

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, October 17, 2022
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Conference Room 114-Wood County Courthouse & Teleconference via WebEx

Present (In person or via WebEx): Bill Leichtnam, Bill Clendenning, Rhonda Carrell, Ken Winters, Ben Jeffrey, Tim Wuebben, Tamas Houlihan, Gordon Gottbeheut, Bruce Dimick, Shane Wucherpennig, Karoline Whitman

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comment:** Bruce Dimick- DNR performed superficial testing of Emerald Sky Dairy. Nothing has been done, so the issue is back in the court of the citizens to push clean-up.
3. **Speaker - Chair Leichtnam - "WCCGG Possible Structural Changes"**
 - First meeting was 12/15/16 at the Nekoosa Public Library. First speaker was Mark Borchardt (Marshfield USDA office).
 - In April 2017 established a mission statement, worked on bylaws (3rd draft done in November 2018).
 - Have met as a group 71 times, with speakers nearly every time
 - Have moved locations several times. Moved to courthouse during Covid, mainly for WebEx support.
 - Took one field trip to Heartland Farms on 10/15/18.
 - Have been addressed by three state lawmakers.
 - As a group, organized one panel discussion in January 2020.
 - In April 2018, attendance sank to three.
 - The purpose of having a structural change discussion is that repeatedly meetings have been down to four people in attendance.
 - What kind of an effect have we had? Most recently Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative has been a spinoff of Citizens Group. Also, this committee has a voice at CEED, at J&L, and at HHS.
 - **Time:**
 - Tamas Houlihan: 2:00 on Monday works well for him most of the time.
 - Bruce Dimick: No personal issue with meeting at 2:00 on Monday, but an impediment to those who work during the day.
 - Rhonda Carrell: Great with 2:00 on Monday. Important that current members continue to attend.
 - Gordon Gottbeheut: Agrees with Bruce, but also points out that evening meetings would preclude attendance from Wood County employees (as well possibly people with school-aged children due to school events).
 - Ben Jeffrey: It would be tough to attend evening meetings.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Meetings will remain at 2:00 p.m.
 - **Place:**
 - Bruce Dimick: Would prefer Riverblock due to shorter walk.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Would be concerned about IT help.
 - Ben Jeffrey: IT help desk would be available via phone.
 - Tamas Houlihan: Appreciates virtual option.
 - Bill Clendenning: Thinks that in the next three years, with parking, Riverblock is a good idea.
 - Gordon Gottbeheut: A lot of people that used to attend may not realize the virtual option is available.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Will try the next meeting at Riverblock.
 - **Frequency of Meetings:**
 - Bill Clendenning: Would like to keep monthly so as not to lose people.
 - Bruce Dimick: Agrees with Bill, to not lose continuity.
 - Tamas Houlihan: Agrees with Bill also. Would like to keep monthly.

- Ken Winters: Agrees with monthly meetings.
- Rhonda Carrell: Every other month works better for her personally, but she will agree with whatever works best for the group.
- Bill Leichtnam: Outlined the possibility of every other month, skipping December. Hesitant to contact a speaker such as Preston Cole to speak to a room with only four people in attendance.
- Will continue meetings on a monthly basis.
- **Speakers:**
 - Bruce Dimick: Speakers put a fair amount of effort into presentations and then speak to less than a half-dozen people often. Embarrassed by this. Encourages to get organization up to reasonable size or have less frequent speakers and spend more internal time discussing issues among group.
 - Bill Clendenning: Farmers could have speakers as well to hear “other side”.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Requests help with thank-you notes for speakers (Speakers Bureau).
 - Tamas Houlihan: Agrees farmers need to be “at the table” to make conservation work. He declined Bill Leichtnam’s request to find a monthly speaker. He is willing to find three speakers a year.
 - The decision was made to decrease the frequency of speakers, discuss what was heard from the previous month’s speaker, and try to create a more balanced speaking group of speakers.
 - Speakers Bureau: Tamas Houlihan will help find speakers. Bruce Dimick will write thank-you notes. Rhonda Carrell will proofread thank-you notes.
- **Change in Leadership:**
 - Bill Leichtnam posed the question whether or not a change of leadership would benefit this group, either for attendance or because a change of leadership is needed.
 - Rhonda Carrell: Would prefer Bill stay in this position. Inquired whether or not Bill is wishing to give up leadership.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Wonders if he has done something that has discouraged attendance.
 - Bruce Dimick: Covid has diminished all voluntary groups.
 - Tamas Houlihan: Agrees with both Rhonda and Bruce.
 - Ken Winters: Agrees that Bill has done a fantastic job. Thinks that everyone could come together to help ease the burden of finding speakers. Suggested B&D Farms to come speak regarding mustard seed.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Lack of promotion of speaker may be a downfall.
 - Rhonda Carrell: Suggested forwarding agendas to people when speakers are featured. Asked Tamas why more growers do not participate in meetings. Tamas stated he does take information from the meetings to other growers, but the majority of them are too busy to attend meetings. A handful do not attend for fear of being “ripped on”.
 - Consensus is that Bill Leichtnam remains Chair, Bruce Dimick as Vice-Chair.
- Discussion regarding funding options and uses was held.
- **Goals/Direction**
 - Bill Leichtnam: Goal has always been education. Wonders about moving more into the action realm.
 - Bruce Dimick: Without concrete goals to influence policy, he can see why people lose interest.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Suggested that instances where action has been taken may not have been noticed by others.
 - Ken Winters: Feels that not everyone is aware of the pesticide problem.
 - Bill Leichtnam: An action item may be to find who will work together and center efforts around them.
 - Tamas Houlihan: Outlined successes that have come out of the work that has been done.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Action items will be reinstated on the meeting agenda.

- **Self-Evaluation**
 - Bill Leichtnam: We haven't been as action-oriented as we should have been.
 - Bruce Dimick: Why aren't more elected officials showing up? We've not gotten through to people in Wood County who should have interest in protecting the water of their citizens.
 - Rhonda Carrell: Believes that others leave it up to the few who are doing the work to attend. Feels that this group has made a huge difference.
- **Agenda Structure**
 - Bill Leichtnam: Asked for ideas to streamline agenda.
 - Bruce Dimick: #2 could be #2, #4, #5.
 - Bill Leichtnam: Meeting to include: Call to Order, Public Comment, Speaker, Future Speakers, Agenda Items, Adjourn.

4. **Correspondence/Updates/Handouts/Reports on Meetings Attended:**
 - 10/20/22-Imagine a Day Without Water
5. **"Action Items" proposed to CEED Committee by Wood County CGG:** None
6. **Roundtable:** Discussion around possible structural change to CGG meetings.
7. **Announcements by members / visitors (upcoming related events / meetings):** None
8. **Future Speakers:** Please contact Bill Leichtnam or Bruce Dimick with suggestions for future speakers.
November - None
9. **Agenda Items for next meeting:**
Agenda items should be submitted to Bill Leichtnam by the second Monday of the month.
10. **Next Meeting:** Meetings will be the third Monday of each month @ 2:00 p.m.

The next regular Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 21st at 2:00 p.m. at the Wood County River Block Building, Room #206 (Auditorium), 111 W. Jackson Street, Wisconsin Rapids. This will be an in-person and virtual WebEx meeting.

11. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting:**

Bill Leichtnam declared the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.
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Notes by Karoline Whitman, Planning & Zoning Office