

PORTAGE COUNTY GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COUNTY ANNEX
THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022 - 7:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

GROUNDWATER CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GCAC) MEMBERS LISTING:

MUNICIPALITY	MEMBERS NAME	Attendance	MUNICIPALITY	MEMBERS NAME	Attendance
TOWNS:			TOWNS:		
Alban	Vacant		Pine Grove	Ben Sawyer	Absent
Almond	Edward Burns	Present	Pine Grove Alt	Jeanette Wilson	Absent
Amherst	Tommy Enright	Present Online	Plover	Joe Firkus	Absent
Amherst Alt	Peggy Farrell	-----	Sharon	Ron Hensler	Present Online
Belmont	Mike Warzynski	Absent	Stockton	Curt Soik	Absent
Belmont Alternate	Rita Walkowicz	Absent	VILLAGES:		
Buena Vista	Zack Mykisen	Present Phone	Almond	Richard Burns	Absent
Buena Vista Alt	Roger Turzinski	Absent	Amherst	Mike Juris	Present
Carson	Fred Copes	Absent	Amherst Junction	Vacant	
Dewey	Dennis Meis	Present	Junction City	Peter Mallek	Excused
Dewey Alt	Kathy Girolamo	-----	Nelsonville	Tarion O'Carroll	Present
Eau Pleine	David Hansen	Present	Park Ridge	Dan McFarlane	Present
Grant	Cecile Stelzer-Johnson	Present	Park Ridge Alt	Christine Neidlein	-----
Grant Alt	Andrea Musch	-----	Plover	Matt Saloun	Present Online
Hull	Tim Zimmerman	Present	Rosholt	Jessie Anderson	Absent
Lanark	John Droske	Present Online	Whiting	Jake Wilcox	Absent
Linwood	Garth Frost	Present	CITY:		
New Hope	Jenny Larsen	Present	Stevens Point	Eric Southworth	Present Online
New Hope Alt	Anne Abbott	-----			

STAFF PRESENT: Jen McNelly, Tim Reed, and Amy Heins, Planning and Zoning Department.

OTHERS PRESENT: John Pavelski - County Executive, Pat Keller - County Board Supervisor District 14

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by E. Burns, Chair.

2. PUBLIC NOTICE: *Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their requests at this time with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.* No one registered to speak.

3. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 10, 2022

McFarlane moved to approve the minutes as presented. Zimmerman seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Results of PFA's testing in the Village of Amherst:

- Saloun stated the Village of Plover tested and had "no detect".
- Southworth stated the City of Stevens Point recently tested and awaiting results.
- McNelly stated the EPA standard is 70 ppt (parts per trillion) and the DNR is recommending 20 ppt. Zimmerman asked if there are health risks and how do you know that is what caused it. McNelly replied yes, though it is hard to pin-point exact cause, and small traces will show in everyone's blood. Activated carbon filters will remove PFA's from your drinking water and those filters can then be disposed of in the landfill as they are lined and monitored.

b. New Well Sampling Factsheet from the Survey of the Health of Wisconsin:

- McNelly will send out a copy to all municipalities once it is finalized.

5. Updates on County Projects:

a. County Wide Well Water Sampling Project:

- Postcards were sent to 350 wells (217 were repeat wells from 2017); approximately 150 repeat wells responded which will be used to assess trends, and then we added 150 nearby wells (every 4 sq.miles).
- Kits will be mailed, owner must sample and drop it off. There will be multiple drop off locations.
- The new wells selected had construction reports for a well casing depth analysis.

- Hoping to be able to do a nitrate susceptibility map; so overlaying land-use, soil type, etc.

b. Nelsonville Workplan and Monitoring Wells:

- REI drafted the workplan for monitoring wells across the Village.
- The draft workplan will be going to the Land and Water Conservation Committee in June, and the next step would be funding to implement it.

c. ARPA Funding Project:

- 2.3 million dollars in ARPA funds passed April's County Board.
- Funding would be available for homeowner package water tests, if nitrates are over 10 ppm (parts per million) reverse osmosis treatment systems would be an option. If they receive funding for a treatment system, there would be a follow-up nitrate test at one year. Tarion suggested selecting a brand with reasonable filters as it gets very expensive to keep replacing for homes with hard water, some as frequent as once a month. DHS recommended providing test strips to know an estimate of nitrate levels.
- There will be an online application process to apply for funding.
- We will use the media, social media, and municipalities to get the word out about this available funding.

Zimmerman questioned Gordondale Farms monitoring wells. Pavelski stated it would cost \$20,000 per well and would require 3 holes with different water levels for monitoring. We need to research and see where the nitrates are coming from and to what extent, then make determinations from there. Also, if the farm does agronomic practices, we will need to see what those do or if the groundwater improves over a few years which is what the monitoring wells are for. Need to come to an agreement and move forward as soon as possible.

6. Discussion/Possible Action:

a. Idea for County Program to require private well owners to sample their wells every three years:

- Steltzer-Johnson stated if the County were to levy \$20 in taxes per home every year, then every well could be tested every 3 years.
- Burns stated everyone that has concerns about their water have access to testing without mandating it.
- McNelly stated City properties with a well (potable or not) need to test every 5 years per State mandate.

Larsen questioned Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) in connection with groundwater. McNelly replied the County sent a resolution to the State to consider that or develop an alternative set of recommendations that were based on water quality vs profitability. McNelly stated she has not heard anything, but it did spark some conversation at UW Madison. Larsen asked if the County Conservationist could come and share information on NMP's. McFarlane stated only a few farms in Portage County have a NMP and one of the areas with high nitrates is near a farm with a NMP. Droske stated Steve Bradley said NMP's allow for greater nitrogen applications; therefore, more NMP's would create an increase in nitrates. McFarlane replied there are good and bad plan writers and DATCP does audit several NMP's a year, especially with the help of counties that have an agronomist. McNelly asked if we should bring NMP discussion back to the next meeting and stated she would check with the State for any updates.

7. MEMBER UPDATES

None

8. NEXT MEETING DATE/TOPICS:

The next meeting date is tentatively set for Thursday, July 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room 5, County Annex.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Zimmerman moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by McFarlane. Meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Heins
Recording Secretary