

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Metropolitan Mosquito Control District Offices
April 19, 2006

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Members Present: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Scott Simmer for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Roger Lake for Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), Terry Schneider (AMM- City of Minnetonka), and Dan Cook (School Districts - TIES), Tony Pistilli (Metropolitan Council).

Members Absent: Gary Delaney (Carver County), Joseph Wagner (Scott County)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Nancy Read (Chairperson), Dave Drealan, Jane Harper, David Claypool, Will Craig, Mark Vander Schaaf, and Rick Gelbmann.

Visitors: Prof. Shashi Shekhar (University of Minnesota)

Support Staff: Randall Johnson.

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Member Egan moved and Member Pistilli seconded to approve the meeting agenda, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

3. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Pistilli moved and Member Schneider seconded to accept the January 19, 2006 meeting summary, subject to correcting. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

Will Craig introduced Prof. Shashi Shekhar, noting that in the previous week the subject research project had received the Research Partners Award for the Most Valuable Research Project in the past year. Prof. Shekhar then reported on a web-based software tool, which utilizes GIS technology, which he and his team developed to improve the evaluation planning in conjunction with emergency preparedness responsibilities. He also commented that access to standardized data for the region, made available through MetroGIS's efforts, is very important to reaping the full benefit from the use of the tool.

He shared two tests of the software, which in both cases outperformed manual methods regarding both goals – substantially reduce the time to prepare planned evacuation routes and reduce the actual time that it takes complete the evacuation. The greatest time reduction during the actual evacuation comes from the software's ability to recognize bottlenecks and to generate new routes to reduce congestion.

The members asked several questions to clarify various capabilities of the software (e.g., ability to eliminate road segments from otherwise acceptable evacuation routes that would be within a plume associated with a chemical spill; rationale for routing evacuees past a problem area as opposed to directly away from it might be due to medical considerations; ability to deal with outward evacuation as the same time that first responders are heading into the area.). Board members acknowledged the importance of this and similar tools to educating the Emergency Preparedness Community on the benefits of collaborating with the geospatial community.

Prof. Shashi Shekhar was thanked for sharing his innovative work with the Board. A copy of his presentation can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/06_0419/Shekhar_presentation.pdf.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Election of Officers

Chairperson Reinhardt turned the meeting over to Vice Chairperson Kordiak to conduct the election for Chairperson. Vice Chairperson Kordiak called for nominations. Member Schneider moved and Member Pistilli seconded to nominate Member Reinhardt for Chairperson and Member Kordiak for Vice Chairperson for the coming year. Vice Chairperson Kordiak called for further nominations three times. Hearing none, he closed the nominations. Motion passed, ayes all, to re-elect Member Reinhardt for Chairperson and Member Kordiak for Vice Chairperson for the coming year.

b) Draft Report – Metropolitan Council Evaluation of MetroGIS

Chairperson Reinhardt commented that from her perspective the evaluation conducted by the Metropolitan Council was well run and that she is happy with the outcome. She then invited Mark Vander Schaaf, Director of the Department of Data Resources at the Metropolitan Council, to summarize the draft Final Report and Recommendations of the Community Development Committee MetroGIS Workgroup.

Vander Schaaf began his comments by stating that the message from the evaluation is good news. He commented that through the evaluation process Council management and Councilmembers learned of the MetroGIS's value to its operations and were generally impressed with the accomplishments and manner in which MetroGIS conducts its business.

He summarized the findings presented in the report in the context of four major themes:

- Governance and Funding – No major changes.
- Encourage a Statewide Equivalent to MetroGIS
- Accountability – Improve understanding among senior management and Councilmembers of MetroGIS's efforts. Vander Schaaf commented that the recent creation of the Department of Data Resources within the Council represents a change to accomplish this goal. MetroGIS is now separated from the Regional Administrator by 1 level of management (himself) as opposed to 3, as had been the case going into the evaluation.
- Memorialize/Certify Relationship to the Current MetroGIS Organization – Act on a preference for sustaining the current MetroGIS organization as a critical component to the Council's ability to cost effectively obtain the data it needs from others to accomplish its responsibilities.

Vander Schaaf then summarized the process that will be followed to act on the recommendations presented in the report, noting that the goal is for formal Council consideration to occur in May.

Pistilli, Metropolitan Council representative to the Policy Board and member of the Metropolitan Council's Workgroup whose deliberations are summarized in the subject report, commented that the evaluation process, although difficult at times, ultimately affirmed the value of MetroGIS to the Council and the region. He concluded his comments by stating the outcome is positive for all parties.

Schneider commented that he is pleased with the outcome. He offered an observation that quarterly reporting to the Council might be better served if illustrations of the benefits are provided as opposed to standard written reports. Pistilli concurred that viewing practical applications made possible through collaboration would greatly help policy makers understand the value of the efforts behind the scenes to implement collaborative solutions. No other comments were offered.

Vander Schaaf thanked Member Pistilli and Chairperson Reinhardt for their leadership during the process which made it possible to get past differences and achieve consensus.

c) June 1 Geospatial Technology Possibilities Forum

Coordinating Committee Chair Read summarized progress to prepare for the June 1st forum that MetroGIS is co-hosting entitled Imagining Possibilities: the Next Frontier for Geographic Information Technology. She also commented that this forum is one of three major initiatives designed to support preparations for the Strategic Directions Workshop planned for this fall. Board members were encouraged to register for the morning session, which will be designed to be of interest to policy makers and senior managers.

A copy of the forum brochure was handed out (an email had also been sent the week prior to Board members and all committee members). In response to a question, staff provided an explanation for limiting the capacity to 250 individuals, which was acceptable to the Board.

d) Use of Funds Donated to MetroGIS for June 1 Forum (Ratify Acceptance Received Between Meetings)

Chairperson Reinhardt summarized this item, as outlined in the agenda materials.

Motion: Egan moved and Pistilli seconded that the MetroGIS Policy Board ratify the use of up to \$2,000 in funds donated to MetroGIS as a contingency for the expenses to be incurred in connection with hosting the June 1, 2006 forum, entitled Imagining Possibilities: The Next Frontier for Geographic Information Technology. Motion carried, ayes all.

6. MAJOR PROJECT UPDATES

Staff distributed the 2005 MetroGIS Annual Report to Board members and provided an overview of the 2006 Regional GIS Projects Proposals that were reviewed at the concept phase by the Coordinating Committee. No other topics were discussed.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

Staff commented on the two federal grants outlined in the agenda report that have been awarded to stakeholders who named MetroGIS as a cooperating entity.

Chairperson Reinhardt reported on a presentation she made at the national NACO conference in March. The focus was the role that GIS technology plays in wetlands preservation efforts.

Vice Chairperson Kordiak asked what is happening at the state level to accomplish collaboration needs that has been achieved through MetroGIS's efforts. Gelbmann, Chair of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI) and a member of the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee, commented that although there is a great deal of support for more collaboration, resources to implement the various mechanisms are lacking. He commented that much of the success in the Metro Area is a result of having full time staff (MetroGIS Staff Coordinator) assigned to foster the means to attain the desired collaboration. Gelbmann noted that the good news is that this organizational constraint has been identified in the Minnesota Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) Strategic Plan that was adopted by the GCGI last year. He also noted that acknowledgement for a similar entity to MetroGIS at the state level is gaining and that the Council's recommendation (Agenda Item 5b) could help this momentum reach the critical mass needed for serious dialogue on resource needs.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, 2006.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Prepared by,
Randall Johnson, AICP
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator