

**MINUTES**  
**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**July 9, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim LaRue, Mike Koivula, Peter Graham, Jan Nelson, John Sundquist

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ross Penhallegon, Chris Melotti, Kai Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Orin Schumacher, Debby Woodruff, Arno Nelson

B/CC PRESENT:

GUESTS PRESENT:

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Koivula called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion: J. Nelson moved to approve the minutes of June 11, 2008 as amended. Graham seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion passed.

**III. GENERAL COMMENT**

J. Nelson stated that Jan Wroncy explained that Lignin has dioxin in it.

A. Nelson stated that they are through using it now but they do use it about 2 weeks every year.

J. Nelson suggested this be checked out. She asked Schumacher for an itemized list of cost for VMAC since he stated it is around \$28,000.

Schumacher explained he would get that for VMAC. He explained that staff time is a big part of the cost.

A. Nelson explained how staff uses coding for cost of VMAC.

Schumacher explained the difficulty of breaking down the cost telling specifically what the staff person was doing at the time.

J. Nelson wanted this information to know if the County would be saving money if VMAC was eliminated or if staff would still be doing the work.

LaRue asked if the County is eliminating committees

Schumacher explained that there has been a trend to downsize and look at the committees.

LaRue stated that based on an article he read in the Register Guard, he objects to the statement there that suggests VMAC focuses on herbicide use.

Koivula stated that at the Board meeting, it was stated that 95% of VMACs time is spent on herbicide discussion.

Schumacher stated that there has not been a meeting where herbicide use was not the point of contention or a multiple agenda item and is a huge chunk of discussion and debates.

Koivula stated that the committee is responding to the direction given to the committee by the Board of Commissioners.

Sundquist asked if the indefinite moratorium would allow for cost savings by eliminating the no

spray program which would be \$50,000 and is that greater than the GIS system discussed previously.

Schumacher explained that he can't really toss a program that has been in existence for that long because if spraying ever came back, they would be starting over again. The only savings would be the NSA program.

J. Nelson suggested a letter be included with the NSA renewals explaining the moratorium.

Schumacher explained that the computer system that was to be put with the spray truck is no longer needed since the herbicide program is not happening. He explained that they would have to use GPS to mark NSA areas because they cannot just use the tax lot information for no spray areas.

Sundquist thinks a small hand-held unit could be used to document the no spray areas.

Schumacher explained that the flaggings are often placed in the wrong areas and are inaccurate. He explained that at the new renewal time the information would have been updated and corrected. Since there is a no-spray policy, there is no point in spending the money on the GIS system.

Koivula suggested that this issue be put on the next agenda.

J. Nelson suggested that since the Board suggested eliminating VMAC, maybe the committee could have fewer meetings, eliminate the dinner, etc.

Koivula stated that spraying is going on for False Brome at Alton Baker Park again and he suggest that when the invasive species are removed, it should be replanted with something else that would compete with the other invasives. He thinks it will be targeted with backpack spray.

#### **IV. REPORT ON ILLEGAL SPRAY SUBCOMMITTEE – J. NELSON**

J. Nelson stated that she has called the ODA several times and they are claiming that they have no authority or interest in enforcing illegal spray issues and that the County is responsible. She stated that Jan Wroncy told her that the EPA authorizes the State to do this through the FIFRA.

Schumacher explained that the ODA is unable to staff people to do this work.

J. Nelson stated that if any illegal spraying is done in the ROW, there isn't the staff or time to enforce this. She would like the subcommittee to go over this with the legal department. She wants some type of notification done.

Schumacher stated that the County has a nuisance abatement person, but they are used for Lane Management issues. The permits division deals with issues in the ROW.

LaRue stated that having the subcommittee looking into the illegal spraying is a horrible misuse of what few funds the County has right now. He believes those funds should be used for health and safety issues rather than the ROW issues with grass farmers who need to have a pure crop to sell. If the County has to enforce this, it would be a huge impact to the farmers.

Sundquist stated that the subcommittee would not be using money to do this and he has little sympathy for grass seed farmers who violate public health to make more money. He stated that there are many alternatives to burning to protect their fields.

#### **V. BOARD OF HEALTH UPDATE - SCHUMACHER**

Schumacher stated that at the Board of Health meeting, the Board voted unanimously to put an indefinite moratorium on the use of herbicides for the roadside vegetation management in Lane County. They also authorized the funding for 2 additional FTEs. He is not sure exactly where the money comes from for this. His biggest concern is the guardrail work and the rotation of employees.

A. Nelson explained how 520 temporary positions work. He explained that 5 employees have been laid off in Road Maintenance.

Sundquist stated that there should be negotiations with the unions for the next contract to take into consideration the County's needs in getting the inmate crews back.

A. Nelson explained that there are 5 employees gone from RM now and another 25 next year

and this is an issue for the unions.

LaRue asked about the Federal funding and whether there would be anymore money coming in.

A.Nelson explained that it is pretty much gone. Something could change with a new president but there is no way to know at this point.

Schumacher stated that the Board directed him to look at the dissolution of VMAC and to come back with proposals to the Board. He has met with the Roads Advisory Committee. The Board of Health can deal with the health issues and the RAC can deal with the roadside vegetation issues that VMAC has dealt with. Both were accepting of this idea.

A. Nelson explained that the RAC brings concerns of the citizens for road projects to the committee. Different groups come in and want support of certain projects for an example. The committee is made up of citizens with different backgrounds and experience.

Schumacher stated that the commissioners wanted to step back and look at the options and not eliminate VMAC immediately. He stated that both Melotti and Penhallegon gave their verbal support to do away with VMAC.

J. Nelson stated that it would not be a big deal because they have made connections and would continue to do what they do. She had talked to Fleenor before and said if they stopped using herbicides, they could save money by getting rid of VMAC. She stated that herbicide use is the reason VMAC was formed.

Koivula stated that he is off the committee in January, but thinks the committee does some good and the other committees could likely handle these issues. He is concerned about the indefinite moratorium. He thinks a 3 year moratorium would be better.

Sundquist thinks there is a lot of unfinished business that VMAC has to deal with. The development of alternatives could be acted on and effective. The IVM policy needs to be updated and the illegal spray problem needs to be dealt with. He stated that there are still many valuable things for VMAC to do. He said they could now focus on long term projects that could benefit the County. He thinks that they represent a forum that the Commissioners can trust.

Graham stated that he wants to know more about the other 2 committees. He has learned a lot. He doesn't have a strong feeling that the committee has to exist and hopes the other committees can take up the slack and address the issues.

Schumacher stated that this idea is not in stone, but one idea. He stated that the IVM program is in effect and the herbicide issue is resolved and these were the two main reasons VMAC was formed.

LaRue stated that sometimes the committee ends up spinning their wheels.

Sundquist stated the committee was not given the alternatives that were given to the Board and the Board was told that the committee voted for the 1<sup>st</sup> alternative and that is the reason he got hot under the collar and thinks that was deceptive. He thinks the situation was being manipulated.

## **VI. UPDATE ON N. GAME FARM RD - SCHUMACHER**

Schumacher explained that he has to kill off the current vegetation before putting anything new down such as grass seed. There are lots of alternatives. Grass is good as a mix. He explained that the trees planted on the Crescent Meadow side of the street were planted by the developer not the County and they are only guaranteed for 1 year.

Sundquist suggested that for future developments the County should initiate a contractual agreement with the developers to maintain it, otherwise they will end up in the same situation that Game Farm is in now.

## **VII. FISH CULVERT WORK (PHOTOS) - SCHUMACHER**

Schumacher shared some photos of culvert work.

A. Nelson explained that they use squash pipes for the culverts. They put a couple feet of rock in the bottom of the culvert to replicate the natural stream for the fish. They try to duplicate the

same size as the stream itself. These should last approx. 60-70 years for aluminized pipe. Schumacher showed a tide gate culvert. The gate opens and closes based on the tide so the fish can migrate through. There is only one in Lane County. Lane County only replaced the pipe and someone else replaced the tide gate.

A.Nelson explained that most of these are paid for through grants.

Schumacher explained that he tries to mimic what vegetation is already at the site. ODFW regulates a lot of this work. They may pay for some or none of the work. If trees are removed, 2 are planted in it's place. He has not been able to find the certified straw very easily. It is supposed to be guaranteed free from weeds. It is starting to get easier to find but is a very limited market. Bernhardt Heights is an example of a long culvert system with long slopes which are terraced geo-grid.

A. Nelson explained that they will be putting in some bottomless arches which now is the new preferred method and it is cheaper than a bridge.

#### **VIII. UPDATE ON ODOT DECISION ON PILOT PROJECT - SUNDQUIST**

Sundquist explained that the Oregon Transportation Commission approved the pilot project for Lane County and Hwy 101 as a budget option package that the Governor will present to the legislature 2009-2011 so it can be studied. ODOT wants to spend \$ 2,500,000 to have people go out and look at it. ODOT is supposed to have an IVM policy. I-5 may be a project ODOT will deal with.

Schumacher explained that it is \$2.25 million to purchase equipment and staffing to run the program and monitor it. He explained that it is for a 3 year period. He stated that ODOT is proposing to reduce herbicide use on interstates in Lane County and continue the expansion portion of the Lincoln County 101 into Lane County 101. They would continue to spray for noxious and invasive weeds, guardrails, and distinct management areas. The commissioners voted for this proposal.

Sundquist stated that it doesn't make sense to spray noxious weeds unless you have an IVM program which is a question mark and it doesn't seem that they do. ODOT has joined forces with Benton County Habitat Conservation Plan. Benton County wants to spray native plants and they can spray in the ROW.

#### **IX. VMAC VOTE ON VACATION MONTH - COMMITTEE**

Sundquist stated that there are too many things to do to take a month off. Vote-in favor of not taking a month off.

#### **X. UPDATE WORK PLAN**

Discussion/Action topics added and work plan will be updated and distributed at next meeting.

#### **XI ROAD MAINTENANCE UPDATE - ARNO**

A. Nelson stated that the dust oiling program is done. 25 miles of gravel road. Chip seal started the middle of June. Florence area is done. ODOT Hwy 36 project is in progress now. Blade patch program is going well in Zone 2&3. Fish culvert projects started last week and run until mid September. Safety strip mowing is done except for Cottage Grove. They are down 2 employees there right now. Christenson Rd, Deerhorn Rd & Washburn Lane gravel roads have been hard surfaced.

Sundquist made a motion to extend the meeting a few minutes. J. Nelson seconded. All voted in favor.

**XII. NEW ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – WED., AUGUST 13, 2008**

1. Board of Health eliminating VMAC
2. Itemized cost of VMAC - Schumacher
3. NSA cost
4. Lignin Issue – Arno
5. Updates on N. Game Farm – Melotti
6. Update on ODOT – Sundquist
7. Illegal spray committee update – J. Nelson

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

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Debby Woodruff, Recording Secretary