

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, July 12, 2011 Board Meeting

This page is a brief view of the actions taken by the Washington County Board of Commissioners. For further information, please telephone 651-430-6001.

Washington County's mission is to provide quality public services in a cost-effective manner through innovation, leadership, and the cooperation of dedicated people.

County will pay for legal services in child protection cases

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Dorothy Gause July 12, to provide legal services in child protection cases and termination of parental rights. The contract is for \$101,200 for 2011.

State law requires that a parent has the right to counsel in connection with proceedings in juvenile court for issues such as Children in Need of Protection and Termination of Parental Rights. Legal services for these cases must be provided when these individuals are found by the court to be in need of legal representation, but are unable to afford an attorney. Previous to 2008, the State Public Defenders Office represented these parents. Due to budget reductions, the Public Defenders Office decided not to provide these services and a subsequent court case determined the costs were a county responsibility.

County receives 'Award of Excellence' for stormwater management project

Washington County has been recognized by the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association with an "Award of Excellence" for a project at Square Lake, which was installed to manage stormwater in the park.

A representative of the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association presented a 2010 Award of Excellence to the County Board July 12 for the innovative methods used to keep the water in Square Lake clean.

The association annually recognizes agencies throughout Minnesota for outstanding achievements in parks, recreation, and leisure services in a variety of areas. Washington County was selected as an award recipient in the "Sustainability" category for the improved management of stormwater runoff at Square Lake Park.

Previously, during typical rainfalls, stormwater from the main parking lot at Square Lake Park was discharging into the lake. This meant debris, residue, and petroleum products were finding their way into one of the cleanest, clearest lakes in the metropolitan area. A stormwater management project undertaken last summer consisted of re-directing runoff from the parking lot into natural infiltration systems and eliminated the problem. In addition, interpretive signs were installed to inform people of options for treating stormwater from driveways and other hard surfaces.

A large part of the project's success was the collaboration between a number of groups, including the Washington Conservation District, Carnelian-Marine St. Croix Watershed District, Square Lake Homeowners Association, Washington County, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

County Board denied request for approval for a wind energy conversion system

The Washington County Board of Commissioners conducted a public hearing and denied a request regarding a zoning text amendment to the county's development code regarding wind energy conversion systems.

David and Cynthia Krueger have submitted a request to amend a section of the Washington County Development Code pertaining to wind energy conversion systems (WECS) to allow for taller wind turbines than are currently allowed by county ordinance. The Washington County Planning Advisory Commission conducted a public hearing April 26, 2011, and recommended that the County Board of Commissioners deny the request.

While the Board denied the request, members expressed a desire for a review of the county's ordinance governing WECS to determine if changes should be made to accommodate the systems.

The Board also conducted a public hearing on an update of the Washington County zoning map for Denmark Township. It is necessary to revise and update the zoning map for Denmark Township to be consistent with the Land Use Map in the 2030 Washington County Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Advisory Commission recommended approval of the updated map.

County Board will not meet July 19

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will not meet Tuesday, July 19, as three members of the board will be attending a conference of the National Association of Counties. With three members attending the conference, there will not be a quorum of the board present.