

Healthy Pine River
Membership Meeting Minutes
September 12th, 2024
7:00 PM

Call to Order - Brittany Sommerville
Approval of Minutes for July 2024: Gary/Michael
Financial Report
Financial Statement: Beginning Balance as of 08/01/24 \$21,873.28
 Deposits and Credits \$ 7,074.53
 Withdrawals and Debits \$9,104.48
Closing Balance: \$19,843.33

Tonight we discussed the Pine River going through the Alma City Limits with representatives from the City of Alma. Welcomed back environmental student organization LEAPS to Alma College. Discussed river issues to date, including *e. Coli*, nutrient overload, and excess sedimentation. Septic best management practices from Mikie Vanhorn, and announce our SepticSmart event in September.

Liz Braddock from Mid Michigan District Health Department discussed *E. coli* contamination in the river, updates on local and state regulations, the importance of updating outdated septic systems, and their human hazard signs at bathing beaches in their jurisdiction. Les Rosan discussed the history of the Alma Impoundment, and offered photos of the PR over the years.

Alma City Manager Aeris Ripley discusses brownfield property development and utilization. History of property along the river in Alma - 2004 city plan, need to revisit to see more reasonable solutions for a downtown on the riverfront, difficulty of getting investors and the need to get the river cleaned up aesthetically to build attraction to the area. City commissioner Dan Wernick on the history of the impoundment. The State Street Dam was built in 1938 as a source of drinking water for the City of Alma. Drinking water currently comes from seven groundwater wells, although the Pine River can be used as drinking water supplies if needed. Cost projection for dam revitalization. Dam funding is through tax payer dollars, not through state/grant funding.

\$200,000 for dam seal project 8 years ago.

\$150,000 for minimal maintenance to sand off, clean gates, adjust railings – has to be fixed. \$3,000 every 3 years for engineering analysis to find out what maintenance is needed. State Street Dam to be more of a liability than an asset. Impoundment/Dam's current purpose is a backup drinking water supply (not currently in use) and to help water softening (practice not in use for the past several years).

Dam/Impoundment options with Dan Devaun, Senior Project Manager at GEI consultants:

What have other communities with dams and impoundments done? Average age of dams in Michigan is 75 years. Lots of communities are asking the question what to do with our aging dams. 6 dam failures every year in Michigan. Every 5 years there is a major dam failure.

What goes on in a feasibility study? Dam maintenance costs, risk and liability of dam failures, changing regulatory requirements for dams (more frequent and in-depth maintenance requirements). Competing interests and needs; ecological functions vs human functions can be competing interests.

What does river restoration look like? Dam removal: restoring natural river function; sediment management; infrastructure impacts (bridges, parks, property), managing flow and stability, ecological goals, real estate, (who controls land along riverfront?) What does the community want from social surveying?

Funding Support: Less funding options for dam rehabilitation or modification, more funding options for dam removal.

Meeting Adjourned: Brittany/Gary

Next Meeting
October 10, 2024
Alma Public Library