



CITY OF NORTH OAKS

Regular Natural Resources Commission Meeting
Thursday, June 17, 2021
7 PM, Via Teleconference or Other Electronic Means Only
MEETING AGENDA

Remote Access - *Natural Resource Commission members will participate by telephone or other electronic means pursuant to Minn. Stat. §13D.021. Any person wishing to monitor the meeting electronically from a remote location may do so by calling the following Zoom meeting videoconference number: 1-312-626-6799, Webinar ID: 859 8166 7076 or by joining the meeting via the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85981667076>. Due to the existing COVID-19 Health Pandemic, no more than five (5) members of the public may be in Council Chambers (Community Room, 100 Village Center Drive, MN) during the meeting. Once room capacity is met, anyone wishing to attend the meeting above the five (5) members of the public who may be present in the room during the meeting will be required to monitor the meeting remotely.*

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda

4. Citizen Comments - *Members of the public are invited to make comments to the Commission during the public comments section. Up to four minutes shall be allowed for each speaker. No action will be taken by the Commission on items raised during the public comment period unless the item appears as an agenda item for action.*

5. Approval of Previous Month's Minutes

5a. NRC Meeting minutes for Approval from May 20, 2021
[5.20.21 NRC Meeting Minutes - Draft.docx.pdf](#)

6. Business Action Items

- a. North Oaks water body review
- b. Forest education opportunities discussion
- c. EPA 319 plan for Wilkinson Lake

7. Commissioner / Staff Reports -

- Tick Task Force Report
- Community Outreach: Winsor Report
- NOHOA/ NEST Report
- City Forester Report
- VLAWMO Tech Report
- City Report

a. Reports

[Outreach report.pdf](#)

[May in Review.pdf](#)

8. Next Meeting: Thursday, July 15, 2021

9. Adjourn - *The next meeting of the Natural Resources Committee is July 15, 2021.*

**North Oaks Natural Resources Commission
NRC Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting via Teleconference or Electronic Means Only
May 20, 2021 at 7 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hawkins called the meeting of May 20, 2021, to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

NRC members participated **by telephone or other electronic means** pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.021.

Present: Chair Andrew Hawkins, Vice Chair Kate Winsor, Commissioners Shannon Dunn, Damien Lepoutre, Penny Kianan (joined at 8 p.m.), David White, Kate Winsor, City Council Liaisons Tom Watson, Jim Hara, NOHOA Liaison Patricia Orud

Absent: Commissioner Bob Larson

Staff Present: City Administrator Kevin Kress, City Forester Mark Rehder

Guests: Nick Voss and Gary Ellis from VLAWMO

A quorum was declared present.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Winsor, seconded by Dunn, to approve the agenda as submitted.

MOTION carried unanimously by roll call vote.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

5. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

- Commissioner Winsor asked a question of Administrator Kress as to whether a report she had submitted at the last meeting would be included in the minutes. He clarified that it would be included in the official packet that is kept at City Hall.

MOTION by Hawkins, seconded by White, to approve the April 15, 2021 minutes with corrections as discussed.

MOTION carried unanimously by roll call vote.

6. BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS

a. Update on East Oaks Rec Center, renovating the existing bioswale (VLAWMO)

- Nick Voss and Gary Ellis from VLAWMO were introduced as guest speakers. Ellis (as well as Sierra Weirens who was not present) are North Oaks residents and official MN Water Stewards who were trained by the Freshwater Society. As part of their training, they complete a capstone project, which is the proposal that Voss presented to the Commission.
- Background: What is the MS4 program – The MPCA permit for generating, tracking and improving stormwater runoff. The City of North Oaks and NOHOA are joint permit holders.

There are 6 categories designed to help communities make progress. These categories are measured and audited.

- Permit cycle runs from April 021-June 2022.
- MS4 program stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. The program helps communities use green infrastructure as a tool to accomplish Minimum Control Measures (MCM). It provides opportunities for education, outreach and participation. VLAWMO provides assistance as needed.
- Permit compliance works as a strategy to reduce long-term complications and reduce costs.
- The East Oaks Bioswale is the site that NOHOA recommended for the capstone project. Voss shared a diagram of the site with the swale's current dynamic. He noted that it is inundated with sediment, has poor infiltration and has an outdated infrastructure for sediment removal.
- Goal of the project is to excavate excess sediment to give the site a restart or revamp.
- Options for doing so include converting to the area to turf which is easy to maintain. The downside for the watershed is that water moves more quickly through it which has a negative effect of wetlands, lakes and water quality. The other option is to do a more intricate planting plan. The downside to this would be higher maintenance. The overall goal in choosing a strategy will be to find a happy balance of practical maintenance, making the site an asset for pollinators, beautification of the area, retaining water for infiltration and MS4 credit, and creating an ongoing team effort for sediment removal.
- They are currently working on designing a more simple catch basin that would better fit the outlet connected to the culvert. This will take the high straight volume from the road and settle the sediment there so that long term the swale will not experience such an inundation of sediment.
- Project goals: keep/relocate existing plants, excavate, design new simplified planting plan, communicate across multiple channels (NEST committee, NOHOA), install catchment sumps (2) with NOHOA support, soil amendment, new plants and mulch, long term maintenance plan, work toward reduction of stormwater runoff and sediment loading upstream.
- Collaboration options for MN Water Steward capstone: NRC is invited to help with communications, volunteering for planting, mulch, etc.
- Voss answered questions: Commissioner Winsor asked if there was already intentional planting around the site and if any of it could be retained or reused. Voss said that the whole area would need to be dug up in order to reach an elevation that would perform better for holding storm water. He was not able to identify the plants at this time, but if they could identify them, they could potentially save and repurpose them.
- Commissioner White asked how the landowner, NOHOA, feels about the project. Nick suggested that commissioners reach out to Kristie Elfering for her thoughts, but he said that the project is supported by NOHOA at this time because it compliments their plans and goals for the site.
- Commissioner Dunn asked where the area drains. Voss said that it drains North to a wetland complex and then on to Pleasant Lake after that. The draining process goes slowly, and the project ultimately aims to help the wetland perform better to improve the health of Pleasant Lake.

- Commissioner White asked if we know the path that it takes from the swale to Pleasant Lake. Voss said that Tyler Thompson from VLAWMO has that map if anyone is interested in the specifics. He said he would be happy to follow-up if needed.
- Commissioner Dunn asked how the MS4 credits are determined. Voss said they are based on pollution reduction efforts and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan. Commissioner Dunn recalled that a previous VLAWMO presentation indicated that Pleasant Lake does have a TMDL.
- Chair Hawkins asked how often the catch basin would need to be cleaned out and what kind of maintenance would be required. Voss said he would expect it would most likely be monthly in the spring and fall. Depending on the winter, summer might be every other month. Chair Hawkins noted that North Oaks uses a mixture of sand and salt on the roads in the winter, and he imagined that a lot would end up in the area.
- Chair Hawkins recognized that the city does not own the property but that NOHOA does, and wondered why the state would need to regulate private property. Does MS4 apply to private property? Nick clarified that MS4 does not apply to private property, and that this is a unique circumstance in which North Oaks and NOHOA would be opting in to the program and the project. Hawkins wondered why NOHOA would apply for the permit. Administrator Kress explained that if a developer or NOHOA wants to do a stormwater project that is bigger than an acre, an MPDS permit is required from MPCA. The city itself does not own any stormwater facilities. Chair Hawkins wondered how the MPCA views this relationship since we are doing it more for the benefit of the community rather than because it is a requirement.
- Administrator Kress clarified that we do have storm water requirements in the city ordinances or the PUD, but the city requires them to establish it as if it were to take them over, even though it ultimately does not. Chair Hawkins noted that this is a point of discussion as the North Oaks company is pulling out of the developments, and NOHOA and sub associations are trying to determine who will be responsible for storm water facilities. Kress said that if the city wanted to do anything to them, it would have to have public access to them, but it currently does not.
- Commissioner White wondered if this was a place for a joint powers agreement between NOHOA and the City in order to accomplish the objective of the project and storm water issues at large. Voss noted that VLAWMO is a joint powers and the MN Water Steward program is an extension of how they have built a strong program of volunteers.
- Commissioner Lepoutre complimented the project and said it was a nice location where it can be appreciated by the community. He said it would be nice to confirm the path of the water flow since it is close to other areas including Gilfillan, Black Lake and Mallard Pond and there is interest in protecting those lakes. Voss said he would confirm the water flow and will correct himself if needed.
- Councilor Watson reminded the group that even though we are a community where NOHOA manages roads, etc., the city does have a few ordinances with which NOHOA needs to comply. Heretofore, we have not needed a JPA with NOHOA on projects such as this, and the cooperation has always been positive in the past.
- Chair Hawkins thanked Voss, Ellis, VLAWMO and asked that they pass on their thanks to Sierra Weirens as well.

b. Pleasant Lake Management, including authority, research, and plans (NOHOA)

- Patricia Orud volunteered on behalf of NOHOA to give a short overview about what is currently going on with Pleasant Lake.
- The work on Pleasant Lake started as a capstone project about 8 years ago when VLAWMO started working with NOHOA.
- Pleasant Lake perimeter is owned entirely by NOHOA. This includes the shoreline and the trail. Those who live adjacent to the trail are invited to use the land, and they are given a policy packet about how use the shoreline, including how to put in a dock, pumping water to irrigate lawns, etc. NOHOA is in the process of mapping all of these areas and working with homeowners to remove extraneous or noncompliant structures or approve new structures.
- NOHOA's statutes are more restrictive than city ordinances. The city ordinances provided a statutory floor, and then NOHOA decided what additional requirements they wanted to add.
- Dawn Tanner from VLAWO has written some articles in North Oaks News about the projects in Pleasant Lake and these have brought up some questions such as whether we are getting more sediment in West Bay because of water being pumped in. A sedimentation study determined that is not where the sediment is coming from.
- VLAWMO is also working with the regional water authority to study where zebra mussels are coming from.
- The St. Paul Water Authority has a lot to say about Pleasant Lake Water quality because it is the potable water supply for the city of St. Paul and other contract cities.
- Another project that VLAWMO is spearheading is the carp situation. The city has more carp per hectare than it should, so they are looking at the impact of carp on the lake. Carp are bottom feeders that like to eat the good aquatic plants and can be very damaging. The carp harvest depends on market for carp. It currently looks like it will happen in Fall 2021.
- VLAWMO has also studied the curly leaf pondweed. NOHOA got a DNR permit as well as permission from the water authority and the pollution control agency to treat it, but at the last minute the MN Dept. of Health said that treatment was contraindicated by their most recent standards. Although it will not happen this year, it may in the future.
- What about cutting the weeds for recreational purposes? For many years, NOHOA treated the lake chemically but they discontinued it because the copper sulfate in the treatment was settling into the sediment of the lake. NOHOA is looking at alternatives because not treating the weeds increases swimmer's itch, e. Coli, aquatic invasives, etc.
- Last year the weed harvester cut a channel 100 feet out from the shore and there was an option for those with docks to have weeds cut as well. This is a very temporary solution, but it encourages more weed growth long term.
- This year a dive team are coming to pull the weeds by hand around the beach. This is also an option for those with docks if they would like to pay for it. There will still be some weed cutting in certain places to improve the carp harvest.
- Last year NOHOA also removed the docks from the swimming area at Pleasant Lake beach because the docks accumulate bird feces which contributed to E. Coli blooms and swimmer's itch.
- In addition, NOHOA has a 3-part goose management plan that has been developed in conjunction with the DNR. It includes hazing, cleaning the beach 2x per day and doing a study to determine numbers and if there should be a reduction.

- If people have concerns about geese, they can call NOHOA to let them know so that NOHOA a better sense of where the problems are.
- Commissioner White asked what the limits are of Pleasant Lake of being a public water. Orud said it is a DNR designation. Councilman Watson explained that it is public water, but by MN statues, it is denied public access because it is a DNR test site for introducing fish and studying their growth. There are several lakes like that in MN.
- Orud added that property deeds within the NOHOA boundaries describes NOHOA as a game refuge that prohibits fishing, use of firearms, etc. Watson clarified that Pleasant Lake and Deep Lake are specifically off limits for fishing because of state statues related to the DNR test sites. Administrator Kress shared that this is MN Statute 6262.0500.
- Many NOHOA members ask for weed control on other lakes in the city. VLAWMO is helping NOHOA study the possibility for that.
- Chair Hawkins noted that the plan for goose management was very much appreciated. The city and the commission have been getting some concerned calls, and that there is a plan to study the geese over the season to see if reduction is necessary. They have included a goose management pamphlet from the DNR in the meeting packet with good ideas for geese hazing. Kelly Lynch Farris from the DNR also included additional information on goose deterrence. He suggested that these resources be posted on the city website.
- Councilor Watson suggested an item for future discussion: In the 90s, a DNR hydrologist said that docks should not be put on Pleasant Lake, and if they touched the land, NOHOA was responsible for telling the homeowner that the dock should be removed. The city may need to revisit that. Orud said NOHOA's shoreland policies were presumably predicated on advice from legal counsel that docks could be used, but she would follow-up on that.
- Administrator Kress shared the rules from the DNR about when a permit is needed for a dock, including rules for when it is touching land. ([Docks and Access in Public Waters | Minnesota DNR \(state.mn.us\)](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/docks/)).
- Councilor Watson noted that there was significant research by Jim Cooper from the University of MN about goose removal, and that they discovered the geese consistently returned. Pat said they had been in touch with Jim, and noted that the DNR really does not want the city to remove geese unless they are causing car accidents or other hazards.
- Commissioner Winsor asked if NOHOA was planning to do any sort of education for homeowners about geese. Pat said there should be an article coming out in the next North Oaks News. Chair Hawkins said Nine North may also be able to help create a short educational video.
- Councilor Watson had one more note that the City Council is working with the golf club to replace their septic system and connect to sewer. They have spent thousands of dollars to remove zebra mussels from their pipes. He believes that the source of the zebra mussels is the Coon Rapids dam. He is going to be talking to the people up there to see if there might be solutions. Orud did not dispute the conclusion, but said that the St. Paul regional water authority has said their filters are sufficient. She encouraged Watson to talk to Dawn Tanner, and that she may have already done some work on this. Watson noted that there is a new administrator, and that there may be the opportunity to re-start the conversation with that individual.
- Mark Rehder asked for clarification about what areas the goose management program will target. Orud said that it will start at Pleasant Lake Beach and will be expanded from there to eventually cover the whole community.

7. COMMISSIONER / STAFF REPORTS

7a. Tick Task Force Reports

- Chair Hawkins reported that the Tick Task Force has met twice since the last NRC meeting. The group got back together to reaffirm priorities, including getting a survey back out to the community. The plan is to make it a rolling survey to allow citizens to report when tick bites happen, thus gathering data in a more timely and accurate manner. The MN Department of Health is overwhelmed with COVID right now, so this will allow the task force to gather data independent of them and report back to the community on a monthly or bimonthly basis.
- Images of tick discs have been posted on the website, and some will also be given out at the Mary Hill event on May 22.
- The task force is interested in contributing to more publications such as the North Oaks Living magazine. They hope to share articles from other entities in the City's weekly eblasts, etc. If you have anything, please share with Commissioners Hawkins or White.
- The next meeting for the task force is scheduled for Tuesday, June 15th at 7:00 p.m. Link will be in the weekly email blast.

7b. Community Outreach

- Commissioner Winsor submitted a Community Outreach Report.
- She noted that Commissioner Kianian offered to write an article about National Pollinator week June 21-27. Kate will also do some email blasts through NOHOA and the city the week before and the week of the event.
- Farm fest is a go for September, so the commission should think about what kind of presence it wants to have at the event. Chair Hawkins asked question asked who has the NRC material from previous years? It was suggested that Commissioner Larson might have it stored somewhere. Hawkins has a table that can be used for the event. Winsor suggested that the commission create new informational boards that are a little simpler and more professional looking for the event. Mark Rehder said he would be happy to provide tree information for the event as well.

7c. NOHOA Nest –

- Patricia Orud noted there is a yellow iris is a problem in the lakes. Dawn Tanner from VLAWMO is going to lead a group to pull yellow iris. Please call the NOHOA office if you would like to assist. It requires a shovel, waders and a warm day.
- They ordered bugs for the purple loose strife but they haven't hatched yet. Must be hatched to get them on the plants.

7d. City Forester Report:

- **Report included in the packet**
- Mark Rehder noted that the brush pickup program was a success. He got good feedback from residents who appreciated the opportunity to drop brush at the curb. There were about 20 participants. The contractor, Langer's, was also happy.
- Leaf out is happening now, Rehder has been knocking on doors to let residents know if there is a problem with any brush or trees blocking visibility on the roads.

- Ash tree markings continue, noticing a slight uptick in symptoms. He is focusing on educating as much as possible to help people through the process and make it more voluntary than enforced.
- A few hazard sights were caught and worked with homeowner to resolve.

7e. VLAWMO Tech Committee Report:

- Skipped – Bob Larson not present

7f. City Report – Administrator Kress:

- Councilor Watson noted that the city hired a new city attorney Jim Thompson with the law firm Kennedy and Graven. Jim has a lot of experience in routine matters of compliance and business as well as prosecution with the MN League of Cities trust fund. We will also have the resources of a couple other attorneys on his team, including Judy Eddington who has done some work in North Oaks when the city sold some bonds to enable construction of Waverly Gardens.
- Watson said he hopes the new attorneys will be helpful as the city confronts the enormous capital costs coming down the pike in the future as the North Oaks Company disappears. He believes the city needs to look at what the Company’s responsibilities have been and what other resources are available to it to meet those needs.
- The Section 319 Wilkinson plan presented by Dawn Tanner and Phil Belfiori at the last NRC meeting will go before the VLAWMO board on June 23rd. The City Council will have a more serious conversation on the matter. There are three options, and now the question becomes how to finance. The most expensive option requires approximately \$110,000.
- Administrator Kress also noted that the city passed the 2040 comp plan and the Surface Water Management Plan.

7g. Water Bodies Report

- Commissioner Dunn has done some research on water bodies in North Oaks. She created a document and a pdf map that shows all of the water bodies in Ramsey County to educate the commission and help the City Council. Administrator Kress sent it out to the Commission to review.

8. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 7 p.m. through Virtual Means.

- Chair Hawkins asked when the commission could start meeting in person again. Administrator Kress said the governor plans were to lift the emergency order on the June 18, so perhaps one more meeting on Zoom, depending on rules for remote sessions.

ADJOURNED at 8:45 p.m.:

MOTION by Kate Winsor, seconded by David White, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION carried unanimously by roll call.

Kevin Kress, City Administrator

Chair, Andrew Hawkins

Date approved: _____

Outreach report

- Submitted fact sheet: Poison Ivy (this was based on a suggestion from a resident)
- Edited and submitted article re: pesticides and wildlife, written by a Pesticide Committee member
- Secured permission to reprint Star Tribune article about jumping worms
- Participated in virtual pesticide conference sponsored by Beyond Pesticides, which included sessions on managing communities without toxic chemicals, pollinators and biodiversity, and the urgency for nontoxic practices.
- Prepared and sent email blasts for City and NOHOA use re: National Pollinator Week
- Coordinated the addition of the Neonic article to city website

May Month in Review

May 2021



Rehder Forestry Consulting

- Homeowner calls at @ 12 Island View, 12 Cherrywood, 33 Eagle Ridge Road, 5 S. Deep Lake Rd, & 23 Long Lake Tr
- Meet with NRC on May 20th, 2021.
- Revised Oak Wilt Educational video through 9 North (formerly CSTV), should be ready for release soon.
- Worked with Langer's Tree to complete a successful Brush Pick-up program on May 14-15th.
- Continue to make residents aware of hazard tree situations that should be addressed.
- Marked a number of ash trees for removal that fit the criteria for Emerald Ash Borer (Year 3-4) disease.
- Gearing up for Dutch elm disease and oak wilt inspections.