

## MINUTES

Cascade Charter Township  
THORNAPPLE RIVER SAD AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING  
May 12, 2022 at 5:30pm  
Cascade Charter Township Hall  
5920 Tahoe Dr. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

**Members Present:** Trustee Shipley, Scott Rissi, Thomas Keith, Mike Wiegand, Jeff Carpenter, Paul Strauss, Chuck Whitley (via Zoom), and Lori Gottlieb (via Zoom)

**Others Present:** Township Manager (TM) Ben Swayze, Jaimee Desjardins (PLM Lake and Land Management)

**Members of the Public:** Mark Sinning

**ARTICLE 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm.

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the Agenda:** Motion by Member Rissi, supported by Trustee Shipley to approve the agenda as written. Motion Carried.

**ARTICLE 3. Acknowledge Visitors & Public Comment:** There were not any visitors who wished to comment.

**ARTICLE 4. Approve the Minutes of the March 7, 2022 Meeting:** Member Rissi said that, at the bottom of page one, he wasn't asking if MDOT could pick up the harvested weeds but rather if MDOT would let them dump the harvested weeds on the eight acres between the highway and the river.

**Motion was made by Member Carpenter to approve the March 7, 2022 meeting minutes with Member Rissi's edit. Supported by Member Wiegand. Motion carried.**

**ARTICLE 5. Discussion on 2022 Thornapple River Weed Management Program:** Jamie Desjardins, the West Michigan Regional Manager for PLM, talked about what types of weed management programs their company offers including removal of invasive species, algae blooms, and nuisance plants. Member Rissi talked about the pledge they made to the residents saying they would go after native species and remove plants in the nuisance areas. He explained that the weeds have grown exponentially in the last five or six years, which also corresponds with an increase in water clarity.

Desjardins explained that, one of the weeds they're currently struggling with, Milfoil, spreads by fragmentation. Every time someone tries to break it up or remove it, it can grow new roots off each piece, which makes it very difficult to remove after it goes to seed. Harvesting it is useful because they leave the bottom section for the fish and remove the top section. This is only done parallel to the shore and has a depth requirement, leaving the plants around the dock and close to shore; to reach the other plants, an herbicide must be used.

Member Rissi asked if using an herbicide was dangerous around well water and Desjardins said that used to be a problem with a granular herbicide but PLM hasn't used that product in years. None of the products they would use on the river have a drinking water restriction but some may have a three-to-six-day irrigation restriction on new grass/newly seeded lots.

PLM has already applied for a permit from the state, EGLE, to treat the water and the state has 30 business days to approve it before money starts to be removed from the price of the permit. Once the permit is issued, PLM will send a notice to all of the residents in the district that list the treatment schedule and all of the possible herbicides that may be used in the river. PLM will notify Manager Swayze the week before the treatment occurs. The day of the treatment, PLM will post a sign on each treated property that lists the herbicides used on it and any restrictions. There will be a one-day swimming restriction any time they do a weed treatment. There isn't a swimming restriction on any of the herbicides they use but the state has a one-day restriction in place so that people aren't swimming in the water at the time of the treatment. As for drinking water that is treated, someone would have to drink thousands (of gallons) to be affected by the herbicide. The herbicide isn't likely to destroy resident's lawns if they irrigate on a day the water is treated but it removes the herbicide from the river, stopping it from doing its job.

Algae control is mostly aesthetic and is only treated in sections. It is a very affordable type of weed control, using a copper sulfate or keelated copper herbicide, but that is generally only done in areas of stagnant water. Member Rissi pointed out that there are a few sections greatly affected by algae including the area from railroad bridge to 48<sup>th</sup> St, some near Member Carpenter's house, and more along Sequoia. PML also uses an anti-drift product that weights down the herbicide so it doesn't flow down the river.

Sinning asked what they do to areas that have very strong current and Desjardins said areas of high current wouldn't be possible to use herbicide on but they could still harvest the area. Sinning then asked how deep the area would need to be for harvesting and she said 18" to 2' of water. She said rocks can also be a problem so there may be sections that simply can't be managed due to the flow and the rocks.

PLM will perform an AVAS (Aquatic Vegetation Assessment Site) survey in late summer. They break the river into 300 ft segments and break down each plant species that is growing and its current density. They will also do a pre-treatment survey where they will record what type of problem they need to treat in each section and mark it with GPS coordinates. Member Carpenter asked if the residents would be able to see a difference by the time the AVAS survey is completed and Desjardins said they would, as long as the treatment permit is approved in a timely manner. A reason for possible delay would be the presence of endangered species of fish in the river.

TM Swayze said that the township will create a page on the website with updated information about this project that is accessible for all residents and there won't be the concern of letters being lost in the mail or an email not making it through a spam filter. Member Gottlieb suggested sending out a mass mailing at the beginning that includes

all available information so that residents who don't use the internet or aren't computer adept also have the information.

Member Wiegand was concerned that there would be residents who aren't in the SAD who have river access and wouldn't be notified. Desjardins said that all sites where treatment occurs would be marked and Manager Swayze said that he will get information about this added to the township newsletters as well.

Desjardins explained that the township would need multiple locations to dump the weeds along the river and that they wouldn't take up too much space once they dry out. There was conversation as to the odor emitted by the weeds as they are drying and that they would need to be deposited somewhere that wouldn't unpleasantly effect residents.

The Milfoil has to be treated before it can be harvested so that it won't break apart and spread. The township has budgeted for all three of the treatments, algae, harvesting, and herbicide, but they may not all be needed in each area as the ecosystem requires some aquatic plants to thrive.

Member Carpenter asked if PLM had included water testing and record keeping in their proposal as he thought that would be very beneficial for the boards and citizens to see. Desjardins agreed and said it was part of their proposal. She said it would cost \$900 and cover two sites, sampling in the spring and late summer. The Thornapple River Association used to do the baseline tests every year but that fell off in the last three or four years. Member Rissi said he would provide PLM with the previous testing sites and data so they can look back and see the change over time.

There was conversation about the clarity of the water and questions on if any of the treatments would affect the clarity. Desjardins said what PLM would be doing to the river wouldn't cause a change in river clarity and the change that they are currently noticing is probably due to the influx of zebra mussels, as they are filter feeders.

Member Gottlieb asked if PLM would note areas that were at risk of erosion or appeared to have large amounts of runoff so they could be proactive in preventing the growth of additional river weeds. Desjardins said that they would look for basic things like a large amount of erosion or if a new development changed the water flow, but they wouldn't be assessing for that in depth.

Member Strauss asked if they should expect to spend the same amount on river treatment plus inflation each year. Desjardins explained that it would probably be similar for a few years, until they get the Milfoil under control. The budget is variable each year but that is dependent on how many Milfoil harvests are performed and the weather that year.

Member Carpenter shared that he had been asked by a resident that day about how the company surveying and treating the river would be inspected. They wanted to know what kind of oversight there would be. Desjardins said that if someone wanted to join them in their surveying and treating on a specific day they could, but it is in no way

required. She said that the oversight would be in the results. The residents would be able to see the difference between the beginning results in comparison to the results after the river is treated. The township will only be billed for the acres that are treated.

**ARTICLE 6. 2022 Thornapple River SAD Budget**

Member Swayze determined that discussing the budget was currently premature because PLM hasn't come to survey yet and determine the area they are treating. They will be budgeting on a high level without a lot of detail.

The meetings will go back to being Mondays at 5:30PM. The next meeting will be Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM. The meeting will include an in-depth dive into the budget and the township PR rep will attend to form a communication plan.

**ARTICLE 7. Roundtable Q & A**

There weren't any questions remaining to discuss during the Q&A.

**ARTICLE 8. Public Comment:**

Member Whitley asked that he be given a copy of the handout from PLM. He stressed the importance of a communication plan with the public. He also requested a test area for muck removal so property owners could see that the tests are making a difference. Desjardins said that there is an entire series of things they could do to affect the water, such as muck reduction, when the program gets off of the ground.

**ARTICLE 9. Adjournment:** Motion was made by Member Carpenter to adjourn. Supported by Member Rissi. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

**Approved by the Thornapple River SAD Ad-Hoc Committee – 6/6/22**