



## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 – 4:00pm – 5:00pm  
Virtual Meeting – 127 N. Wyman St., Suite 100

**ATTENDEES:** Ian Linnabary, Reno and Zahm; Dennis Anthony, Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District; Kerry Leigh, Natural Land Institute; Alyssa Robinson, Rebecca Olson, Olson Ecological Solutions; Tim Bragg, Tom Lind, Rockford Park District; Scott Capovilla, Colin Belle, City of Rockford-Planning; Ashley Sarver; Gary Anderson Architects; Sean Von Bergen, Winnebago County Highway Department; Dan Kane, Boone County Conservation District; Brad Roos, Sustain Rockford; Allen Mills, Kaylin Janicke, Margaret Campbell, Jon Paul Diipla, Region 1 Planning Council.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- a) **Call to Order:** Ms. Sarver called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.
- b) **Attendee Introductions:** Mr. Linnabary then took over. He began by welcoming attendees to the meeting – and then turned it over to Mr. Mills for a roll call of the attendance list. Mr. Mills completed roll call which is reflected in the above attendees.
- c) **Approval of November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 meeting minutes:** Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion for approval. Mr. Linnabary 1<sup>st</sup>ed the approval (4:10 PM); it was 2<sup>nd</sup>d by Mr. Von Bergen (4:10 PM). Approval passes unanimously at 4:11 PM. Motion passes unanimously.

### 2. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- a) **2019 Winnebago County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan:** Mr. Von Bergen provided an update on the Winnebago County Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan. The update included information related to the adoption process by local municipalities. All of the municipalities included in the plan have adopted the plan as per the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements located within the plan. Winnebago County Highway Department is now waiting on Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) reimbursement per their contract. Additionally, Mr. Von Bergen provided a timeline for the next five years, stating that they are hoping to begin the process again ahead of time in 2023/2024 as to not make it a rushed process.
- b) **South Fork Kent Creek Watershed Plan & Presentation:** Mr. Lind provided an introduction to the South Fork Kent Creek Watershed Plan, including background on the goals and (Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Section 319 grant that the Region 1 Planning Council (RPC) is pursuing in coordination with Olson Ecological Solutions (OES). Ms. Robinson provided an in-depth presentation on the plan, implementation, and individuals/organizations involved (this presentation was provided to the Environmental Planning Committee (EPC) after the meeting and is available [here](#)). Mr. Mills discussed the potential roles for RPC. These included, but are not limited to: establishing the topic as a recurring agenda item of the EPC, designating a lead/leads for facilitating implementation of items located within the Plan, and holding stakeholder meetings. Ms. Robinson continued her presentation, explaining the IEPA Section

319 grant and a breakdown of the plan. Ms. Robinson also clarified that watershed planning is generally not regulatory in nature, rather it is voluntary only (i.e. the language and elements identified within watershed plans is limited to individuals electing to participate). She then opened the floor up to questions.

**Question:** Mr. Roos inquired about whether the IEPA Section 319 grant was a planning grant. Mr. Mills explained that the IEPA Section 319 grant is utilized for watershed planning as well as for implementation elements. Mr. Roos inquired about the status of the Keith Creek project. Mr. Mills stated that it would be discussed later in group reports (see line item number three). Mr. Roos highlighted the local Habitat for Humanity homes in the South Fork Kent Creek watershed area – noted that they should be considered in planning items. Mr. Roos inquired about the Bee Branch Creek’s planning process influence on the South Fork Kent Creek’s planning process. Ms. Olson explained that OES had seen the presentation provided by the City of Dubuque related to the Bee Branch Creek’s planning process and considered it. Mr. Roos also inquired about the involvement of other organizations in the planning process. Ms. Olson explained that a number of technical and community organizations were involved in the planning process for the South Fork Kent Creek Watershed Plan. Mr. Roos also inquired about where to view the plan. Mr. Mills explained that it can be found on the Rockford Park District (RPD) Levings Lake website (see link in 2-b-i).

**Question:** Ms. Leigh inquired about the RPD’s interest in having the Natural Land Institute (NLI) pursue funding to purchase easements (in the form of properties) along the South Fork Kent Creek? Mr. Lind responded that the RPD would definitely be interested in having that conversation.

The draft South Fork Kent Creek Watershed Plan is available at the link below and individuals are encouraged to provide feedback to OES or the RPD. <https://rockfordparkdistrict.org/levings-park>. Ms. Olson asked everyone to consider taking part and becoming a lead for implementation projects.

**3. GROUP REPORT SESSION:** Mr. Linnabary asked for any group reports or agency updates.

- a) Mr. Roos announced that Sustain Rockford is hosting the 2021 Greentown Conference in partnership with the City of Rockford, Rockford Convention and Visitors Bureau (RCVB), RPD, Seven Generations Ahead, and A5 Digital. As part of the conference, there will be a presentation on the climate crisis. For the 2021 conference, Sustain Rockford would like to host several events leading up to the conference to raise awareness. \$20,000 has already been raised – this covers the fee to bring the conference to an area. Sustain Rockford is always taking additional donations. He also announced that the 2020 Greentown Conference will be held in virtually – hosted by Cook County. For those that are interested in more information or being involved in an advisory group – reach out to Brad Roos.
- b) Mr. Von Bergen discussed the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HGMP) funding. In the past, Winnebago County Highway Department (WCHD) was not awarded any funding for mitigation. The WCHD will be reapplying again this year through FEMA (and IEMA). The focus of this year’s applications will be on implementation of two watershed plans (Madigan and Buckbee Creek) (e.g. stream bank restoration). Mr. Von Bergen highlighted the WCHD’s interest in these kind of projects (and in partnership on these kinds of projects). Mr. Von Bergen note the 5-year revolving cycle for planning and implementation of watershed funding – he stressed to the Committee that now is the time to apply for funding for a number of watersheds (as they are currently in priority cycle).

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- c) Mr. Mills highlighted the Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan: Public Survey which is available on the RPC's website. Additionally, Mr. Mills highlighted the funding awards to the RPC from the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) funding grant program. RPC was awarded three separate funding grants: (1) Passenger Rail Station Conceptual Siting Analysis, (2) Keith Creek Corridor Study, and the (3) the Regional Freight Plan.

**Question:** Mr. Roos inquired about who the lead for the Keith Creek Corridor Study is? Mr. Mills responded that this initiative is a joint effort by the Region 1 Planning Council the City of Rockford. Mr. Mills stated that he would be point of contact for additional questions.

**Question:** Ms. Leigh inquired about who the lead for the Regional Freight Plan Study is and their contact information? Mr. Mills responded that it was Sydney Turner (RPC) and provided her email.

**Question:** Ms. Sarver questioned whether IEPA Section 319 funding was a good option for the Keith Creek Corridor implementation phases? Mr. Mills responded that depending on the Keith Creek's classification within the IEPA (and EPA) – there is the potential for funding. Additionally, Mr. Mills noted that the application to award time for the IEPA Section 319 grant is long; and Mr. Mills noted that for the Keith Creek – there are more appropriate sources of funding.

- d) Ms. Leigh inquired about the status of the Groundwater Study project, applied for through the Coca Cola Foundation, since it was not awarded funding. Mr. Kane stated that they are working with identified sites to identify those that are best utilized for wells; Mr. Kane noted that this was funded with grant money. Ms. Leigh told him to contact the EPA about integrating ideas and water resources.
- e) Mr. Von Bergen inquired about the structure of the IDOT SPR funding grant program. Mr. Von Bergen inquired about whether or not the funding could be used for implementation (similar to the IEPA Section 319 funding) or was it restricted to planning elements only? Mr. Mills stated that the IDOT SPR funding grant program is restricted to planning only, it is not allowed to be used for any kind of implementation or engineering elements.
- f) Mr. Mills discussed the RPC's Online Bicycle Facilities Map. The online version of the map will be released in the Fall of 2020; and an ArcGIS Map version will be available to partners soon after. The online map will be available for access through the RPC's website.

#### 4. ADJORNMENT

- a) Mr. Linnabary stated that the next Environmental Committee meeting is scheduled for **September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020** at 4:00pm, most likely via video/teleconference but will depend on external factors.
- b) Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Von Bergen 1st'ed the motion (5:09 PM); it was 2nd'd by Mr. Capovilla (5:09 PM). Approval passes unanimously at 5:10 PM. Motion passes unanimously.

*Opportunities for public comment will be afforded on all agenda items.*

*Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact R1PC at 815-319-4180 at least two working days before the need for such services or accommodations.*

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