

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
MONDAY, April 1, 2019 6:00 PM - 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** The City Council of Inver Grove Heights met in Work Session on Monday, April 1, 2019, in the Inver Grove Heights Council Chambers. Mayor George Tourville called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present were Mayor Tourville; Councilmembers Bartholomew, Perry, Piekarski Krech, and Dietrich.

Staff: City Administrator Joe Lynch, Assistant City Attorney Bridget McCauley Nason, Assistant City Engineer Steve Dodge, and City Clerk Michelle Tesser.

**1) JOINT PRESENTATION BY LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER WMO AND EAGAN-INVER GROVE HEIGHTS WMO**

Assistant City Engineer Steve Dodge stated that representatives from Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation Districts of both the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization WMO, and the Eagan/Inver Grove Heights WMO would be presenting. He stated that Ashley Gallagher and Joe Barton will be providing an overview of the programs and services provided by each Watershed Management Organization. He commented that there were also some residents who are on the Board in attendance.

Ashley Gallagher, Dakota County SWCD & Eagan-Inver Grove Heights WMO Administrator gave the following presentation on WMO (Watershed Management Organization):

History and why to have a WMO:

- 1982 Surface Water Management Act
- Mandatory in 7-County metro area
- Can exist as Joint Powers Organizations among cities
- No taxing authority, rather collect dues
- Often choose to not impose regulations
- Board Appointed by member City Councils
- Inter-Community drainage/flow issues
- May implement project when:
  - Projects are defined in the Plan
  - Petition by member city for projects
- Dakota County has: 4 WMO's, 1 JPO, 1 WD

Eagan – Inver Grove Heights WMO

- Formed in 2014
- Previously Gun Club Lake WMO
- 5 Board Members (2 IGH and 3 Eagan)
- Mission: To oversee member city implementation programs and foster civic engagement within the watershed that promotes citizen participation and responsibility in protecting and improving our water resources.

She stated that this organization completed their first watershed management plan in 2016. Another part of the WMO is that they have many reporting requirements. One of those items is the annual report that is required. She stated that a lot of the work that a WMO does is help cities report on water education. They provide communication with a website and newsletters. She stated that funding is an aspect and that being a WMO allows them access to grants.

She discussed the following three programs and projects that the organization supports:

1. Landscaping for Clean Water: Run by Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District. This program has been around for ten years. The primary purpose of the program is to educate homeowners and give them the means and guidance to install raingardens, native gardens, and shoreline practices. The program involves an intro class and then people can sign up for a design class. She stated that they oversee them all the way through and at the end they receive a \$250.00 grant.
2. CLIMB Theatre: An Inver Grove Heights organization that has programming that is tailored to stormwater quality. They travel around to elementary schools and give interactive presentations.
3. Master Water Stewards: This is through the Freshwater Society. The cities or the WMO's can support a citizen to go through the Master Waters Stewards Program. They dedicate time and hours similar to the Master Gardener's Program. There is a capstone project at the end that must be completed for the community they serve.

She stated that there are many programs that the WMO leads. The following are three of them:

- Rainbarrels: This program will be kicking off this year. The WMO is finding some financial assistance so that anyone in the watershed has access to a rainbarrel at a discounted price. The cost would be \$40.00 which is less than you can purchase them for. There are also education and outreach components included, such as helping with installation.
- Library Bags: Bags will be available at Inver Glen Library and Westcott Library in Eagan. These are water themed bags that contain water related activities for adults and children to check out like a library book.
- Neighborhood Meetings: These coincide with a CIP project that a city is doing. If there is a retrofit taking place on a stormwater pond, they would look for a partner in that neighborhood, such as a homeowner who would like to host a meeting. They invite them and their neighbors together to discuss the project that the City would do in the neighborhood and programming that they could participate in.

Joe Barton stated that he works for the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District. He stated that the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization is trying to get their name out there and provide services to residents and member cities as much as they can. They serve on an annual basis and provide services via contract between the SWCD and the Lower Mississippi WMO. He stated that he considers himself their sole staff member and Administrator. He discussed the following related to the Lower Mississippi River WMO:

- Formed in 1985 – 55.8 square miles
- 7 Board Managers and 7 Alternate Board Managers (2 Vacant). The Joint Powers Agreement stipulates that each city gets one Manager and one Alternate Board Manager. He stated that they are missing an Alternate Board Member for Inver Grove Heights. There is also a vacancy in St. Paul.
- Watershed Management Plan as guide. This plan is required by the State and was last created in 2011. This will be updated in the next couple of years.
- Vision Statement: Water resources and related ecosystems are managed to sustain their long-term health and integrity through member city collaboration and partnerships with other water management organizations with member city citizen support and participation.

He stated that the seven member cities include: Inver Grove Heights, Lilydale, Mendota Heights, South St. Paul, Sunfish Lake, St. Paul, and West St. Paul.

He stated that the ten-year watershed management plan guides them. They produce an annual activity report and a newsletter. He stated that a lot of state grants are only accessible to watershed management or watershed districts. They partner with cities to find beneficial water quality projects that the city may not have funding access to. They can help bridge that gap. He stated that the management plan identifies issues in the watershed and prioritizes projects based on the resources. They target their efforts on the lowest water quality lakes and conduct studies on those waterbodies and implement projects in partnership with the city to see water quality improvements.

He discussed the following information related to studies:

- The need to have a plan often includes hiring a consultant, working with multiple cities, and determining who is responsible for what. For example: Seidl's Lake is owned by South St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights. He stated that they have some active projects that they are seeking out with both cities. He stated that another example is Thompson Lake and the contaminated sediments. He stated that a study would determine how to take out the sediment that has been dumping into that lake for the last 60 years. There is a lawsuit regarding the contamination.
- Allowable flow calculations help them figure out when they have a shared project between three cities and how to come to an agreement on payment responsibilities. The JPA and the WMO sets expectations and standards for the collaboration of projects.
- Water quantity and quality. Making improvements to water quality and not just the water flow.
- Identify Grant and project opportunities. The WMO is trying to be a helpful partner to the member cities.

He discussed projects completed within the last few years and stated that an Alum treatment is a newer practice where you take a water body that has certain conditions. Alum creates a layer, caps off the bottom of the lake, and captures the phosphorus chemically within the lake to reduce algae flows or blooms and increase water quality. He stated that an alum treatment has been implemented on Lakes Augusta and Sunfish. Those were identified as having the lowest water quality. Sunfish Lake saw dramatic improvements. He stated that problems in the lakes took decades to accumulate and takes time to improve. He discussed Thompson Lake in West St. Paul, another project listed as a result from a study done in 2014 by the WMO, and the various steps they would take toward stormwater management. He stated that when they first discovered sediment in the lake it took about nine years to construction. It's a lengthy process with a lot of involvement to make a big project come to fruition.

He discussed the following items that the LMR/WMO is involved with:

- Water Quality Monitoring. Priorities are set annually with some cities doing their own monitoring. Data is collected and analyzed to identify issues and set priorities.
- Education Programs. They have a lot of the same ones that they already partner on within the Lower Mississippi River WMO. The goal is to have County wide programs so there are not multiple entities having similar education programs for stormwater management. He stated that there is one master program that would work everywhere. The WMO provides that and pools funds that come from the cities to provide that service to all residents.
- Metro Watershed Partners. This is an organization that, through the WMO, cities can take advantage of other water resources and natural resources educational materials.
- Master Water Stewards. This gives another level of community engagement and education. Residents go through a series of classes and then become volunteers that the city can utilize at tabling events to put out information for programs or the WMO.
- Storm Drain Stenciling Program. This is a new program beginning this year and is provided throughout the WMO to provide kits for residents to use.

He discussed State funds stating that funds have come from the 2008 Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment. He commented that this funding is changing to a different method with more of a watershed-based approach. He stated that they are going to require, by 2025, for the entire State of Minnesota, 81 watershed boundaries will have to be covered by a watershed plan. If you have a watershed plan you are eligible for some level of base funding. He stated that in the seven County metro area it is referred to as metro watershed-based funding.

He stated that the ten-year plan was last done in 2011 and will be redone by August 2021. The ten-year cycle gives the opportunity to reassess priorities. He stated that they will be reaching out to member cities for their list of projects, priorities, and issues that exist in Inver Grove Heights and how to merge that with the priorities and issues with the WMO and the other member cities. They will then decide which of those rise to the top to be implemented in that ten-year cycle.

Mayor Tourville thanked them for attending and discussing the programs.

Councilmember Bartholomew asked the Assistant City Engineer if there was access from the city website to the County website for water management and if there were links. Assistant City Engineer Steve Dodge responded that they have been updating the website. He commented that he would check to see if the links were available.

Councilmember Piekarski Krech asked how information about the rainbarrel and classes would get out to the residents. She recommended that the information should get out more often.

Mayor Tourville stated that the bigger group that covers most of Inver Grove Heights is the LMR WMO. He commented that the Eagan/Inver Grove Heights Watershed Management District is a much smaller spectrum. He asked if they needed to be careful of advertising the different programs because Eagan/Inver Grove Heights is a separate organization. He stated that they are short an alternate and asked if they could get that information on the website.

Mayor Tourville stated that a few Simley students did some lake monitoring of a few area lakes.

Mr. Barton responded about the Board and stated that they are lucky that a lot of the City Engineers attend the meeting as advisors. He stated that city staff can no longer be representatives, but there are citizen board members and alternate board members. He commented that nearly all City Engineers attend the meetings. He addressed the Landscaping for Clean Water Program and stated that one of the benefits is that it is county wide. You can live in Eagan and go to a class in Farmington and still get the grant.

Councilmember Dietrich asked if they have noticed a difference in water quality since switching over from the sand/salt mix to the organic sugar beet byproduct in the winter. Mr. Barton responded that they are trying to do a better job this year monitoring the chloride. He stated that when the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency goes through their ten-year cycle, they should be monitoring every single body of water of a certain size. He stated that he would have to go back and dig deeper for information about the chloride levels. He responded that the Lower Mississippi River WMO has been focusing more on phosphorus and water clarity through their volunteer monitoring program. Monitoring for chloride is a different protocol that they are working towards doing more of in the future as it is a bigger issue.

Mayor Tourville asked Assistant City Engineer Dodge if there are projects on the horizon that engineering would be taking a look at. City Engineer Dodge responded that they meet annually with Dakota County Soil and Water and go over future projects to look for funding. He stated that one of the key features they need to understand is that in order to secure that funding, the projects need to be determined far in advance. He commented that one challenge that they may run into with their reconstruction projects is that it would be nice to know what 2020 reconstruction projects are at this time of the year so that they can speak with the watershed and secure watershed-based funding. He stated that securing the CIP Program and identifying future reconstructions or improvement projects as far out in advance as possible helps them to secure the funding and work with the WMO.

Assistant City Engineer Dodge stated that with the raingarden workshop, they are now beginning to offer maintenance workshops. Those workshops are offered at the VMCC. He stated that the annual report states how many Inver Grove Heights residents have participated. He stated staff is working on raingardens in Inver Grove Heights that have maintenance agreements from private individuals. He commented that Master Water Stewards may be looking for volunteer hours, this could be a way to help citizens. He stated that he has received calls from some that have been in the roadside raingarden program and have aged out of it. He commented that this would be a good opportunity to have a Master Water Steward assist the city.

Mayor Tourville stated to communicate with the City Council if they need enough time in order to get part of the plan. He asked if Metro Council is involved in the funding mechanism. Mr. Barton responded that in the last three years they started their own stormwater improvement grant that only allows funding to go to a watershed district or a watershed management organization. He stated one project they did near Seidl's Lake had a \$150,000 grant from the Met Council that was led by the City of South St. Paul.

Mayor Tourville asked the other members in attendance to introduce themselves so they can be thanked for what they do.

Sharon Lencowski, 4000 East 66<sup>th</sup> Street, Inver Grove Heights, stated that she has been on both boards for Inver Grove Heights for the last five years. She thanked the Council for the opportunity.

Joe Reymann, 526 Chapel Lane, Eagan, stated that he lives on the edge of Burr Oaks Park. He stated that he was involved in the Gun Club WMO in the City of Eagan and transitioned from Gun Club to Eagan-Inver Grove Heights. He stated that he is in his eighth year of serving.

Dawn Gekke, 7477 Cahill Avenue, stated that she is a new member of the Master Water Stewards program and is just earning her certification. She commented that she needs a lot of volunteer hours and to let her know of anyone that may need the help. She stated that she is earning her Masters in Sustainable Management and is looking forward to working with everyone on future projects.

City Administrator Joe Lynch stated that himself, Assistant City Engineer Dodge, and Public Works Director Thureen will work together to see what links there may be to the WMO so they have the information. He stated that they will also make sure to have access to the website for the information and discuss a plan in finding an alternate. He stated that one of the challenges to finding an alternate is that there have not been a lot of people that have expressed interest in this before. He stated that Commission appointments are coming up so the timing may be right.

## **2) CUSTOMER SURVEY UPDATE**

City Administrator Lynch gave an overview and summary on the customer survey and stated that in 2018 the first city survey was conducted. He stated that after discussions the City Council asked for additional demographic information, which was added. On March 15<sup>th</sup> a PDF of the survey and the link were sent out to the council for feedback, comments or changes. There were no responses back. He stated that the survey went out today and will be out for 30 days. This survey is for residents, visitors and those that work in the City. Lynch stated that staff will have 30 days to collect the information. He stated that they would send the ratings and comments out with the Friday news email. He commented that the Council had asked to see the responses before it was published to see what people had to say. He stated that if there were people that wanted to be contacted, those would be centrally gathered through Management Analyst Shelley Calvert, and then given to the correct department heads. He stated that they asked that contact be made within seven to ten days, and that they would not be waiting until the end of the survey to follow-up with those requesting to be contacted. He stated that an Insights article would come out in June, published ratings and comments would be heard at the end of June, and a discussion about the report in July. The results must be reported to the State of Minnesota. Lynch stated that this is going to be a June to July calendar period. The previous calendar period was January to December.

Councilmember Piekarski Krech asked how people were finding out that the survey was live and available. City Administrator Lynch responded that it has been put out on social media, the website and email lists. There are also hard copies available at the City Hall and the VMCC.

Mayor Tourville commented that at the last session it was suggested to have hard copies available for the seniors meeting. He stated that some had asked to take additional copies for others.

Councilmember Piekarski Krech stated that a lot of people may not have online access. She commented that a press release may be necessary to get the information out there. There are a lot of people that don't look at social media. She suggested going to more places that people may go such as the library or placing information in church bulletins. She commented that she was concerned about having a narrow focus.

Mayor Tourville stated that the survey would be discussed in Insights. City Administrator Lynch responded that the April Insights would be coming out next week.

City Clerk Michelle Tesser stated that she had heard from the Communication Specialist that the survey was dropped off at the library and that there would be a press release to the media.

City Administrator Lynch stated that they added additional questions such as how people receive communication. This way they can understand what the best method of contact could be. He stated that Parks and Recreation also narrowed down how effective the brochure is and whether it is utilized or not. He commented that this is a work in progress and will continue to be worked on.

Councilmember Dietrich asked if they would be going over the results at the July work session. She asked if there was a plan put in place the last time the survey was done. City Administrator Lynch responded that they would review the results, compile them, break them down, and group the comments by category. The Council will see them at the end of May in raw form.

He responded about the last survey and said that was the first time they had done a survey and that they didn't expect that many comments. He stated that they are doing a better job of preparing this year. He stated that they do contact everyone that indicated that they wanted to be contacted either by email or phone. The information will be available when completed as to who was contacted by who so they can see timely follow-up and the comments made.

## **B. ADJOURN:**

**Motion by Dietrich second by Piekarski Krech to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Minutes prepared by Recording Clerk Yourczek.