

**Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Metropolitan Council's Mears Park Offices
April 11, 2001**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6.30 p.m.

Members Present: Lee Whitcraft for Antoinette Johns (TIES), Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), John Siegfried (Carver County), and Roger Williams (Metropolitan Council).

Members Absent: Willis Branning (Dakota County), Barbara Johnson (AMM), Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Terry Schneider (AMM), and Joseph Wagner (Scott County).

Coordinating Committee Members Present: David Arbeit (LMIC) Will Craig (Chair), Rick Gelbmann, Jane Harper, Jim Hentges, Ed Shukle, Gary Stevenson, and Ron Wencl.

Visitors: Brad Henry (URS/BRW) and Jim Ramstrom (LMIC)

Support Staff: Randall Johnson and Theresa Foster

2) and 3) ACCEPT AGENDA AND MEETING SUMMARY

Member Fiskness moved and Member Williams seconded to approve the agenda and the summary of the January 10, 2001 meeting as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4) GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION –

LMIC's Metro viewer software: A Mapping Tool for the Public

David Arbeit and Jim Ramstrom, both with the Minnesota Land Management Information Center (LMIC), demonstrated a mapping software product for non-technical users that they have developed from their EPPL GIS software, call MetroViewer. Arbeit stressed that this product would not be nearly as robust without the efforts of MetroGIS to encourage sharing of data produced by government with other government and to establish standards that make it possible for the various data types to align with one another. Ramstrom demonstrated several of the product's functions with data packaged with the product and noted that with only a few minutes of training non-technical people, in particular students, can make use of the full functionality of the product to produce maps that mix and match orthoimagery, parcel boundaries, roads, water features, and other commonly used data for their particular areas of interest.

A users manual and the "help" command cover everything the user will need to effectively use the product. Final testing should be completed in May with distribution to begin by June 1. All counties, legislators, and many libraries will be sent copies free of charge. The product will also be available to all other government entities free of charge upon request. The product only requires the computing power provided by most Pentium-equipped computers currently in use.

The demonstration was well received and there was concurrence that this product builds on MetroGIS' efforts to increase understanding and use of GIS as a business tool, understanding of the benefits of data sharing, understanding of some the data that through MetroGIS' efforts is being made available on a metro-wide basis, and appreciation for benefits of standardizing data so that the various layers align with one another.

Lee Whitcraft asked for a copy of the current beta version to share with the TIES curriculum development staff, which Arbeit agreed to provide. All agreed that the product will promote the value of GIS tools and value of MetroGIS' efforts to have GIS recognized as a reliable and powerful decision support tool.

Arbeit thanked MetroGIS for its work to foster wide spread acceptance of uniform data sharing policies and agreements and MetroGIS' data producer community for making it possible and for allowing LMIC to make their data available to the non-technical community of users via this product. He also commented that feedback received during the testing phase indicates that many users are obtaining much of the information they need via this product.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Election of Officers

Member Hegberg nominated Member Reinhardt to serve as chair for 2001. Member Siegfried moved and Member Fiskness seconded to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot.

Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Siegfried nominated Member Kordiak to serve a vice-chair for 2001. Member Fiskness moved and Member Hegman seconded to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot.

Motion carried, ayes all.

b) 2002 MetroGIS Budget Proposal

William Craig, Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee and member of the Policy Advisory Team, summarized the process outlined in the staff report by which the budget was developed, noting that the proposed budget received unanimous approval from both the Policy Advisory Team and Coordinating Committee.

Member Kordiak asked for clarification of the make up of the Coordinating Committee and the source of the 2002 funding. Coordinating Committee Chair Craig summarized the membership of the Coordinating Committee and its Policy Advisory Team, noting they are comprised, in large part, by the staff of organizations represented on the Board; the Metropolitan Council having one vote on each these bodies, and that these committees report to the Policy Board, not to the Metropolitan Council. Chair Reinhardt confirmed that the source of the funding proposed in the 2002 budget is the Metropolitan Council and a limited amount of grant funding if our applications are awarded. Chairperson Reinhardt also stated that this has been the case since MetroGIS was initiated in 1995 and that the Board and Council had concluded last year, when the Business Plan was adopted, that a practice of sharing MetroGIS' operating expenses via subscription fees or some other option was premature.

Member Siegfried asked for clarification about the release of project funds by Hennepin and possibility by Scott Counties for use by the broader MetroGIS community. Staff confirmed that Hennepin County has released their \$80,000 in GIS Data and Cost Sharing Agreement project funding and that Scott County is still evaluating whether they will release some or all of their remaining \$25,000 in project funding to be used as directed by the MetroGIS Policy Board. Staff commented that as an outcome of the April 19 Regional Parcel Data Users Forum on April 19 that a Next Steps Work Plan will be presented to the Board at the July meeting that will likely suggest uses for these funds. These funds need to be committed or used by year-end.

Member Williams, Metropolitan Council representative to the Board, commented that the Council and the regional are benefiting from the MetroGIS project and that the proposed budget is consistent with the MetroGIS Business Plan which was accepted by the Council last year.

Motion: Member Siegfried moved and Member Williams seconded that the Policy Board adopt the 2002 MetroGIS budget, as recommended on March 15, 2001 by the Coordinating Committee, and request its approval by the Metropolitan Council

Motion carried, ayes all.

c) Outreach Strategy

William Craig, Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee and member of the Policy Advisory Team, summarized the proposed strategy presented in the staff report, noting that it is a continuation of past practices with the addition of seeking out opportunities via the news media to publicize both MetroGIS' activities and the benefits GIS technology. The plan also calls for an increase in communication with GIS program managers in the collar counties and out-state Minnesota. Craig also noted that supporting products like LMIC's Metro Viewer (See Agenda Item 4) is one component of the proposed strategy.

The members asked for clarification about the extent of resources that would be dedicated to the outreach component targeted to the general public. Staff noted that since the proposal is to seek out this exposure through the news media, no project funding has been allocated. In terms of outreach to GIS professionals and elected officials, resources are specifically targeted in line items for conferences, production and distribution of the annual report, special purpose forums (metadata workshop, data users forums, etc.), and travel expenses. The budget also assumes that the stakeholders will continue to volunteer their time to assist promote MetroGIS' objectives, activities, and accomplishments to there various constituencies and at workshops and forums.

Motion: Member Kordiak moved and Member Hegberg seconded that the Policy Board endorse the outreach strategy presented in the staff report and as recommended by the Coordinating Committee on March 15, 2001.

Motion carried, ayes all.

d) Update on Authorizations Requested from Counties

Staff reported that each of the counties has submitted an executed agreement to authorize the Metropolitan Council to assemble and distribute the regional parcel database to the private sector. Staff also handed out a summary of the various activities that need to be completed before distribution can begin, in particular, finalize an advertising strategy with the counties, set up a means for prospective buyers to browse the data, and modify MetroGIS' WEB sites to provide all relevant information and functions.

Staff noted that the final policy consideration to be worked out deals with whether or not refunds will be permitted. Staff shared the current thinking of stating on the order form that sales are final, no refunds will not be permitted. The no refund policy is consistent with current policy in Dakota and possibly other counties, but staff is also considering providing an on-line ability to browse the data along with the standard liability disclosure statement that the data are produced for county business purposes and shared "as is". No concern was expressed with this proposal. If the no refund policy is implemented, staff estimated distribution would begin sometime in May.

Chairperson Reinhardt reminded the members that the agreement requires the Board and the counties to revisit the fee on an annual basis to make adjustments as the parties deem appropriate and to declare it they wish to continue to participate.

e) Certificates of Appreciation

Chairperson Reinhardt commented that she had presented the certificates of appreciation included in the packet to Brad Henry and Virginia Erdahl at the Policy Advisory Team Meeting on February 14. She commented that the Board, at its January 11, 2001 meeting, had directed staff to prepare these certificates and they were very well received .

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

Staff noted that the names "MetroGIS" and "MetroGIS Data Finder" have been successfully registered with the State of Minnesota. Registration with federal authorities will take 3-5 more months. Staff also commented that the Regional Parcel Data Users Forum scheduled for April 19 is expected to result in

recommendations that will have as much impact on the future of MetroGIS as any actions to date and that Board action is scheduled for July 11.

Clarification was requested about the form of the proposed census boundary data and the whether the counties will have to purchase software to use it for the pending redistricting activities. It was suggested that the counties speak with Lee Meilleur of the Legislative GIS Office about the data he has reprocessed to work with redistricting software. Gary Stevenson also commented that Dakota County will be using ArcView.

There was no discussion of the information items presented in the staff report.

7. NEXT MEETING

July 11, 2001

8. ADJOURN

The meeting concluded at 7:55 p.m.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator