

REGULAR MEETING OF THE RCWD BOARD OF MANAGERS

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Shoreview City Hall Council Chambers 4600 North Victoria Street, Shoreview, Minnesota

Meeting also conducted by alternative means (teleconference or video-teleconference) from remote locations

1		Minutes
2	CALL TO ORDER	
3	President Mic	hael Bradley called the meeting to order, a quorum being present, at 9:00 a.m.
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5	ROLL CALL	
6	Present:	President Michael Bradley, 1 st Vice-Pres. John Waller, 2 nd Vice-Pres. Steve Wagamon,
7		Treasurer Marcie Weinandt, and Secretary Jess Robertson
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9	Absent:	None
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11	Staff Present:	Regulatory Manager Patrick Hughes, Watershed Technician/Inspector Will Roach, Program
12		Support Technician Emmet Hurley (video-conference), Project Manager David Petry (video
13		conference), Office Manager Theresa Stasica
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15	Consultants:	District Engineer Chris Otterness from Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI); District Attorney
16		Chuck Holtman from Smith Partners
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18	Visitors:	Chris Stowe, Roshaan Grieme (video-conference)
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21	SETTING OF THE AGENDA	

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26 27 28 District Administrator Tomcik requested that an item be added to the agenda under Items for Discussion and Information as a new #1, Precipitation Events and the Rice Creek Watershed District Landscape.

Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Bradley, to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion carried 5-0.

READING OF THE MINUTES AND THEIR APPROVAL

Minutes of the September 9, 2024, Workshop and September 11, 2024, Board of Managers Regular 29 Meeting. Motion by Manager Robertson, seconded by Manager Weinandt, to approve the minutes as 30 presented. Motion carried 5-0. 31

4325 Pheasant Ridge Drive NE #611 | Blaine, MN 55449 | T: 763-398-3070 | F: 763-398-3088 | www.ricecreek.org

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CONSENT AGENDA

The following items will be acted upon without discussion in accordance with the staff recommendation and associated documentation unless a Manager or another interested person requests opportunity for discussion:

Table of Contents-Permit Applications Requiring Board Action 36

No. Applicant Location Plan Type Recommendation 37 24-058 Walters MRF LLC Final Site Drainage Plan CAPROC 3 items 38 Blaine

It was moved by Manager Weinandt and seconded by Manager Wagamon, to approve the consent agenda as outlined in the above Table of Contents in accordance with RCWD District Engineer's Findings and Recommendations, dated September 17, 2024. Motion carried 5-0.

OPEN MIC/PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Stowe, 426 Pine Street, stated that he had attended the City meeting at Lino Lakes earlier in the week and he was confused. He explained that he had been told that the culverts on West Pine Street were lowered and that the District controls them, but at the last RCWD Board meeting, he was told that the next one down that crosses Andall Street was controlled by Lino Lakes and that the elevations were at the correct heights. He noted that he felt they were at the old correct heights and not the new ones because the pipes have been lowered. He asked who controlled the pipes because he was told by the City of Columbus and the City of Lino Lakes that they control the ditches, but the culverts were controlled by the District. He stated that the District had lowered the culvert north of him but now south of him was the City of Lino Lake's problem. He stated that he felt it needed to be both lowered and increased in size. He showed the Board some photos on his phone from the last rain event that occurred during the summer. He expressed concern about development and also the desire by Lino Lakes to bring in city sewer and water near this location which is land that is currently zoned agricultural. He stated that he did not believe that they should be doing any of the work that they were already doing until they all get the ACD 10-22-32 issues figured out because it was essentially a disaster. He stated that he was unsure if the District controlled the pipes that were downstream from him, and reiterated that he has been told that the elevations are correct, but noted that they were off of the old drawings, and they ended up lowering the culverts at both West Pine Street and Pine Street which floods him out even more. He noted that he had been talking with an individual who had purchased land in Columbus who told him that part of his property used to drain to Coon Creek but now that they have developed stuff in Blaine, his property was also getting flooded out. He stated that it appears that the water is being forced over from Coon Creek into the Rice Creek system which means it is flooding even worse.

District Engineer Otterness stated that regarding the ownership of the culverts under the roadway, the District, as the Drainage Authority, is responsible for the drainage system, however, any of the culverts that are along the system that are under a roadway are the responsibility of the road authority. He stated that the District identifies when those roadway culverts have been undersized or too high, thus constituting an obstruction to the system. He explained that the District has collaborated with the cities in order to get those culverts lowered or properly sized when they have identified as a potential obstruction. He stated that with regard to the floodplain, the District has a rule that requires any property that places more than 100 cubic yards of fill within a floodplain to mitigate that fill, meaning they would have to excavate somewhere on their property in order to compensate for the amount of floodplain volume that would otherwise be lost in the system. He stated that if fill was brought in on a development, then the property

owner would need to determine where they can excavate to make up for the difference in volume. He 74 75 noted that there are some that they have anticipated and have identified floodplain mapping in the area Mr. Stowe was referring to and explained that the District has recognized that there is a substantial portion 76 77 of the potentially developable area draining to the ACD 10-22-32 that is within the floodplain.

Mr. Stowe stated that he agreed with that but explained that the problem he was having right now is with both the culverts that cross into Lino Lakes. He stated that Lino Lakes was not officially notified about those culverts so he thinks someone messed up, if the pipes are theirs once it crosses that line, because the lowered the pipes north of him but had not downstream of him, nor did they increase any of the sizes. He stated that they now have storm surges going on which is why the sod farms were getting flooded out even worse and when they are underwater, he is underwater, because the whole system cannot take it, so it was spilling over the banks of ACD 10-22-32. He stated that the District seems to be saying that the culverts are now the city's responsibility and asked why the District had lowered the pipes on Pine Street. He explained that he felt this should have been a joint venture between the District, the City of Columbus, and the City of Lino Lakes and that he should have been notified immediately and noted that he felt that there were liabilities issues going on.

- District Administrator Tomczik stated that the District, including its inspection staff, have been hard at work 89 on ACD 10-22-32 and have done a records affirmation and confirmed all the work on the system. He asked 90 District Engineer Otterness if, within all the survey work, the culverts were consistent with the ACSIC. 91
- District Engineer Otterness stated that for the work that has been completed by the District, those 92 elevations were consistent with the ACSIC. He stated that they have done a repair report in the past to 93 identify the capacity of the culverts and identified that the capacity was sufficient based on those metrics. 94 He noted that there would be a forthcoming report for the Board that will talk about the culverts on Pine 95 Street and the relation to the two others downstream. 96
- District Administrator Tomczik reminded the Board that Mr. Stowe had appeared before the Board 97 previously about this issue and a determination had been made to put this item on their October Workshop 98 meeting which was the report that District Engineer Otterness was referring to. He assured the Board that 99 the work that the District does includes communications with the cities. He explained that they do work 100 101 and collaborate with those entities and notification is consistent with the existing Statutes. He stated that the capacity of the system is the capacity of the system, and things that go beyond that and proposals like, 102 lowering a culvert or increase the size of this culvert would be legally designated as improvements to the 103 system which is a whole different matter beyond the maintenance that is undertaken. 104
- 105 Mr. Stowe stated that the District did an improvement of the system upstream of him.
- 106 District Administrator Tomczik clarified that the District had not constructed what would be legally designated as an improvement on the system under the drainage code. 107
- 108 Mr. Stowe suggested that the Board come out to Pine Street and take a look at the ditch, look at the 1890 109 surveys, the grade of the road, and how the water in the ditch now flows the opposite of the grade of the road. He stated that by combining all the ditches and creating ACD 10-22-32, they were now sending the 110 water uphill toward his place. He noted that they had to lower the ditch because they ran out of elevation 111

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which is why the power poles are leaning towards the street. He stated that he questioned the District 112 saying that the numbers were all good and reiterated his suggestion for them to look at the 1890 surveys. 113

Manager Waller stated that the whole ACD 10-22-32 complex is not just a question of what the capacity of the drainage system is because there are so many places where there are muck soils. He stated that the District, as the stormwater conveyance authority, isn't limited just to the 103E portion, which is the capacity, and explained that, in his opinion, they haven't adequately taken into consideration what the roads do to those areas that are adjacent the ditches that have the muck soils. He stated that the flowage of water through the muck soils that no longer takes place and now has to go through a straw, is a problem. He stated that the District has the authority to take a look at ground water that is just below the surface and how the water does and doesn't flow there. He noted that the District also had authority to work with the cities to do planning for stormwater conveyance systems under chapter 103B. He stated that this is a situation that has happened many times in the past because of the piecemeal approach to things, but in this case, it was active. He stated that he felt it was important for the District to not just consider the elevation of the culvert and the capacity of the actual drainage ditch, but also what the road situation was in 1890, the impact of building a road through a wetland with muck soil versus permeable soils, and how it would impact the area. He stated that he can remember seeing pictures of the same type of thing while serving on the Board a number of years ago on ditch 55 where all the homes were being put in on the west side. He stated that he felt that when the Board holds their workshop, they need to look at more than just chapter 103E but also what they can do about working with the cities for the other part.

Manager Robertson stated that she wanted to once again suggest that this item be brought to a workshop. 131 She stated that she feels that sometimes Open Forum turns into an agenda item which should really just be 132 an opportunity for the Board to hear the concerns of the residents and then for staff to take direct to place 133 it on the workshop agenda. She stated that she felt it wasn't appropriate to dialogue this matter during 134 135 the Open Forum portion of their meeting and suggested that the Board move on to the next agenda item.

President Bradley stated that the Board had already directed staff to bring this item back to the workshop meeting in October. He noted that they have also had discussions with the City of Columbus about the need for systemic planning because this is something that the District alone cannot fix.

ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

2025 Stormwater Management Grant Release

Watershed Technician/Inspector Roach presented the program documents for the 2025 Stormwater Management Program. He noted that they had been presented to the CAC at their September 4, 2024 meeting and based on their feedback, the documents have had a few revisions. He gave a brief overview of the recommended changes and updates from the CAC for the program documents and the grant agreement. He explained that the RFP had also been revised to note that applicants should review the program documents and stated that staff was recommending authorization of the program, solicitation of applications through the RFP process, and approval of HEI Task Order 2024-008 for engineering review of the applications.

Manager Wagamon referenced page 34 of the packet in the bottom paragraph where it states, 'will not consider projects from entities that owe funds to the District'. He asked if that meant funds in

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arrears or if it meant that if they had another project going that they were paying on if they would not be eligible.

President Bradley stated that he felt that the intent was if someone owed the District money because they hadn't paid.

Manager Wagamon referenced page 45 of the packet on the grant agreement, Section I. A (2), where it says, 'the District for the Administrator's written approval, not to be unreasonably withheld.' He stated that he felt the use of the word 'unreasonably' was pretty subjective and asked what it actually meant.

District Attorney Holtman explained that the wording was part of the existing boilerplate language and noted that it was a standard formulation where it is giving the other party the opportunity to present something different than what the agreement provides. He noted that the District would retain the discretion to decide whether the proposal would be consistent with program purposes or not, but also wanted to give some assurance that it would make that decision in good faith and not in a random manner.

Manager Wagamon thanked him for the explanation and asked if the District had any idea about the cost differences and if they were causing a lot of extra costs for people just applying for the program and explained that he did not want this to be so expensive that people do not even apply.

President Bradley noted that it has not been a problem so far.

Manager Wagamon agreed that it hadn't been a problem, but now they were adding additional items and was just curious about the overall costs and if the things that the District was asking for were expensive.

District Administrator Tomczik stated that he did not believe that these requests were expensive because they were all fairly routine items. He stated that he believed the work that Watershed Technician/Inspector Roach and the CAC have done was to get it more in the forefront discussion so everyone was thinking about it ahead of time.

Manager Robertson noticed that the majority of the red language highlighted was related to reporting and the aftermath. She asked if the requirement for reporting was based on previous grants that have been awarded where the standards were not met. She stated that she understands the desire for 'before' and 'after' to ensure that the work was done. She stated that some of the language included such as, requiring people for up to 10 years to report to the District, seemed a bit excessive to her. She suggested that the reporting period could perhaps be done when the District can ensure that the project was completed to the appropriate standards. She asked if there was going to be a template available for the applicant to use for the reporting requirement. She did not want the requirement to be burdensome to the applicant.

Manager Weinandt stated that these grants were requested by cities and organizations, not individuals. She explained that it was standard practice for any State grant that if you get a chunk

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of public money they were required to operate and maintain it for 10 years, which is what this portion of the document outlines. She noted that she served on the CAC for a few year when they would review the applications and some of them came in not completely thought out, so she felt what has been happening year after year is that the application was becoming more and more clear. She stated that she felt that having the applicants speak to people at the District prior to applying can save a lot of time. She stated that she felt that the CAC had really played an important role in talking about what the application looks like and also seriously reviewing the applications.

President Bradley shared examples of things like iron-enhanced sand filters or SAFL Baffles which require maintenance. He explained that he believed all this was doing was saying that the District knows that they will have to do maintenance on this and would like to know how they were going to do it.

Manager Weinandt asked how long the District had been awarding these grants and whether any of the projects had met the 10-year mark.

President Bradley stated that they have easily met the 10-year mark. He explained that he had been on the Board for 10 years and they have done this every year he has been involved.

Manager Waller stated that he did not know exactly how long they have been awarding the grants, but noted that they have been doing stormwater grants for a long time. He stated that they have required them to continue operating and maintaining these things, but was not sure that there had actually been a continuous annual report on them from each city. He stated that he would agree that requiring 10 years of reports was excessive.

Manager Robertson stated that the language in the packet identifies potential applicants as being cities, counties, school districts, libraries, and other public and private entities. She asked if private entities also meant that residents within the District would be allowed to apply for this grant.

District Administrator Tomczik stated that within the general frame of the District's stormwater management grant program, he would say private entity would be something like a corporate entity or a university, those landowners at would have a large campus. He noted that the public, or mom and pop landowners, would be more aligned with the water quality grant because the size of their property was typically significantly smaller and the capacity of a BMP would be significantly different. He stated that they 'could' apply, but felt it went back more to the element of what Watershed Technician/Inspector Roach has brought before the Board with early and good communication about what was intended and what would be involved and aligning that opportunity with the District's framework and experience in order for them to be successful.

Manager Robertson stated that she appreciated the language about a pre-application sit-down with staff because she felt that was very important within the planning process. She reiterated that she just did not want to make the aftermath of the grant process anymore difficult than it needed to be.

Watershed Technician/Inspector Roach stated that the 10-year requirement on page 43 of the packet would be asking the applicant to provide a maintenance plan of what activities would be

taking place within the first 10 years of the project. He noted that the actual reporting aspect would only be an annual report for each year the grant was active.

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Manager Waller asked what the word 'active' meant.

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Watershed Technician/Inspector Roach explained that staff's intent, when using the term 'active', would be reporting for the lifespan of the agreement itself.

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Manager Waller stated that description would make quite a bit of difference relating to that lifespan of the agreement itself versus the 10 years that had been mentioned.

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District Engineer Otterness stated that he had just noticed one thing that may have the potential to He referenced page 38, 'Project proposing the maintenance or repair of be misinterpreted. existing stormwater management infrastructure are ineligible for Stormwater Management Grant funding.' He explained that specific wording, to him, would imply that any project that would have some component of it being repair or maintenance would make the whole project ineligible. He stated that he felt that the intent was to make ineligible those project components that were related to maintenance. He suggested that they amend the language to 'Project components which are intended solely for the maintenance or repair of existing stormwater management infrastructure are ineligible for the Stormwater Management Grant funding.'

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Manager Waller thanked him for that comment, because he had written a note to himself on this page that he would not vote in favor of this for that reason. He stated that he felt the language was just too broad and goes against some of the things that the District wanted to do, for example, encourage cleaning of stormwater ponds. He referenced the next sentence at the top of page 38 'Additionally, projects that are proposed by entities that owe funds to the District will not be considered.' He stated that he did not remember too many of the instances in his 18 years on the Board where someone owed money to the District. He stated that in his notes, he had this whole new section underlined, and would say 'no' to the whole section. He explained that he did not think the language should be amended and instead, it should be struck.

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Manager Weinandt asked what would happen when the 10 years was met but repairs were needed. She asked if the city or the other entity would be stuck with keeping it up. She stated that the other clarifying question she had was that this was the Stormwater Management Grant but there is also the \$500 mini grant as well as a grant in between the two, but she could not remember what it was called.

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District Administrator Tomczik explained that she was referring to the Water Quality Grant which the District had periodically collaborated with the municipalities when they have a road project and leverage this with the community for multiple rain gardens on private property within the right-ofway.

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Manager Weinandt stated that the Water Quality Grant was the one that private entities with costshares can do some of the water quality work.

District Administrator Tomczik explained that his recollection from the CAC meeting and the language on the top of page 38 regarding owing funds was that it came from a member of the CAC that had business experience and had a situation arise where people were asking for more money when there were already outstanding fees owed.

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President Bradley stated that he did not remember the details but knows that there was a time during his tenure where there were about 4 cities that had made a promise, as a result of prior grants, to provide credits or something to the District. He stated that the District had given them the option of either paying the money or to comply with the agreements. He stated that he felt this proposed language would give them the opportunity to make it clear that the District expected them to honor their other obligations to the District before they considered giving them more money.

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Manager Robertson stated that she assumed that this was reviewed every year and stated that she had no problem with what was being proposed. She suggested that for discussion next year that they want to work the longevity of the project into their ranking criteria along with what additional maintenance costs may be.

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Motion by Manager Robertson, seconded by Manager Bradley, to authorize staff to initiate the 2025 Stormwater Management Grant program and to notify potential applicants of funding availability by publishing the attached Request for Proposals, including correction of the typographical errors as indicated by staff, and the amendment to the language on page 38, 3 (1) to include language that reads, 'Project components which are intended solely for the maintenance or repair of existing stormwater management infrastructure are ineligible for the Stormwater Management Grant funding.'

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Manager Waller explained that he would be voting against this item based on the language included on page 38 because, in his opinion, it was unreasonable and unnecessary. He stated that in his time with the District, it has not been a big enough problem to warrant including that kind of language.

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Motion carried 4-1 (Manager Waller opposed).

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Motion by Manager Robertson, seconded by Manager Weinandt, to approve the HEI Task Order 2024 – 008 for Engineering review of the 2025 Stormwater Management Grant program applications. Motion carried 5-0.

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2. Check Register Dated September 25, 2024, in the Amount of \$259,132.30 and September Interim Financial Statements Prepared by Redpath and Company

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Motion by Manager Weinandt, seconded by Manager Robertson, to approve check register dated September 25, 2024, in the Amount of \$259,132.30 and September Interim Financial Statements prepared by Redpath and Company. Motion carried 5-0.

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ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION

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Precipitation Events and the Rice Creek Watershed District Landscape

District Administrator Tomcik noted that for the last few meetings, he has been holding up the DNR maps which show their analysis of water levels in the watersheds throughout the State. He noted that it was particularly wet April through August, and had finished August at 140% of normal precipitation. He stated that the message received was that it was the wettest April-June that is on record; things have dried out a bit in September; they were still well above the normal precipitation for the year; but needed rain because things were drying out. He stated that in his mind this appears to be conflicting information and wanted to look into it more closely. He stated that he spoke extensively with Program Manager Kocian about the situation and would like to offer some context. The hydrologic region in the State that includes RCWD is roughly 25% storage with lakes and wetlands. He noted that RCWD has 30% storage, so they were well above the region and Coon Creek has 24%. He stated that the slope as in the drop in the landscape across the region was at 7.76 feet per mile and RCWD has 2.23 feet per mile, so they are very flat which creates a bathtub that holds the water with limited ability to drain. He stated that if they only look upstream of Long Lake for the District, storage is at 33% and the slope is 1.9 feet per mile. He said he felt this offered context that this is one element that the Board and staff should be aware of in considering issues. He reviewed the current conditions and noted that Clear Lake has had high water levels all year that were consistently above OHWL and they are slowly dropping. He noted that White Bear Lake's water level is up and stated that this has been an area of great concern following 2 years of drought, but they are nearing the long-term average. He noted that White Bear Lake was not yet out-letting but had filled up a lot. He explained that Rice Creek had a current flow of 80 cubic feet/second and noted that the average for this time of year was 55 cubic feet/second, which means they were well above average. He stated that the message he would like the Board to take home with them about this is that the watershed has a lot of storage, a lot of wetlands on the landscape and a lot of lakes, yet very flat and so slow to drain.

Manager Robertson asked District Administrator Tomczik to send a summary of the information he shared to the Board, including the DNR map information he had referenced.

Manager Waller stated that he felt District Administrator Tomczik's report demonstrated the importance of noting the impact on the roads that are built through the permeable soils and creating impermeable structures which limits the drainage, because that can make things even slower and wetter.

Manager Wagamon stated that they also actually have ditches running backward.

Manager Waller stated that it also shows the need for the District to have a bigger picture look at things when they are working with the cities.

2. **Staff Reports**

Manager Weinandt stated that she appreciated the staff reports and noted that it looks like they were close to getting a full team put together again.

3. October Calendar

District Administrator Tomczik noted that the October calendar did not include the Bald Eagle Lake de-listing celebration which will be held on October 17, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. and noted that it possibly has an incorrect address.

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The Board discussed the location for the event along with parking accommodations.

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District Administrator Tomczik stated that staff would confirm the address and communicate if there was any change.

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Manger Robertson stated that she will be in attendance at the CAC meeting on October 2, 2024, but may be a bit late.

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4. **Administrator Updates**

District Administrator Tomczik stated that he was continuing work on the Blue Thumb logo transfer to Metro Blooms. He stated that related to public drainage system, RCD-4 that the survey of the banks has been completed and staff was currently working through the quantities and the estimates for bank stabilization. He stated that for drainage and other issues on ACD 10-22-32 they are awaiting the DNR position on the rare and endangered species from which to bring the Pine Street permit back for Board consideration. He explained that there was some discussion about the completeness of the record and discussion on the Coon Creek minutes and noted that both Coon Creek and the City of Columbus were subject to a data practices act request. The material has been reviewed by the District Engineers as it pertains to ACD 10-22-32 and noted that Manager Wagamon had asked to look at those materials.

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Manager Wagamon stated that he had received the materials earlier this morning.

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District Administrator Tomczik stated he had additional copies available if anyone else on the Board would like to see this material. He noted that he had engaged with Jack Davis, City Administrator in the City of Columbus, about the flooding concerns. He had extended the cost-share study of the area to him and noted that he believed the value in that would come from their land use plans and that the representative engineers would best consider the parameters that might be included in any such study to see if it would be viable and supportive of both entities. He stated that District permits consider and work to mitigate the impacts of development on the landscape and how development will affect landowners downstream. He explained that the rules work towards having it contained within the properties and also have studies and projects with municipalities. He noted that there would be several updates related to administrative housekeeping matters in the employee handbook on the horizon and explained that he planned to bring them to future Board meeting.

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5. **Managers Update**

Manager Waller stated that a resident who lives in Forest Lake near the 180th Street area by the pipeline that crosses JD-2 had informed him that he had signed an easement with the Northern Gas Company to put in a third pipeline which means it was no longer rumor and asked staff to make sure that this does not just go by the wayside.

421 422 District Administrator Tomczik stated that he believes that Regulatory Manager Hughes has been in contact with the company regarding their proposed work. 423 424 Regulatory Manager Hughes clarified that he had just had a conversation with Manager Waller 425 about this situation just prior to the meeting, so he was aware of it. 426 427 President Bradley stated that he had attended the recent CAC meeting and was impressed with how 428 they came forward with ideas and suggestions based on their annual reviews and frustrations with 429 the grant process. 430 431 **ADJOURNMENT** 432 Motion by Manager Robertson, seconded by Manager Wagamon, to adjourn the meeting at 10:08 a.m. 433 Motion carried 5-0. 434 435 436