

Hickory Creek Watershed Planning Group
January 22, 2010 Meeting Minutes
Village of Homer Glen

Attendance: Ron Sly, Village of New Lenox - Chairman; Bill Eyring, Center for Neighborhood Technology - Coordinator; Robin Ellis, Village of New Lenox; Tim Good, Forest Preserve District of Will County; Rick Suttle, Ruetteger, Tonelli & Assoc.; Erin Venard, Village of Homer Glen; Paul Pearson, Village of Mokena; Tony Minette, Village of Frankfort; Scott Killinger, Will County Storm Water; Cindy Skrukud, Sierra Club; Traci Barkley, Prairie Rivers Network; Kim Ramirez, Frankfort Square; Julie Arvia, Frankfort Square Park District; Trent Stober, Geosyntec; Mark Willobee, Geosyntec; Jesse Elam, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Tom Schwerha, City of Joliet; Hal Sprague, CNT; Ann Piasecki, New Lenox

Ron Sly called the meeting to order at 9:15.
The minutes of December 10th were approved unanimously.

Water Resource Inventory.

Mark Willobee and Trent Stober made a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the inventory. The presentation will be placed on the Wiki site and attached to the email transmitting these minutes. In summary,

- Most of the work has centered on in-stream data compilation, GIS data compilation and analysis, and summary of the 2008 Integrated Water Quality Report
- Several maps have been prepared, including, but not limited to, municipal boundaries, land use, land cover, wetlands, and NPDES permitted facilities
- Database currently includes 17,170 entries for 49 sampling sites (33 sites with water quality data) collected between 1974 and 2008. Geosyntec is currently processing (“cleaning up”) the data to allow for analysis.
- Challenges in data analysis include piecemeal acquisition and a variety of complications to arrive a consistent set of data for analysis
- According to the 2008 Integrated Report, total phosphorus, sedimentation/siltation and chloride are the most common potential pollutant causes of impairment for aquatic life within the watershed.
- According to the 2008 Integrated Report, the most common potential non-pollutant causes of impairment for aquatic life include alterations of stream-side cover and flow regimes, and low dissolved oxygen levels
- Mark reiterated his request via e-mail to the municipal points of contact to identify places where there is:
 - Severe stream erosion
 - Excessive sediment deposition
 - Impacted stream buffers
 - Trash and debris
 - Problems due to stream crossings and storm sewer outlets
 - Channel modifications, and
 - Excessive algal growth

New Lenox, Frankfort and CNT had replied to the e-mail. An impressive reconnaissance of Hickory Creek within New Lenox was done in 2009. Ron mentioned frequent flooding

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at Route 6 and Marley Road. The information is needed within 2 weeks (February 5th) so that the suggestions can be compiled and analyzed. Geosyntec will then coordinate with the Group to prioritize problem areas to be visited during Geosyntec's watershed reconnaissance. The reconnaissance may potentially be conducted during February or March. Property owners will be contacted before site visits, as necessary.

Bill Eyring asked whether anything can be learned from analyzing flow records from USGS gages to document changes as urbanization has progressed. Trent and Mark said that modeling for TMDL projects has revealed that these are very complex analyses with many variables affecting any given storm flow, such as antecedent soil moisture, to relate flow rates simply to storm volumes and land use changes.

Plan Approval

Jesse Elam initiated a discussion about adoption of the Hickory Creek Watershed Plan by elected bodies in the watershed. Jesse proposed to the HCWPG that formal adoption of the plan be sought after it is complete in 2011. This has been done by resolution for other watershed plans that CMAP has been involved in producing. He recommended that each of the governmental representatives keep their leaders informed of the work and the status of planning so that the decision-makers feel comfortable with its provisions. It will be important that they agree with not only the general conclusions, but with specific recommendations for implementation. He emphasized the role of staff in communicating the plan's recommendations to elected officials as well as in helping craft the plan so that it will be acceptable to them. Jesse asked the staff present whether they would be comfortable in this role, along with perhaps an early presentation by HCWPG members, and they indicated that this would be acceptable.

Cindy Skrukrud suggested that we look at the Jackson Creek Plan to gain insight on what will be acceptable. The Kishwaukee Plan may be more relevant because it was actually adopted by the County and by the municipalities in the watershed, not just approved by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. One incentive for accepting a Plan is often the likelihood that Section 319 funds will become available for remediating specific problems, although a large local match is required.

In order to acquaint local officials with the Hickory Creek planning process, Bill Eyring offered to create a brief PowerPoint presentation that any of the members can use. He will have a draft ready for review and comments in February.

Committee Structure and Activities

Bill reported on his informal survey of 8 watershed groups about their structures, especially how they regarded the need for a steering committee. There was general agreement that at our stage of planning, a formal steering committee isn't needed. The Thorn Creek Ecosystem Partnership uses an example of a practical process. They have just a few committees, and each committee selects one of its members to serve as a steering committee member.

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Bill suggested that some of our committees be consolidated and that they each select a steering committee member.

- The **Technical Committee** would combine the Water Quality Issues, Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Habitat, and Flooding Issues Committees
- The **Communications and Public Outreach Committee**, formed at the December 10th meeting, will report on planning for brochure, website and social media
- The **Policy Review Committee** would continue to function, and
- The **Finance Committee** would, beginning later in 2010, work to create a sustainable long-term organization for the Hickory Creek Watershed.

Bill will bring a motion on these changes to the March HCWPG meeting.

A mockup of the brochure was passed out and discussed, and is attached to these minutes. There was general approval of the format and the emphasis on encouraging residents and leaders to get acquainted with the streams and other interesting watershed features. Those interested in the Communications and Public Outreach Committee will meet on February 26th in New Lenox at 9AM to plan for the brochure distribution and review plans for the website. In the meantime, CNT will finalize the brochure with input from Tim Good, Robin Ellis, Ann Piasecki, Kim Ramirez, Julie Arvia, Mark Willobee and Jesse Elam. The idea of a Hickory Creek Facebook page went over well: the Forest Preserve District of Will County and Pilcher Park both are on Facebook.

Hal Sprague reported that:

- MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) regulations have changed as of January 1st and now require each municipality to train its employees and contractors that are responsible for new construction in green infrastructure strategies and techniques.
- There is a strong possibility that there will be more stimulus funding available this year for stormwater management through the State Revolving Fund, and the Illinois EPA has indicated that it will be using some of it for green infrastructure projects. The new selection criteria are being developed, and Hal and Cindy will be following the process. Hickory Creek municipalities should be thinking about potential green infrastructure projects for which they can apply for funding.

Traci Barkley emphasized that the State will be looking for good projects for stimulus funding. As these matters were discussed, the concept evolved for the HCWPG to host a training event on the new MS4 requirements and possible stimulus projects for local, and not so local, municipalities. CNT has some funding for Hal to work on the event, and Mark and Trent suggested that Geosyntec could bring a highly-qualified trainer, Eric Strecker, from Geosyntec's Portland, Oregon office. Scott Killinger, Hal and Trent will follow up on this opportunity.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:46.

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Assignments and Announcements

- **Next meeting of the HCWPG – March 26th, 9AM at Joliet City Hall
In May we meet at Mokena**
- **Communications and Outreach Committee – February 26th 9AM at New Lenox Village Hall to plan brochure distribution and review website**
- **Send problem areas to Mark Willobee at mwillobee@geosyntec.com by Feb. 5th, if possible**
- **Send great places and/or photos to Bill Eyring at bille@cnt.org**
- **Bill will be contacting each municipality to gather Comprehensive Plans and ordinances**
- **Bill will put together brief PowerPoint for communications to decision-makers**
- **Hal, Trent and Scott will explore a workshop on MS4s and stimulus projects**