



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes
August 24, 2016

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Wednesday, August 24, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in the Allen S. Hardin Amphitheater at the R. Charles Loudermilk Center for Regional Community in Atlanta, Georgia.

Members Present

Hon. Boyd Austin, Chairman
Ms. Katie Kirkpatrick, Vice Chair
Mr. Birdel Jackson, Treasurer
Hon Buzz Ahrens
Hon. Tim Lee
Dr. Mark Berry
Ms. Pamela Burnett
Mr. Brad Currey
Ms. Kit Dunlap
Mr. Tim Thoms

Mr. Steven Woodruff
City of Atlanta Designee: Kishia Powell
DeKalb County Designee: Margaret Tanner
Douglas County Designee: Mr. Gil Shearouse
Forsyth County Designee: Jon Heard
Fulton County Designee: Nick Ammons
Hall County Designee: Ken Rearden
Henry County Designee: Tony Carnell
Rockdale County Designee: Dwight Wicks

Members Not Present

Hon. Edward Johnson
Hon. Charlotte Nash
Hon. Larry Owens
Hon. Mathew Santini

Hon. Jeff Turner
Mr. Chuck Huling
Mr. Gerald Pouncey

Chairman Boyd Austin called the meeting to order.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Chairman Austin called for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the June 1, 2016 meeting minutes was made by Ms. Kit Dunlap, seconded by Mr. Brad Currey and passed without opposition.

Drought/Lake Level/Water Litigation Update

Katherine Zitsch gave a brief overview of drought conditions across the metro region. Currently, half of the District is in “Severe” and half in “Extreme” drought conditions according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The elevation of Lake Lanier is approximately 1066, or five feet below full pool of 1071.

The Florida v. Georgia Supreme Court trial before the special master has been scheduled for October 31, 2016 in Portland, Maine. The trial is expected to last six to eight weeks.

There are two cases pending in the Alabama/Coosa/Tallapoosa basin. The first case is the Georgia/Cobb-Marrietta/ARC v. USACE lawsuit in the Northern District of Georgia. The case is currently awaiting a decision on summary judgement filed by the three Georgia parties. The second case is Alabama/Alabama Power v. USACE in Washington D.C. This trial will remain in Washington D.C. and separate from the Georgia lawsuit.

In Congress, the latest draft of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill rolled back the clause from the 2013 bill that was harmful to Georgia's water access. The final bill is expected to pass in September 2016.

2017 Calendar Photo Contest Deadline

Chairman Austin noted that the third annual Water Reflections Calendar Photo Contest is currently open for photo submissions with a deadline of September 9th. The contest promotes an awareness of the need to protect our shared water resources. Amateur and professional photographers over 18 years of age are asked to submit photos taken within the 15 county region that capture the beauty, heritage, activities and character of metro Atlanta's water resources. Winning photographs will receive a cash prize and will be included in the 2017 Water Reflections Calendar. The Grand Prize photo will be featured on the cover of the calendar.

Water Sense Sales Tax Holiday

Chairman Austin noted that Friday, September 30th to Sunday, October 2nd is a sales tax holiday for WaterSense and ENERGY STAR labeled products. All WaterSense and ENERGY STAR labeled products with a sales price of \$1,500 or less purchased for non-commercial home or personal use will be Georgia state and local sales tax-free. The current sales tax holiday received a one year extension for this year only so new legislation will be needed in the 2017 session. Chairman Austin added that it is unclear as to who will carry this legislation but to keep an eye out. Chairman Austin also urged board members to consider supporting the legislation if it makes sense for your jurisdiction.

2016 Middle School Essay Contest

Chairman Austin announced the 2016 Middle School Essay Contest. This Year's Topic is "Why is water conservation important to you and our region?" The deadline for submission is Friday, October 21, 2016. An awards reception will be held in the State Capital on December 14, 2016.

Storm the Watershed Trail Run

Chairman Austin announced that on October 22nd, the District will host its first "Storm the Watershed" Trail Run in Henry County to help raise awareness for pollution prevention. Storm the Watershed is a 15K/5K trail run along the beautiful Long Branch Reservoir at the Cubihatcha Outdoor Education Center in Locust Grove, GA presented by Henry County Water Authority. Barbecue lunch is included with registration.

Schedule for 2016 and 2017

Chairman Austin noted the scheduled dates for District Board Meetings in 2016 and 2017 as follows:

- December 7, 2016
- February 22, 2017
- June 7, 2017
- August 23, 2017
- December 6, 2017

2017 Water Management Plan Update Status

Mr. Danny Johnson provided an overview of the Plan Update progress and updated timeline. District staff along with a handful of board members attended the Eastern Georgia Joint Regional Water Council and Western Georgia Joint Regional Water Council meetings over the summer. Georgia EPD presented information on the Agriculture Water Use Forecasts as well as the statewide Surface Water Availability Assessment which identified gaps and statistical assessments of the Corps of Engineers reservoirs. Mr. Johnson noted that the agricultural forecast for the District counties had been placed at each of the board member's chairs when they arrived.

The draft Plan Update Sections 1 through 4 are currently under review by the Technical Coordinating Committee, the Basin Advisory Councils and Georgia EPD. The remaining sections of the plan are currently in development. The Governing Board Working Group will meet next week to discuss final action item recommendations. The state is considering an extension of the District's Plan Update and Regional Water Council Plan Updates into June of 2017.

EPD Surface Water Quality Resource Assessment Update

Dr. Elizabeth Booth, with Georgia EPD, provided an overview of the latest statewide Water Quality Resource Assessment. Dr. Booth discussed plans to institute ammonia limits on future NPDES permits for wastewater treatment facilities due to water quality issues downstream related to endangered mussels. She also noted that some dischargers are starting to push the limits of dissolved oxygen as facilities expand. Additionally, new and renewed NPDES permits will likely be required to report nitrogen concentrations.

The Lake Lanier water quality model shows that load reductions are needed from multiple point source dischargers upstream of the District as well as reductions from non-point sources from urban and agriculture loading. The Lake Lanier Stakeholders Group helped identify potential load reductions to help meet water quality limits within the lake. While phosphorus limits for dischargers are tight, dischargers could reduce or borrow loading credits from urban and agricultural loading.

The following questions were asked:

Q: Does the model take into account seasonal variations in ammonia?

A: Yes

Q: How well does the TMDL model coordinate with municipal permits?

A: The state cannot issue NPDES permits that don't meet water quality limits.

Q: Has anyone looked at Industrial/Municipal credit trading?

A: Not that I know of but it could be considered.

Non-Point Source Strategy

Mr. Chris Faulkner noted that he would be presenting to the Governing Board Working Group next week about the District's development of a Non-Point Source Strategy document. The document would identify how best to and with whom do jurisdictions need to partner with to coordinate a comprehensive stakeholder effort to reduce non-point source pollution in the future.

One board member commented that the task moving forward is how to address the fact that a large portion of the pollutant load in surface waters is coming from non-point sources and not from municipal wastewater dischargers. The state directly regulates pollutant loading through point source discharge permits but has less control over non-point sources, therefore we must think about who bears the cost of non-point source reductions as it will be a tough and expensive effort.

Local Response to International Issues – Zika Stormwater Initiatives

Mr. Chris Kumnick presented the efforts being made at the Georgia Department of Public Health to educate and mitigate the spread of the Zika virus spread by mosquitos. Mr. Kumnick discussed the human health implications, how the virus is transmitted and what people can do to mitigate the spread of mosquitos and the viruses they may carry. Best practices for reducing mosquitos include getting rid of items in the yard that you don't need as well as tipping and tossing items that hold rainwater. The state recommends using mosquito repellent with deet that includes an EPA Registered Repellent label, mosquito netting for children younger than two months of age, and using condoms following any travel to countries where Zika has a presence. Only 20 percent of people who carry the virus present symptoms.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.