sustainability and how it compares with our special areas noted in the conservation overlay district (18% slope, marsh areas, significant ecological attribute and/or fragile) areas, our natural landscapes, etc. Conservation Overlay District. Need specific standards, requiring

application of overlay district with regard to any CUP (conditional use permit) and/or development, meet those requirements? Map 11 in Binder. As applications come in, opportunities arise.

Annie, Susan and Richard will be a subcommittee to work on reviewing the two new items in Met Councils Comp Plan (sustainability and resiliency). Then review gaps in Afton's comp plan; draft language to cover it, leveraging our existing Conservation Overlay District report, that would then need to be applied and conformed to when reviewing future CUPs and development applications.

f. Susan mentioned learning what's underground. Keith will look into having a guest speaker come.
g. Mark gave update on South Washington County Watershed District.
h. Keith asked status on the septic project. Richard said meetings have been taking place with tribes. Many tests have been conducted. No signs of Native artifacts have been detected.
i. Solar installation ordinance. We do not have any applications at this point.
j. Susan motion to adjourned, Jack second. All in favor.

From: "Stephanie Souter" <Stephanie.Souter@co.washington.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2017 11:03:33 AM
Subject: Note: June Water Consortium Cancelled & Comp Plan Feedback

Good afternoon,

Please note that the June 7th water consortium meeting has been **cancelled**. There is also no July meeting. We will reconvene in August for a tour.

As those who attended our April meeting may know, Washington County is updating its comprehensive plan and invites residents to share their thoughts on the county's best characteristics and their concerns about its future through an online "wiki map" tool. If you are interested, please view this interactive online tool to provide comment on what you appreciate about Washington County, and what you want to see in its future.

Background: The Comprehensive Plan is an official document adopted by the Washington County Board of Commissioners as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of the county. The plan sets broad policies to direct the county's future growth and development in the areas of land use, transportation, water resources, parks and trails, housing, economic competitiveness, and resilience and sustainability. The comprehensive planning process was initiated by the decennial census and the Metropolitan Council's adoption of "Thrive MSP 2040," a vision for the Twin Cities metro area over the next 30 years. The Met Council adopted regional policy plans in the areas of transportation, water resources, parks and housing, and issued system statements. The next step is for local governments to update their comprehensive plans to build upon the regional vision and plans. Washington County's planning process is just getting underway. The county is working with a consultant to manage the planning process, produce a final plan that meets the requirements of the Met Council, and engage stakeholders in the process. Information about the planning process is available on the county's website. The majority of plan development activities will occur in 2017.A six-month review period will precede a public hearing on the plan, both of which will occur in 2018. The updated comprehensive plan is due to the Metropolitan Council by Dec. 31, 2018.

Have a great weekend!

Stephanie Grayzeck Souter, MS | Senior Planner
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NRGC Memo

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To: Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee Members

From: Ron Moorse, City Administrator

Date: July 27, 2017

Re: Work Planning for 2017 Goals

The NRGC met in a joint work session with the City Council on May 2, 2017. One item of discussion was goals for 2017. The minutes of the May 2, 2017 NRGC meeting reflect the top three goals selected for 2017. The Committee may want to begin to plan how those goals will be accomplished.