

**MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, August 15, 2012
MPCA Room Board Room, 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul**

EQB Members Present: Dave Frederickson, Brian Napstad, John Saxhaug, Kristin Duncanson, Julie Goehring, Erik Tomlinson, Bill Grant for Mike Rothman, David Thornton for John Linc Stine, Ed Ehlinger, Mark Phillips, Tom Landwehr, Spencer Cronk, Bernie Arseneau for Tom Sorel

EQB Members Absent: Mike Rothman, Tom Sorel, John Linc Stine

Staff Present: Bob Patton, Jeff Smyser, and Kate Frantz (EQB), Mary Osborn (MPCA for EQB)

Chair Frederickson called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

I. Introductions

Members of the EQB introduced themselves.

II. Adoption of Consent Agenda and Minutes

A motion to accept the Consent Agenda and July 18, 2012, Meeting Minutes was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

III. Chair's Report

Chair Frederickson asked that everyone participating today be mindful of the time constraints that we are under, and said that we will move through the agenda as quickly as possible to give time to everyone who wishes to testify.

IV. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Patton explained the handouts placed before the Board members. DVD copies of the presentation that will be given today are also available.

V. Frac Sand Update and Public Testimony

Kristin Eide-Tollefson (Florence Township) introduced a video created by the Lake Township/Lake City Study Group as an introduction to the petition to the EQB for a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) on Industrial Silica Sand Mining in Minnesota. Ms. Eide-Tollefson acknowledged the efforts of thousands of citizens who, with the help of their local governments, have been investigating and moving this issue forward. Following the video, Bill Neuman, St. Croix Scenic Coalition, and David Williams, Fillmore County resident, provided the final remarks of the presentation of the petition.

The following local government officials gave updates on the steps taken in this process by their offices.

- Lisa Hanni, Goodhue County Land Use Management Director, County Surveyor, County Recorder, and Dodge County Surveyor
- Jason Gillman, Winona County Director of Planning and Environmental Services
- Carlos Espinoza, City of Winona Assistant City Planner
- Brian Peterson, City of Red Wing Planning Director

The following people testified in support of a GEIS.

- Senator John Howe, District 28, resident of Red Wing
- John Lenczewski, Minnesota Trout Unlimited
- Thom Boncher, City of Jordan Council Member, representing himself

- Bob Tammen, City of Soudan resident
- Kathleen Bibus, City of Red Wing resident, Save the Bluffs
- Don Arnosti, Audubon Society
- Jody McIlrath, Florence Township resident, Save the Bluffs
- Rosemary Iversen, Houston County recreational property owner and concerned citizen
- Michael Levy, Osseola, Wisconsin resident
- Dean Flugstad, Lake Township resident

Carol Zoff, Mn/DOT, Great River Road Program Coordinator, provided the Board with information about the Great River Road Program and the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota, supplementing a letter from the Commission Chair, Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-67B), which supported a GEIS.

Executive Director Patton stated that the Board will have time during the September meeting to discuss options for the state, including the GEIS.

Commissioner Ehlinger discussed Health Impact Assessments, where a community is partnered with a public health agency to look at health issues related to traffic, noise, etc. He asked that if anyone in the audience knows of a community that would be interested in partnering to conduct a Health Impact Assessment on frac sand mining, please let him know.

VI. Executive Order 11-32 Project Updates

Updates on project work plans were presented to the EQB.

Improved Environmental Governance and Coordination

Presenters: Jeff Smyser (EQB) and Susan Heffron (MPCA)

One of tasks under the Executive Order is to “evaluate and make recommendations for improving environmental governance and coordination.” The legislature then added the MPCA’s Citizens’ Board evaluation onto that effort. The following question needs to be addressed: “With regard to environmental issues, policies, and programs, how should the state ensure that state agencies operate in an efficient and coordinated manner consistent with the state’s priorities?”

The core team’s five alternatives to answer that question were presented to the EQB, along with the criteria that will be used in the analysis of each alternative.

1. Status Quo
2. Refocus the EQB and Reduce Duties Significantly
3. Revitalize and Refocus the EQB
4. Abolish the EQB and MPCA Citizens’ Board, and Create New Environmental Review Board
5. Abolish the EQB

Susan Heffron explained to the EQB what decisions are currently taken before the MPCA Citizens’ Board. The core team drafted three alternatives with regard to environmental review and permitting.

1. Commissioner makes final decisions on all environmental review and permitting documents
2. Modified Citizens’ Board process on permits and environmental reviews – MPCA Commissioner ONLY can grant that a decision be made by the Citizens’ Board
3. Modified Citizens’ Board process on permits and environmental reviews – Environmental review decisions remain with the Citizens’ Board, MPCA Commissioner ONLY can grant that a permit decision be made by the Citizens’ Board

After discussion, the Board gave “the nod” for staff to proceed with analysis using these alternatives.

Environmental Congress

Presenters: Todd Biewen (MPCA) and Anna Sherman (intern to Ellen Anderson)

- Logistics are being finalized for the “Listening Sessions,” now called “Citizen Forums.”
- The team is working with the Report Card team on how to incorporate the content of the report card into the citizen forums to query citizens and get feedback from them.
- Presented the logo that will be used on the website and all printed material related to the Congress.
- Printed materials regarding the Citizen Forums and the Congress will be distributed at the State Fair.
- Invitations for the Citizen Forums have been sent out to the EQB and critical staff.
- Anna presented the website to the EQB. It is live, and people may be directed there, but it has not been “advertised” yet as it is still under development.

Environment and Energy Report Card

Presenter: Matt Langan (Commerce)

- The team continues to work on developing the input provided by the EQB at the last meeting. Have met with one of the two external advisory groups, which had many great suggestions. The other advisory group will meet next week.
- Have been working with DEED’s graphic design team on the presentation of the Report Card. A draft will be ready at the September meeting for EQB input, and the final should then be ready for the October meeting.

Environmental Review Improvement

Presenter: Randall Doneen (DNR)

- The Report on Stakeholder Focus Groups for Environmental Review Improvement is being incorporated into the Environmental Review Improvement final report. Recommendations from the Stakeholder Report, previous efforts, other states’ processes, and EQB member agencies are being reviewed and analyzed. The team hopes to bring a draft report to the Board in September to approve for public notice.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Frederickson at 4:05 p.m.