



**MINUTES
LORAIN COUNTY
STORM WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SWAC)**

DATE: Thursday, May 18 @ 5:30 pm

PLACE: 226 Middle Ave. Elyria, OH 44035, 4th floor Mtg Rm B

CALL TO ORDER – Don Romancak @ 5:30 pm

A) ROLL CALL-

Present: Donald Romancak, Peter Zwick, Rob Duncan, Rick Carlson, Lyn Ickes

Absent: Ken Carney, Dan Petticord, John Born, Mark McConnell, Butch Born, Rich Beran, Chip Wendt

Guests: Matt Arnold, Mark Rufener, Carl Wesemeyer, Neil Lynch, Jessica Hozalski, Patti Donnellan, Jack Fisher

B) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES from February 16, 2023

**MOVED BY Ickes SECOND BY Carlson TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM
February 16, 2023, MOTION PASSED**

C) Old Business-

1) Project update by Peter Zwick

- 100% complete: Eaton Estates Catch Basin Project (named “Mencl” easement) Denes Concrete recently completed construction, and storm sewer inlets are performing well at this time;



Before



After



During



Before

The Township sent a nice letter to SWAC, Thanking us for making the project successful!

(a) ARPA projects – Romancak reported we have our first project going through the 6117 process. It is a simple project with Firelands School District to install an outlet for their stormwater control measures. We have presented to identified project to the Board of Commissioners and they will set a hearing date and there will be one notice sent to the affected property owners. The County Engineer will have the opportunity to speak on the project and if the Commissioners decide to move forward with the project there is a 5 day waiting period for anyone with objections to file them and then we are able to out to bid.

We are also still working on getting easements on other projects.

2) Petitions in Progress:

- a) Fortune: Romancak- One appeal has been filed. We are hoping to go out to bid in early summer with construction starting in the winter
 - b) Kelner: Romancak reported the first notice will go out on Monday.
 - c) Roth – Romancak stated the first hearing is next week
- 3) Planning & Mini Grants – Romancak: All MOUs have been sent out. There are still funds available for Mini Grants.

D) New Business

- 1) Community Grants – Romancak reported the sub-committee got together earlier this month to review the grants. They have recommended to award all 5 grants and carry over the unexpended balance of \$139,780 to next year. This makes \$564,780 available for Community Grants next year. Townships should start drafting their applications and working with the County Engineer and Matt to put together a strong project.

2023	SWAC Community Grant Applications	May 2, 2023	Subcommitt	Recommendation		Available = \$425,000
RANK	PROJECT	Township	SCORE	COMMENT	REQUEST	Comm. Grant RECOMMEND
1	14596 Baird Rd. culvert replacement	Camden	81.8	Twp. 17%	\$ 13,470	\$ 13,470
2	East River Rd. replace tile to River	Carlisle	80.8	Twp. 20%	\$ 70,400	\$ 70,400
3	Murray Ridge & Griswold Rd. st. sewer	Elyria	79	Twp. 20%	\$ 72,000	\$ 72,000
4	Ph. 2 Battenhouse Main Ditch log jams	Amherst	78	Twp. 20%	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000
5	Ph.2 Extend Erhart Rd. Ditch southwest	Grafton	73	Twp. 0%	\$ 49,350	\$ 49,350
				Total	\$ 285,220	\$ 285,220

Motion to award all 5 grants received and carryover unused funds to next year; MOVED by Ickes, SECOND by Zwick, MOTION PASSED

- 2) Ditch Maintenance – Lyn Ickes

Maintenance:

MOWING, why we do not need to mow yearly

Purpose of off-road ditches

- 1. Helping to alleviate flooding
- 2. Slowing the velocity of water
- 3. Storing the water for a bit thus not overwhelming our natural waterways and road ditches (see number 1).
- 4. Allowing the water to drop its sediment load and improve overall water quality (see number 2).

Think of off-road ditches as "flowing" basins.

MOWING

I am not suggesting we never mow again. We just do not want trees and shrubs (woody vegetation) to be allowed to grow into the off road ditches. This will now be a project, not simply routine maintenance.



Fall 2022

This photo shows the stark contrast that tree canopy vs sunlight makes to the ditch. I noticed this precise demarcation multiple times on multiple ditches throughout the 2023 inspection process. Mowing tree canopy areas could easily go three years or more. KEEP THE CANOPY!!! Or at least the trees on the south and west sides of the ditch.



Spring 2023

Spring 2023

Spring 2023

We need to allow the grass to re-establish in the areas that were relatively recently ditched. So that they look more like the ditch on the right.



Recommendation:

- No mowing for 2023
- It will be less costly to the district if we can establish an every other year pattern. Equipment rate increases (the below rates do not include operator wages)
 - 2021...\$23.05
 - 2022...\$57.98
 - 2023...\$74.98
- It will give us time to determine if there are easements on some of our ditches where that is not currently clear
- It will give us time to determine which side of the ditch shall be mowed
- It will allow for further grass growth on banks that are in desperate need of growth, thus reducing erosion. The Engineer's current equipment is capable of cutting 3 inch in diameter woody brush, rarely would that occur in a year's time.
- It will allow for bird and wildlife habitat. The reason ODOT only mows from the road to the bottom of its ditches.
- We will send letters to let folks know what our plans are, they can choose to maintain their own property or not.

Wesemeyer was in agreement that we could assess the ditches every spring and put together a mowing plan for that year. Romanak stated we are required to inspect the ditches every year also for new trees or checking slopes and turn that into the County Engineer for them to submit their required report. Zwick stated that the Engineer is required to also maintain the ditch and he requests an MOU stating the

Engineer's responsibilities and the Districts responsibilities. He recommends taking this presentation to Bob Klaiber and the garage.

Wesemeyer asked if in the pictures with the slumping if it was because the banks were to steep? Ickes replied yes and there is that issue on many of our ditches. Carl stated he thinks maybe we should go to a 3:1 slope because it would be easier to get grass to grow. Zwick stated he doesn't think some of the legacy ditch were done at a 2:1 slope but the middle of them was the only thing dipped.

- 3) Easements and ORC 6117- Romancak stated as he mentioned earlier this is a much faster and easier process. There are no assessments so only the property owners that are directly impacted have to be notified. We will need the Townships to help with getting easements signed or at least an acknowledgment that they are willing to sign an easement. The petition process is still available if needed.

E) Other:

- 1) Lorain Soil & Water Conservation District – Black River AOC Facilitating Organization - Patti Donnellan introduced herself as the new District Administrator of the Lorain Soil & Water and has been here for 3 months. Jack Fisher introduced himself as the Stormwater Specialist and has been here since January. Don started he has been training with KEM and Matt and also recently got his EPA class. Patti said that they were awarded the Black River AOC Facilitating Organization and was supposed to have a meeting with Stephanie to hand everything over today but it fell through.

F) SWAC Member comments-

G.) PUBLIC COMMENT- Wesemeyer asked if there would be something for the home owners to sign for the Plum Creek project that was awarded to Grafton? Don stated there would be an easement.

ADJOURNMENT: @ 6:17pm motioned by Zwick; seconded by Ickes. Motion Carried.