

APPROVED SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2022

Euclid Creek Watershed Draft Council Minutes

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Hosted Virtually on Zoom

In Attendance: Chris Vild (Chair), Mayor Roche (Vice Chair), Karen Arnold, Andy Blackley, Jeff Filarski, Jennifer Heard, Elizabeth Hiser, Mayor Holzheimer Gail, Commissioner Ramona Lowery, Scott Sipos, Sarah Stangelo, Mayor Ward

Voting Members: Karen Arnold, Andy Blackley, Mayor Holzheimer Gail, Commissioner Ramona Lowery, Scott Sipos, Mayor Roche, Chris Vild, Mayor Ward

The Watershed Program Manager welcomed everyone and provided instructions for how to use the Zoom platform, votes were placed using the reactions yes and no tool. The meeting was recorded.

Before the official meeting, an icebreaker activity was held with introductions. What is the community's highest priority watershed or stormwater project?

Introductions and Icebreaker

Elizabeth Hiser (Cuyahoga SWCD) – 185th Spillway Fish Passage project – led by United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS). Funding for design has been awarded to USACE. NEORS is working through real estate issues.

Chris Vild (Beachwood) – Installing new storm sewer on Community Drive – previously not tied in. This will bring this area into compliance. Using community cost-share to do follow-up monitoring of outfalls identified as a concern by Board of Health with an agreement to use NEORS laboratory.

Mayor Roche (Richmond Heights) – Emphasis on preservation/conservation with several city properties including Greenwood Farm. Currently working on maintenance of a bridge from the school over Richmond Road that needs replaced. Using community cost share to address storm drain replacements along Richmond Road. The night before the meeting a water main broke along Highland Road, this is the second time in less than a year.

Mayor Ward (Lyndhurst) – Working on a tree canopy grant for riparian reforestation.

Jeff Filarski (Lyndhurst) – Working with NEORS on 4 houses with Illicit Discharges (IDDE) – reconnecting those properly.

Andy Blackley (South Euclid) – Eliminated overflow at Euclid Creek and Green Road. Relocated the storm and sanitary sewers. Using NEORS Member Community Infrastructure Program Funds (MCIP) for Phase 1 along Maywood/Oakmont to replace aging sewer infrastructure. Service Department used community cost share funds to purchase a Vactor Truck for annual catch basin cleaning program.

Mayor Gail (Euclid) – The wastewater treatment plant updates are now substantially complete, and the city is working on a community park project called "Top of the Tank" that will create greenspace over the treatment plant. The Lakefront Watershed Trail project is a big success. Not

a city project, but the Cleveland Metroparks has purchased the old middle school site and will be creating public park space and significant tree planting.

Commissioner Lowery (Cleveland) – Used community cost share to purchase jets and vactor truck for catch basin and sewer cleaning program. Collaborating with Cleveland Water so that streets are only worked on once. Replacing 1000 ft of sewer on West 56th to connect to the Shady Side Interceptor through a NEORSD regulator. Storm catch basins are being added from Shady Side to an existing NEORSD Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) – will discharge to a branch of Big Creek to help alleviate basement flooding and eliminate IDDE. \$3 million - taking advantage of NEORSD Community cost share funds and MCIP program.

Scott Sipos (Mayfield Village) - audio was not working.

Karen Arnold (Mayfield Heights) – Lives in Mayfield Heights, grew up in South Euclid near the recent South Euclid improvements. Retired registered nurse. Assisted in a Kokosing River study in Mount Vernon Ohio in college for about 15 years. I have been involved in similar projects, and am looking forward to being involved in work like this, I am looking forward to learning more about projects going on in the watershed and helping with the efforts in Mayfield Heights and the rest of the watershed.

Sarah Stangelo (Lyndhurst) – With Chagrin Valley Engineers (CVE) along with Jeff Filarski.

Jennifer Heard (Cleveland) – Working on getting acclimated to MS4 changes and effectively implementing the new stormwater management plan (SWMP).

Meeting Called to Order

After introductions Chair Vild called for a movement to call the meeting to order. Moved, Mayor Gail, 2nd, Mayor Roche– All approved. Meeting started at 8:17 AM.

Consent Agenda

The chair reviewed and proposed the use of a consent agenda for remote meetings to streamline the routine, procedural, informational and self-explanatory non-controversial items on the agenda. All consent agenda items were presented to council in a single motion for an up or down vote after allowing anyone to request that a specific item be moved to the full agenda for individual attention. Other items, particularly those requiring strategic thought, decision making or action, are handled as usual.

Chair Vild called for discussion. No discussion was requested.

Motion to approve use of consent agenda. Moved, Mayor Roche, 2nd Mayor Ward – All Approved

Motion to Approve Minutes and Work Plan Updates

The chair proposed the use of one motion and vote for the following items during the meeting: Approval of the April 2021 Minutes, 2021 Work Plan Update, and 2021 PIPE Work Plan Update

Chair Vild called for the vote on the consent agenda. Moved, Mayor Ward, 2nd, Mayor Roche - All approved

SWCD Euclid Creek Watershed Program Updates

Chair Chris Vild introduced the next item, Euclid Creek Watershed Program Updates

Ms. Hiser went over program highlights. Handouts were emailed and are available on the website (www.euclidcreekwatershed.org) under About Us: Euclid Creek Watershed Council. Ms. Hiser thanked council for their support and reminded that SWCD sent out invoices to Mayors and financial departments for 2022 in late November.

Watershed Planning:

SWCD has been updating the Euclid Creek watershed Nine-Element Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategic Plan (NPSIS). The update is focused on creating Critical Areas based on priority problems rather than based on location per Ohio Environmental Protection Area (OEPA) guidance.

This year SWCD used county canopy data to create the Deforested Riparian Zone (DRZ) critical area. These are areas directly neighboring open waterways in need of additional tree cover.

Next SWCD will map and create targets for directly connected impervious (DCI), large impervious areas (LAIA), and preservation (PRES) opportunity critical areas.

Once those revisions are complete, SWCD will submit those revisions to partners for review and request community projects that need federal or state funding support to be added to the NPS-IS. We will include a public comment opportunity and then submit to OEPA for approval. We hope to have those revisions complete in spring.

In 2022 SWCD would also like to conduct a flood control basin retrofit analysis based on training provided by Sustainable Streams this year – this will focus on areas upstream of NEORSR regional system. These retrofits would add water quality benefits and help prevent downstream erosion.

Technical Committee Updates:

We are working with our Central Lake Erie Basin (CLEB) partners to host a few setback implementation workshops to help communities make informed decisions when there are requests for variances on stream and wetland setbacks. The workshop will bring in local experts and provide decision making tools for those that have to implement setbacks. The timeline for this workshop has been moved to 2022.

Don't forget the new OEPA Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requires electronic submittal of all documents through the Ohio EPA eBusiness Center. The permit requires that all MS4s renewing coverage update their Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) to be consistent with new requirements by April 1, 2022.

Grant Assistance and Management:

NEORSR Watershed Partner Service Agreement (WPSA) (\$40,000)

2021 NEORSR Service Agreement work continues, 2022 application has been submitted. NEORSR has requested additional emphasis on implementation and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) in 2022. They will no longer support tasks considered "research" like the volunteer monitoring equipment.

NEORSR Master Planning

As the Chagrin River - Lake Erie Tributaries (CHALET) Master planning is wrapping up NEORS will be meeting with communities to go over their community report. SWCD would like to attend these meetings to make sure any watershed goals can be tailored to help meet and supplement Community and NEORS goals.

Please invite us to your meeting!

West Branch Euclid Creek Mayfield Campus

Design work for phase 1-3 of the West Branch Euclid Creek Mayfield Campus GLRI Grant (\$235,059) was completed in June.

SWCD has been awarded a \$300,000 Ohio EPA 319 grant for construction of Phase 1. NEORS will provide \$59,463 in match. SWCD is currently working through the agreements with the property owner, the Cleveland Clinic upstream for access, and Ohio EPA. We anticipate 2022/23 construction. SWCD has applied for funding of phase 2 from H2Ohio and Ohio EPA 319. If funded, we hope to do construction of phase 1 and 2 in the same season.

USFS GLRI CLEB Grant (\$215,933)

Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP) is leading this grant which includes reforestation efforts in Mayfield Village, Lyndhurst, and Richmond Heights. SWCD staff is providing technical support. There have been project delays due to partner contract delays. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was released November 8th. The Project Pre-Bid Meeting was held November 22nd. Proposals are Due December 17th. SWCD will assist with contractor RFP reviews. Invasive management is targeted for January-March. Planting targeted for March-May. Maintenance in June-Sept. The final grant Report is due in Sept.

Dominion/WRLC Grants (SWCD \$2,500, FOEC \$1,500)

SWCD and FOEC received mini grants for 2021 work from WRLC/SWCD.

SWCD assisted FOEC with a WRLC/Dominion grant. In the spring of 2021 Friends of Euclid Creek used funds from this grant to purchase a watershed model from www.enviroscape.com for use in outreach and education events. This model has already been used at several events this year despite a decrease in opportunities due to COVID restrictions. Friends of Euclid Creek staff were trained by staff from Cuyahoga SWCD in the common uses and education programs for modeling surface water pollution using this model. Over one hundred people interacted with this model at the Greenwood Farm Festival in Richmond Heights on September 18th. This watershed model will continue to be a valuable tool for educating the public on the connection between human activities and the impact on local waterways.

SWCD managed an additional WRLC/Dominion grant aimed at creating public rain gardens and native landscaping. This included the installation of a rain garden in the spring at Willoughby - Eastlake School of Innovation Rain Garden: On May 22, 2021, seven (7) MRG course participants installed a 237ft² rain garden from start to finish. In October, 12 volunteers helped install a native plant memorial garden for Joe Newman in Beachwood at The Temple-Tifereth.

SWCD continues to support efforts in underserved east side watersheds neighboring Euclid Creek. As part of the WRLC/Dominion grant, a rain garden was also installed in East Cleveland across from Coit Road Farmers Market in partnership with Food Strong. This site hosts learning gardens right next to the community garden and market gardens and is a wonderful opportunity to teach residents about rain gardens. On May 29 -10 MRG course participants installed the 100 ft²

rain garden from start to finish. This included the removal of invasive mugwort and cattails and two subsequent weeding efforts have the garden looking great. Signage was installed this November.

Master Rain Gardener Grants

The William Bingham Foundation Grant work is complete (\$35,000). Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) grant (\$18,392) kicked off in May. 4 courses were held by Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP) and SWCD in 2021 (3 online, 1 in person) - 145 students took one of the Northeast Ohio MRG classes in 2021. 23 of the students reside in Euclid Creek Watershed Communities.

As of 09/30/2021, the program has trained over 400 residents and professionals and enabled the installation of 110 rain gardens, which are capturing over 1.5 million gallons of stormwater runoff each year.

This year we developed a unified website for the program, creating a single landing space for the Northeast Ohio Master Rain Gardener program. Before this website, program information was disjointly displayed on our individual organization websites. We announced the launch of this new website (<https://neomasterraingardener.org/>) on August 31, 2021. The website includes information about the program, registration information for all upcoming Master Rain Gardener courses, an event calendar, and several interactive maps. The volunteer tab allows visitors to learn more about adopting a rain garden and view an interactive map of the public rain gardens that are available for adoption. Current volunteers are also able to directly report their volunteer hours through this website. The website has a page for landscape professionals who are interested in learning more about the program's professional certification track, along with a list of certified professionals for those looking for help to design or install a residential rain garden. Finally, we recognize many of our certified Master Rain Gardeners on our rain garden wall of fame with photos of them proudly standing next to their rain garden along with their new Master Rain Gardener t-shirt and/or sign.

As part of the Master Rain Gardener program, we also lead an Adopt-a-Rain-Garden program that allows participants to volunteer to maintain a local public rain garden or bioretention cell. By recruiting and engaging these volunteers, we are (1) creating a community of activists that are advocating for rain gardens and other green infrastructure in their communities, (2) giving a good reputation to rain gardens by maintaining these visible examples of green infrastructure, and (3) increasing community awareness and support for rain gardens and the Master Rain Gardener program. Several Euclid Creek community bioretention have been adopted by rain garden stewards.

Let me know if you have a bioretention cell or rain garden you would like to have adopted – or if you are looking to get a rain garden installed by our master rain gardeners.

We held our first annual Volunteer Recognition Day on September 15 at the Wildwood Shelter at Cleveland Metroparks Euclid Creek Reservation. A total of 25 MRG participants attended the event and were recognized for their volunteer, advocacy, and rain garden installation efforts. The event included a recognition presentation, a native plant swap, and a tour of the Wildwood restoration project. This event not only recognizes the efforts of our MRG students who go above and beyond what the course requires, but also will help to build a community of rain garden advocates. By connecting these advocates, they are continually inspired to share their knowledge of rain gardens with their friends, family, and community.

Several stewards noted that the tour of Wildwood really opened their eyes to the larger restoration efforts on behalf of our watershed and inspired them to work harder to promote rain gardens as solutions individuals can do upstream to prevent the need for such large-scale efforts.

Volunteer Monitoring Program

Meg Hennessey, Watershed Coordinator, has continued to ramp up our volunteer monitoring program this year.

We now have 16 active volunteers monitoring 13 Sites (1 new site was added to track pre and post project monitoring for the Mayfield Campus project)

Of note, our volunteer monitors have found high ammonia at Dusty Goldenrod stream #2 which flows through the Dusty Goldenrod Preserve in Highland Heights.

SWCD coordinated with Ohio EPA, Highland Heights, NEORS, and County Board of Health to try and track down the source last winter. Follow up monitoring indicated the source is between Wilson Mills and the properties along Hawthorne but is yet to be determined. Levels returned to normal in April but appear to be spiking again this November. We will continue to work with the city and sampling partners to try and identify and stop the source.

Stormwater Public Involvement and Public Education (PIPE) Program

All 2021 PIPE events and outreach are complete. 22 involvement events and 12 educational programs have been held in 2021 for the Euclid Creek Watershed Committee Communities.

As folks head inside for winter, virtual programming on Green Yards Healthy Homes, Backyard Stream Maintenance, Tree Care, Rain Barrels, Rain Gardens, and water quality monitoring is available on demand for promotion to residents. If your community would like, simulated live presentations can be catered to individual communities for promotion and viewing at a specific time and date.

SWCD will work with communities on 2021 annual reporting in early February for these two Minimum Control Measures (MCMs).

For 2022:

To aid in reporting efforts to watershed council, we would like to modify the PIPE committee work plan to focus exclusively on SWCD services to the communities for their PIPE program and move any supplemental watershed outreach and events to the ECWC work plan and FOEC/Community partner updates. This will help us to make sure all PIPE reporting is the same throughout the county and help to better track watershed specific services for Euclid Creek.

SWCD helped host 12 stream cleanup events in 2021 for Euclid Creek watershed communities. Over 196 bags of trash were removed from the watershed. To communicate about and address litter in the watershed, SWCD partnered with American Rivers and a mobile application called Litterati to track the trash being picked up. Euclid Creek Watershed-wide, 25 participants have picked up and tracked 4,241 pieces of litter using Litterati in 2021. Carol Toris, a volunteer who found us during a spring Euclid Creek cleanup is leading the way picking up 756 pieces!

Added focus has been placed on litter tracking at Acacia because of the constant inundation of trash at the restoration site.

1,188 of the pieces tracked were collected at Acacia during monthly Cleveland Metroparks (CMP) led cleanups.

Mayfield Heights business Kerry reached out to Cuyahoga SWCD looking for local volunteer opportunities this fall. To help with the trash audit, they offered to do a 2-hour Litterati trash blitz at Beachwood Place which is directly upstream of Acacia. Over the course of 2 hours, 5 volunteers picked up 1,395 pieces of litter, 548 of those received user generated tags which tell us the Object, the Material, and the Brand of a piece of litter. Though not all tagged or picked up due to time constraints, cigarette butts were by far the most observed item at the mall. Of note – no cigarette receptacles were observed on site.

Cuyahoga SWCD received a litter grant from the OEPA that allowed us to purchase and use “smart grabbers” to speed up these litter audits. Volunteers mount their phone to a grabber with a Bluetooth button to click and grab both litter and a photo in one motion. The grant also has supplied take home items for volunteers that encourage putting waste where it belongs.

Litter is a real problem in Euclid creek, it comes up at every public input meeting and every PIPE committee meeting. We hope to utilize Litterati data and volunteer engagement to start getting to the root of the problem.

I am happy to answer any questions about the work plan updates before we go on to additional business.

Additional Business

Ms. Hiser gave a Friends of Euclid Creek update.

Friends of Euclid Creek had several well attended events this year. Especially the Tour of Friends of Euclid Creek’s Native Plant Garden and Euclid Waterfront Improvement Project with Allison Lukacsy Love and Survey of Moses Cleveland Trees in the Watershed by Roy Larick. Like many, they struggled with Covid and weather cancellations.

They are currently completing an update to the FOEC brochure for printing this month and working on 2022 programming. They have their holiday party coming up. Be sure to stay tuned to the website (<http://www.friendsofeuclidcreek.com/>) for upcoming events. Their new board has been working really well together, their conservation committee has just been hitting it out of the park. We are very grateful for their efforts.

Scheduling Next Meeting

Mr. Vild brought up the next meeting. With the pandemic it is difficult. Does anyone have thoughts on in person, summit, virtual? Because everything is up in the air, perhaps we should not yet commit and see how the beginning of the new year starts and play it by ear. We could always do a doodle poll later.

Mayor Ward – I agree.

Ms. Hiser – While the virtual summit was well received last year, there may be some virtual gathering burnout. It might make sense to hold a smaller Mayor’s Breakfast or virtual work plan meeting and postpone the summit to summer when it could be held outdoors and covid is not such a concern. I will defer to council and set up a doodle poll in the new year.

Mr. Vild asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Mayor Roche, seconded Mayor Ward

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 AM.

Minutes compiled by Elizabeth Hiser, Cuyahoga SWCD Watershed Program Manager

Reference:

Watershed Council Meeting was recorded, and video is available for viewing at this link:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/7761905998684333826>