

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
Environmental Commission
Wednesday, October 19, 2022
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at **7:01 p.m.** in the Denton Room by Chairman **DeBuck**

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman DeBuck, Commissioner Ross, Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Merritt, Commissioner Creal

Absent/Excused: Trustee Boynton

Staff: Director Lockett, Director Akers, Secretary Zantop

Audience: Two (2)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion Commissioner **Creal** Second Commissioner **Ross** to approve the agenda of October 19, 2022 as presented.

(4) AYES – DeBuck, Ross, Gibson, Merritt, Creal

(0) NAYS

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion Commissioner **Gibson**, Second Commissioner **Merritt** to approve the minutes of August 17, 2022 as presented.

(4) AYES – DeBuck, Ross, Gibson, Merritt, Creal

(0) NAYS

Motion Carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Director Lockett introduced and welcomed back Director Akers to the Environmental Commission.

Commissioner Merritt shared that the two people he knew that were interested to join the commission are unable to. Commissioner Creal stated he knows someone interested in joining. Those interested in joining the commission can find the application on the Townships website or visit the Supervisor's Office.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Commissioner Creal asked if there were any updates on the lily pads located on the west side of the lake. He hears the most concern from residents regarding the lily pads. The lily pads limit access to homeowners on that side of the lake. Director Akers recalled in past discussions the challenges of treatments are they can get loose then re-establish when harvesting and the movement of water on the river system can be an issue for chemical spray applications. Director Akers will ask the Huron River Watershed Council how other areas on the river system have handled these situations.

Commissioner Gibson asked for updates about the work being done at US ecology that he brought up during the last meeting. Commissioner Gibson saw covered dumpsters and heavy equipment on the site. Director Luckett said he went out and the dumpsters were gone. Director Luckett skipped to Agenda number 5. Summary of U.S. Ecology site visit and gave an update. On October 6th, the Army Corps of Engineers did a site visit at U.S. Ecology. During the visit, they did an audit part of the audit was to interview officials from the township. Director Luckett, Supervisor McNamara, and Director Power participated in the audit. The Army Corps of Engineers spoke highly of that facility and said it is one of the best facilities in the country. Chairman DeBuck asked how much waste U.S. Ecology turns away. Director Luckett said they have a schedule of what can come in and they stick to that. Director Akers stated any waste stream they accept has to be reviewed by the state of Michigan. It is a highly regulated site between the state and county. Director Luckett is planning a site visit that he will share with the commission once he has a date.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Update on Discussion with Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner

Director Akers reviewed his conversation with Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner Evan Pratt. There is currently a lot of funding available for grants at the state level for Dam repair and removal. In the 1970's Washtenaw County acquired two Dams on the Willow Run Creek. Those are the Beyer Dam and the Tyler Dam. The Washtenaw County Drain Commission will be submitting grants for the removal of both Dams. Both Dams have been dewatered so they are not holding any water back. Tyler dam was dewatered a few years ago. At the time they did extensive environmental testing and soil borings. They did not find any leftover contaminants from the adjacent superfund sites in the 1990s that had been cleaned up. New projects would require additional testing by EGLE and they assured preventative measures would be taken to ensure that contaminants were not released into Belleville Lake. The Beyer Dam is being used as a first flush basin for the creek. It captures initial surface runoff that goes into the storm system and filters out sediments and pollutants. As part of the grant application, the intent is to install something that fulfills the function to filter the water going through. Commissioner Ross asked where the Beyer Dam is located. Director Akers showed the commission on the map where he believes both dams are located. Chairman DeBuck asked if Wayne County should be involved. Directors Akers replied both Dams are located in Washtenaw County and owned by the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner. Chairman DeBuck stated we need to have drains

in our areas cleaned out. Director Akers said there are a handful of petition projects in the Township and there was a time the County was having trouble getting funding for those projects. Director Luckett said he had some discussions with the county this summer about cleaning drains.

Rosemary commented about a month ago the Huron River Watershed Council spoke at the library. The Council talked about dams that were being taken down. Someone asked if French Landing Dam was on the list. The Council said not now, but if the dam were to stop producing electricity it could be. Director Akers stated the Township has licensing to operate the hydroelectric dam the company the Township uses is currently in the process of relicensing there is no intention to get rid of the dam.

2. Discussion on Ann Arbor Wastewater Release

Directors Akers stated on October 4th at about 1:30 p.m. the City of Ann Arbor Wastewater Treatment Plant discovered a discharge of partially treated wastewater due to low water levels in the ultraviolet disinfection channels. This caused a system shutdown to protect the equipment. The discharge was for approximately 3 hours of about 1.375 million gallons. They followed legal procedures and notified Washtenaw County Health Department and EGLE. There was no advisory to avoid contact with the Huron River by EGLE. The water that was discharged went through all steps of treatment except the last step. In this step, the water is subject to a certain amount of UV light that kills additional bacteria before they discharge it. The water was tested and reviewed there was no concern to issue an advisory. Commissioner Ross asked if there is a fine for doing this. There were no fines that have been reported. Commissioner Creal inquired about Ann Arbor's permit renewal for treated water discharge and the tmdl (total maximum daily load) of phosphorus and asked where the Township's sewer treatment plant is located. The Township has four separate sewer treatment systems South Huron Valley Brownstown, DUWA Wyandotte, Rouge Valley Detroit, and YUCA Ypsilanti.

3. Discussion on upcoming Huron River Watershed Council meeting.

The Huron River Watershed Council requested a meeting with the Township to better understand how they can support us. The meeting is on November 1 and if there is anything the commission would like to ask send those questions to Director Akers or Luckett. Rosemary commented during the previously mentioned meeting neither Belleville nor Van Buren Township had members on the council. Director Luckett stated he is a member of the Council. There will be four new watershed signs put up throughout the Township for protecting our water system.

4. French Landing Dam Relicensing Update

Eagle Creek is the company the Township contracts with to manage the French Landing Dam. The facility's current license was issued in 1987 and expires in 2027. In April documents were filed by Eagle Creek with the FERC to start the relicensing process. Commissioner Creal stated the dam was inspected within the last 2 years and that's when they added the riprap. The State

requires dam inspections and safety reports. Commissioner Ross asked if another 40-year lease is the goal. Director Lockett will update the commission after the meeting with Eagle Creek.

5. Summary of U.S. Ecology Site Visit

Director Lockett discussed this item under unfinished business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS:

Donna Lavin commented the Rotary meeting had a plastics pollution seminar. The speaker said the Huron River has the largest level of micro plastics of any of the 20 other great lakes tributaries. Director Akers will ask about this when he meets with the Watershed Council.

Commissioner Ross stated he got a call regarding a Facebook post about foam by the dam. He went to take a look he saw a little bit but nothing out of the ordinary. Gibson said he has seen foam coming down the river just below the dam upstream. Chairman DeBuck inquired if this is a naturally occurring event or caused by contents in the water.

Commissioner Gibson asked for an updated on the Woodland Meadows wetlands lawsuit. Director Akers said as of right now there are no updates. Commissioner Gibson asked if anything was being done about the erosion issue at Quirk and Belleville Road.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to Adjourn **Creal**, Second **Merritt**, Meeting adjourned at **8:04 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kendyl Zantop
Recording Secretary