

Northern Counties Land Use Coordinating Board

Minnesota Discovery Center, Chisholm

January 8, 2015

Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rich Sve at 9:30 a.m.

NCLUCB Members Present: Rich Sve, Brian McBride, Todd Miller, Garry Gamble, Wade Pavleck, Brian Napstad, Steve Raukar, Anne Marcotte,

Other Participants: Bob Lessard, DNR; John Chell, secretary

Administrative Actions:

Additions to Agenda: Election of NCLUCB officers for 2015.

Minutes of Dec. 9, 2014: Approval moved by Miller, Seconded by Pavleck. Approved.

Annual Election of NCLUCB Officers: Through unanimous consent all current officers were reelected for 2015: Rich Sve, Chair; Todd Miller, vice chair; and Steve Raukar, treasurer.

Financial Report:

General Fund: \$120,817.33

Accounts Payable:

Association of MN Counties \$ 223.40

J. Chell Prof Services \$ 768.87

Financial Report moved approval: M-McBride, S-Napstad

Audit: After a lengthy discussion, Gamble moved and Pavleck seconded revising the audit process by the following:

1. Frame the audit process and provide a scope of work document.
2. Solicit an audit bid from several suggested firms from within the region.
3. Contact the Hoffman firm and explain the reason for a broader solicitation for the audit work. Given the few number of actual financial transactions during the fiscal year, the cost of a compliance audit should be significantly less than the \$4600 proposed.

Wetland Legislation Update:

Commissioner Napstad noted a recent article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune. Napstad regarded the article as a misinterpretation of his advocacy for changes in the Wetland Conservation Act. He felt the author incorrectly suggested that changes in the wetland law were proposed to provide a more favorable approach to the various mining initiatives in Northern Minnesota. Several NCLUCB members agreed and felt that the article didn't understand that mining can only occur where economic concentrations of mineable mineral occur and those same areas may not provide meaningful opportunities for mitigation. NCLUCB is advocating either in lieu fees and/or an option to mitigate in areas of the state where wetland restoration can be more effective. This position should not be interpreted as making the environmental review process less rigorous or as a means to promote any specific project or industry. It is an attempt to make WCA a more strategic and effective tool for mitigating wetland loss in areas where wetland restoration will do the most good.

Bob Lessard commented that the Payment In Lieu may streamline the environmental review process as well as result in better mitigation projects. McBride agreed stating that various permit review delays are hurting businesses throughout the state. Gamble stated that the environmental community opposes any changes to the law and cites the opposition to in lieu fees by the Corps of Engineers. Raukar stated that the Corps can speak for themselves, the mining industry and business in general wants a level of predictability. If this legislation can make the permitting process more predictable while creating better mitigation projects, it is a win-win solution.

Commissioner Miller stated that most watershed districts already have designated priority areas for environmental restoration. Commissioner Marcotte inquired about the progress of Wisconsin's Payment in Lieu program. After a discussion regarding the Wisconsin initiative with the St. Paul District Corps of Engineers, Commissioner Pavleck moved and Commissioner Miller seconded a motion to authorize the Chair to inquire if a Wisconsin DNR representative might be available to address NCLUCB regarding their program. The Chair is authorized to provide normal and reasonable expenses for such a presentation. Unanimous.

EPA Ozone Regulations

Commissioner Napstad outlined the federal proposal to reduce ozone limits from 9ppb to 7ppb. He suggested that the way to view the scope of the various clean air initiatives is as follows: the Fond du Lac Class I proposal is a local issue, the Haze initiative is regional, and the new Ozone standards are national. In all three cases, however, air quality issues that may be several states away from us can affect the air quality regulations and economic growth of us locally. These three issues must be closely tracked by AMC, NACO and other associations.

Waters of the U.S.

Commissioner Sve has met with representatives of Congressman Nolan's staff and has extended an invitation to both the Congressman and his staff to meet with NCLUCB regarding his position on this issue. Commissioner Miller noted that the EPA administrator has stated her intentions to proceed regardless of any congressional action. Sve noted that while NACO was initially ambivalent about aggressively opposing the EPA position, they are now much more concerned about the issue.

Rep. Erickson Letter

NCLUCB members reviewed and approved the Erickson letter

Future Topics Survey

Members of NCLUCB listed the following topics for future discussion:

Forest Road Closures

Timber Wolf Ruling

Invasive Species Training and Regulations

Status of the Class I air quality issue

Blandin Paper Company property tax appeal

Next Meeting: Northome on February 5

Commissioner Sve suggested that NCLUCB consider holding the March meeting in conjunction with the AMC meeting at the Crown Plaza. We should also think about a dinner meeting at that time with legislators, specifically Sen. Baak and Rep. Dill.

Motion for adjournment: M-Gamble, S-Miller

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.