



MetroGIS Policy Board Meeting Summary

Wednesday, January 23, 2013 (Approved 04.24.13)

Metropolitan County Government Offices
2099 University Avenue, St. Paul, MN

Members Present:

Terry Schneider, Metro Cities/City of Minnetonka, Policy Board Chairman
David Bitner, dB Spatial, Coordinating Committee Chair
Jim Bunning, Scott County (alternate)
Steve Elkins, Metropolitan Council
Peter Henschel, Carver County (alternate)
Randy Knippel, Dakota County (alternate)
Jim Kordiak, Anoka County
Mjyke Nelson, Washington County (alternate)
Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County

Interim Members:

Cliff Aichinger, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Administrator
(Representing the interests of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)

Guests:

Nancy Read, Technical Director, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District
Dave Hinricks, Chief Information Officer, Metropolitan Council
Rick Gelbmann, GIS Manager, Metropolitan Council
Mark Kotz, Systems Database Administrator, Metropolitan Council

Staff:

Geoff Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator
Paul Peterson, MetroGIS Project Manager

1) Call to Order

Chairman Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM

2) Approve Meeting Agenda

Motion: Kordiak, Second: Reinhardt, *motion carried, agenda approved.*

3) Approve October 17, 2012 Policy Board Meeting Summary

Motion: Reinhardt, Second, Kordiak; *motion carried, summary of last meeting approved.*



MetroGIS Policy Board Minutes: 2013-2014

4) Introduction of new Metropolitan Council/MetroGIS Project Manager Paul Peterson

Coordinator Maas introduced Paul Peterson. Paul gave the group a summary of his education, work experience and personal life and a brief rundown of the projects he is currently engaged in at the Metropolitan Council and with MetroGIS. The Board welcomed Paul to MetroGIS.

5) Rick Gelbmann, Retirement Announcement

Rick Gelbmann, GIS Manager at the Metropolitan Council and one of the ‘founding fathers’ of MetroGIS, announced his upcoming retirement, scheduled for April 2013. Rick gave an overview of his career and retirement plans and stated his thanks to the Policy Board for their continual work and attention to MetroGIS. The Board acknowledged Rick’s contribution to the MetroGIS collaborative with a Certificate of Appreciation.

6) Presentation:

Address Points and Addressing Authority: Joint Powers Agreements between Cities and County Government in Dakota County, Randy Knippel, Dakota County GIS Manager

Dakota County has been an innovator in Minnesota with the development of joint work between city and county government to develop, implement and manage an authoritative address point system. Key to their current progress is the success of a Joint Powers Agreement between city and county government with a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities.

GIS Manager Knippel provided a technical overview of address point data, processes and the work presently underway in Dakota County. With existing parcel data, the County was able to get 90% with parcel data; however the remaining data provided a number of challenges. Unique situations such as mobile home parks (sites and assets logged as personal property rather than real property), sites on private roads, multi-unit dwelling and commercial structures and expansion/contraction of units within single parcels or structures provide a challenge to completing the dataset.

The authoritative address data point set will serve a variety of purposes in the county for permitting, billing, socials services, geocoding and support for the public safety Records Management System and eventually the NextGen911 system (still emerging), once the authoritative source database is developed it can be distributed, used and relied upon.

Joint Powers Agreement between the counties and cities was originally focused with the interests of the 911 community as the primary driver but immediately became important for clarifying expectations, ensuring adequate resources were available, the formalizing roles and responsibilities of the participants and ensuring that the cities and counties could maximize the benefit of the shared effort.

City responsibilities included the designation a road naming and addressing authority, making contacts to police and fire departments, assigning, updating and tracking new names and addresses to roads under city purview.

County responsibilities included assigning names to county roads, selection of a road database administrator, affixing new road names to roads under county jurisdiction and coordinating the committee effort. County will also host an application that will be available county-wide; each jurisdiction will be able to edit their data. The County will perform additional quality assurance on the back end and distribute the data. All cities are using the MetroGIS Address Editor in Dakota County

Next steps for the project include associating address points with property address, street centerline validation, and to distribute address databases. The county is positioning itself in a facilitating role to continue the work.

Presentation Questions and Answers:

Elkins: Are all cities in Dakota County equipped and utilizing their own GIS systems?

Knippel: There is a range of availability and use, some cities do and some don't, presently about half do not have dedicated GIS staff or departments.

Elkins: Are there cities using the county's GIS system?

Knippel: Yes, four cities presently subscribe.

Read: Does the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) need to be reviewed every year?

Knippel: We have arranged it so the JPA is on-going, and does not need to be renewed each year.

(Brief group discussion on what JPAs do and don't do)

Knippel: When we began the process, we used public safety as the key point of leverage, this included a working relationship with the MESB and the county dispatch center, getting the support of the MESB director was helpful.

Schneider: The general public assumes we are doing this all the time, how does the Dakota County process for developing and managing address points compare or differ from the MetroGIS address effort?

Knippel: We are using the MetroGIS tools; we are part of that effort, not different.

7) Brief Project and Activity Updates

7a) Coordinator Maas provided a brief update of the joint MetroGIS/MnDOT/MnGeo Centerline Initiative including the results of past meetings and the upcoming next steps.

7b) Coordinator Maas provided a brief overview of the MetroGIS Work Plan items for 2013 as well as the budget allotment for these activities. Work Plan items and the priority of item completion were approved by the Work Plan Review Team and the Coordinating Committee. Budget levels were similar to those of from the previous (2012) budget year with only minor adjustments.

8) Action and Discussion Items.

8a) Approval of the MetroGIS 2013 Budget.

Moved: Reinhardt, Second: Kordiak, *motion carried. MetroGIS 2013 Budget was approved.*

8b) MetroGIS Policy Board Restructuring Discussion

Chairman Schneider provided a cursory overview of what has led to the need for the restructuring and the continued discussion.

Kordiak: This body [Policy Board] has been talking to reformulate ourselves, as we know, we have not been particularly active and this body has not been participatory, and we've had some changing faces, we continue to reiterate the same points, and I am frankly exhausted with the discussion. We need to get to the bottom of the issue, and by issue, I do mean the core issue: are we, or are we not going to give away the [county] parcel data. Do we simply need to draft a resolution and sign off on it? My county [Anoka] is prepared to make data available at no charge.

Reinhardt: We still need to discuss the liability issue. Even when we sell the data, we have the same issues regarding liability; the data can still be misused, no matter what means it is available. The reason we haven't moved on freely available parcel data is an indication of how hard it has been to get to this point the Regional Parcel Data Agreements have been a significant amount of work to complete, let alone giving the data away. While we respect and need the work they do, dealing with non-profits and the business sector is not core to the work of county government.

Kordiak: Regarding the parcel data issue, is it as simple a task as just asking our county attorneys to draft up the language we need? Can we assemble a resolution that we all wish to see carried forward?

Schneider: If we draft a resolution in support for broader public access to publicly produced data, and provide it to the counties, then using that and doing it county by county might be a way forward. We can ask Geoff to work with the Coordinating Committee or the appropriate MetroGIS work group to develop draft resolution language that is concise that this body can comment on and then take back to the counties.

Maas: If that is a direction from the Policy Board, we can begin to develop that language at the Coordinating Committee level.

Schneider: It is. It should be concise make a clear case as to why making the data available is of real benefit. The same language utilized by all the counties for the resolution might carry more weight.

Knippel: Our Eight County IT Collaborative, (the seven metropolitan counties plus Olmsted) has been meeting monthly via conference call and quarterly in person. We have been tasked by our county administrators to identify means of reducing costs, and one of the items raised has been data policy. In our discussion, the intention of making all GIS data, not just parcel data, freely available has been, will continue to be discussed.

Nationally there is movement in this direction and there are certainly reasons for understanding the benefits and implications putting the data out there free. Our group is working to tackle it. One approach is for us to develop some draft narrative, give the GIS managers of the counties the ability to pursue what is needed within their counties. Policy changes and major language revisions need to be vetted here [at the Policy Board level] and with your input we can be more deliberate about moving it forward.

Our intention with the GIS managers group is to develop a summary document or white paper of arguments on what this would mean, the benefits, the return-on-investment, implications and so on. [Ramsey County GIS Manager] Matt Koukol has begun some of this work. From our point of view, this is not just parcel data, but deals with all GIS data.

MnGeo proposed the legislation to reduce all liability for government-to-government sharing and there was not only varying support within the metro for that approach but a significant backlash in the outstate counties so it is probably not going to pass.

Some counties are ready to go, some are reluctant. In many cases the cost of administering the sale or licensing of the data is just not worth it for the minor revenue it brings in, in others, counties are dependent on the sale of their data and they would need to find another source to replace that revenue.

We need to assemble a clear set of arguments on the benefit of making the data available. Identifying the cost savings and benefits and working with our county administrators to do so.

Reinhardt: Can we have some language or the white paper to review by our next meeting? Does that provide time for both the Coordinating Committee and 8 County IT Collaborative to address the issue, draft up the materials and bring it to the Policy Board for review and discussion?

Knippel: Our intention [with the 8 County Collaborative] is still to discuss more than just the parcel data availability. With a concerted effort among the counties we can likely assemble this.

Kordiak: Before we get too far, I'd like to hear from other participants at the table.

Aichinger: I have a minor point, how is the data free if MetroGIS is paying \$4000 to each county for it?

Maas: That annual payment is MetroGIS' contractual obligation to the counties, a modest monetary inducement to them to continue to allow the historic parcel data to be freely available, update the metadata of the current data and perform scheduled improvements to their parcels.

Nelson: Washington County is in agreement on moving that working toward a resolution, however, I know that our survey office would be reluctant. The data is commodity that raises revenue for the county. Internal policy discussion needs to take place within our, and other, county governments. With the last legislative attempt, there was a draft from the surveyors association that was strongly opposed to doing what we propose; a direct challenge from the surveyors association.

Kordiak: I like the idea of a white paper and some draft language; however we need a summary document with talking points, information points and bullet points to digest it better.

Henschel: Carver County has had this discussion about data and IT, we know, we're all facing similar issues, we want to move forward in that same direction, and we need to have those internal discussions as well. Bringing this up to the policy level will help.

Bunning: We've already have preliminary approval to release our parcel data.

Reinhardt: I motion that we task the groups [Coordinating Committee/Data Producers Workgroup/8 County Collaborative] to develop a 'white paper' resource and some draft resolution language for review and discussion at the next meeting.

Kordiak: Second (*motion carried*)

Schneider: This is a significant policy issue, if we can make the case for its benefit than let's support it and get behind it, this is the relevant work of this body. Substantive issues need to be raised and addressed and this is certainly one of them.

Reinhardt: When is our next meeting scheduled?

Maas: If we stick to our normal quarterly schedule, we'd meet again here on April 24 [2013]. I've reviewed our Operating Procedures in light of our discussion tonight; there is no language in them that mandates a quarterly meeting.

Reinhardt: Is April enough time to get these materials prepared?

Knippel: It may be possible to hammer out the document and details by April, but we also need a game plan on how to roll this out to the counties and make room to include insight from their internal discussions. If we are given more time to refine it and critique it we can schedule a [Policy Board] meeting data when it is ready.

Schneider: These recommendations can come back at our next meeting, and that can even be into the summer. This is obviously a central reason for this body to meet again and the review of these materials will likely tie to further action.

Knippel: This body [Policy Board] is a good vetting process for working through the issues before they rise to the county board level. It is important to have policy makers present at the meeting as much as possible for that discussion, as opposed to their alternates, since several of the alternates are the same people who will be drafting the materials.

Bitner: From the perspective of the Coordinating Committee, we want to make sure our Policy Board interactions are more effective; this is the kind of discussion dedicated to working on a *specific action*, it enables us to focus and think about what we will do. As to the budget of MetroGIS, at present, all our funding comes from the Council, and final approval needs to return to the Council, we don't lose anything by having our MetroGIS budget developed and approved at the Coordinating Committee level, however, these policy questions are a different matter, we require this body for that purpose.

Reinhardt: In regard to the [five] recommendations, we can still re-convene the policy board as needed, but with the emphasis on the outreach stated in recommendation #4, we can widen our audience and the awareness of what we do, perhaps more productively than having us gathered together on a quarterly basis. If we don't have a Policy Board, then the relevant policy implications will never be addressed so we must retain this body. However, if we do have a scheduled policy meeting, *it must be geared to specifically address issues of policy and we must have the policy makers here.*

Kordiak: How much notice do we feel we need?

Schneider: One month should suffice. We'll have the meetings scheduled as we need them.

Reinhardt: I motion for the adoption of the Five Recommendations.

Elkins: Second (*motion carried*)

Recommendations Adopted:

- (1) The MetroGIS Coordinating Committee assumes responsibility as the operational decision making body of the MetroGIS collaborative (*this includes the approval of the budget, approval of work plan items, decisions on the actions and direction of MetroGIS, etc.*)
- (2) Policy Board meetings will be scheduled as needed to discuss and act on issues of policy import to MetroGIS with a minimum of one meeting per calendar year. A minimum of thirty (30) days notice will be given to Policy Board members prior to the event of a scheduled meeting.
- (3) Policy Board members will be kept apprised of MetroGIS activity and updates in a summary quarterly email or other communiqué; timing of this notice would likely follow the quarterly meeting schedule of the Coordinating Committee. The MetroGIS Coordinator will also prepare a year-end brief summarizing projects, achievements and personnel changes.
- (4) A MetroGIS representative (the MetroGIS Coordinator and other MetroGIS representatives as desired) will provide a brief annual presentation to each metropolitan County Board (or a relevant County Sub-Committee) as well as to Metro Cities and to the Metropolitan Council stating:
 - The origin and purpose of MetroGIS;
 - The value MetroGIS provides to the cities, counties, stakeholders and the Council;
 - Present MetroGIS projects and the needs being met by those projects;
- (5) After a trial period of operating under the above conditions for twelve months, the Coordinating Committee is to assess the efficacy of the new system; after twenty-four months, another review will occur and if the new system is found to be suitable, MetroGIS hires a consultant to assist in rewriting its organizational guidelines and by-laws. If found unsuitable, the issue will be raised for discussion and solution at both the Coordinating Committee and Policy Board level.

9) Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is contingent on the completion of the white paper resource and draft resolution language by the Coordinating Committee, Data Producers Workgroup and 8 County IT Collaborative.

10) Adjournment

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:37 pm



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Wednesday, April 24, 2013 (Approved Oct 23, 2013)

Metropolitan County Government Offices
2099 University Avenue, St. Paul, MN

Members Present:

Terry Schneider, Board Chair, City of Minnetonka/Metro Cities
David Bitner, db Spatial, MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Chair
Debbie Goettel, City of Richfield/Metro Cities
Jim Kordiak, Anoka County Commissioner
John Slusarczyk, Anoka County (Alternate)
Chris Gerlach, Dakota County Commissioner
Randy Knippel, Dakota County (Alternate), Data Producers Work Group Chair
Randy Johnson, Hennepin County Commissioner
Gary Swenson, Hennepin County (Alternate)
Janice Rettman, Ramsey County (Alternate)
Dave Menden, Scott County Commissioner
James Bunning, Scott County (Alternate)
Peter Henschel, Carver County (Alternate)
Mjyke Nelson, Washington County, Director of Information Technology
David Brandt, Washington County, MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Vice-Chair
Mary Texer, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
Dave Hinrichs, Metropolitan Council (Alternate), CIO

Guests:

William Brown, Hennepin County, MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Member
Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council, MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Member
Nancy Read, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Member
Dan Ross, Minnesota Geospatial Information Office, MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Member
Rick Gelbmann, Resident, City of North St. Paul, former MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Member

Staff:

Geoffrey Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator

- 1) **Call To Order**, Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.
- 2) **Approve Agenda** Motion: Texer; Second, Kordiak; motion carried, agenda approved.
- 3) **Approve January 23, 2013 Meeting Summary** Motion: Schneider, Second: Texer, motion carried.

4) Introduction of new members

Chair Schneider introduced and welcomed the four new members of the Policy Board, these included:

Debbie Goettel	Mayor, City of Richfield, Metro Cities Representative
Dave Menden	Commissioner, Scott County
Chris Gerlach	Commissioner, Dakota County
Mary Texer	Board Manager, Capitol Region Watershed District <i>(representing the interests of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts)</i>

5) Update on SF 1298/HF 1390

Minnesota Chief Geospatial Information Officer Dan Ross provided the Board an update on the current status of SF 1298/HF 1390 presently in process at the State Legislature; as of April 24, the proposal has gone through both committees. One of the key tenets of the bill directly relevant to MetroGIS is the proposition that geospatial data shared between government entities should be free and open; specifically, the notion that once a government entity obtains the data, it can then be shared again with other government entities so long as it is accompanied by the metadata and clear indication of the originating authoritative source (please see **Section 4** below for more detail).

The bill makes no provision for private or non-government entities requests for data. These requests would be referred back to the authoritative sources to be handled at their discretion.

Key aspects of the legislation include the following:

Section 1 language changes the nature of certain discretionary powers of the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office;

Section 2 limits the authority of the Chief Information Officer to use a single advisory council and offers language on the composition, function and duration of said council;

Section 3 provides a clear definition of 'electronic geospatial data';

Section 4 provides for the sharing at no cost of electronic geospatial government data with government entities, higher education, and federal and tribal government agencies. This section allows reproduction and redistribution of all data received by a government entity to another government entity but does not allow redistribution to private or non-profit with the exception of Gopher State One Call;

- All shared data must include metadata that identified the original authoritative source;
- Requests for data from non-government entities will be re-directed to the original authoritative source;
- Government entities sharing and receiving electronic geospatial data are immune from civil liability for their use of electronic geospatial data shared at no cost;
- This provision does not require data to be provided in an alternate format;
- This provision does not require an entity to provide data more than 4 times per year;

- This provision does not include **not public** data as defined in Chapter 13 or purchased data classified as trade secret or copyrighted;

Section 5 repeals a portion of the Geospatial Information Office section of statute that set duties for a chief information officer in the Geospatial Information Office to establish fees that reflected the actual cost of providing information products and services, and provided for deposit of those fees into a revolving account and removes a standing appropriation of those fees to the office.

Additional questions about the details, contents or timeline of **SF 1298/HF 1390** may be directed to Dan Ross at 651.201.2460 or dan.ross@state.mn.us;

6) Free and Open GIS Data: Benefits and Challenges Discussion

In response to the request of the Policy Board at its January 23, 2013 meeting, the MetroGIS Data Producers Work Group developed a 'white paper' resource document and a one-page summary fact sheet relating to the issues surrounding the benefits and challenges to free and open geospatial data. These documents were completed and distributed to the members of the Policy Board one week prior to the April 24 meeting.

Schneider: I wish to thank the work group for producing a very sound and concise document and I wish to stress that our goal this evening is to walk away with a consensus that this is a good idea, and begin to think about how we move forward toward formal approval and advance the issue within our individual jurisdictions.

Randy Knippel, Dakota County GIS Manager and Data Producer Work Group Chair gave a presentation on the past development and present conditions of county data policies and the technological and practical conditions in which these policies now operate. The presentation can be accessed here in PDF format: http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/13_04_24/index.shtml

Knippel: By way of introduction, the GIS managers of the metropolitan counties including Olmsted County have been working together (as the Data Producers Work Group/Eight county Collaborative) to compare our various approaches; GIS has been included in the larger context of IT; we are working to identify areas of cost savings, collaboration and to determine and report on differences in our practices.

The state statutes under which we operate and conduct business include Chapter 13, 13.03 (subd. 3) which governs access to government data. This rule enables the responsible authority to charge a reasonable fee for distributing that data; this originally spawned the idea of recovering initial costs, however our focus became the use of disclaimers, license agreements and copyrighting the data (to which intellectual property rights are applied), as well as limiting the redistribution of the data and not allowing for derivative uses. One of our key observations is that the rules put in place thirty or so years ago may not be the best way to accommodate for the significant technological changes we have encountered and are now working with.

Since the 1980s the expense of deploying the hardware, software and data development for GIS in government and private sector use has dropped dramatically while the uses have expanded; major expenses once associated with deploying GIS have dropped.

The 1990s saw the advent of the Internet and its opening for public use, the first county GIS applications begin to appear and MetroGIS' first licensing agreement between the Seven Metropolitan Counties and the Metropolitan Council for parcel data.

The 2000s saw the continual 'democratization' and wide spread use of GIS coupled with the ease and ability for data to be created and dispersed.

Gerlach: Can I ask when GPS was merged with GIS?

Knippel/Ross: In the late 1990s/early 2000s; the introduction of civilian GPS access dramatically changed the commercial use of the GIS data, particularly streamlining the data collection aspect.

The following was added *conventu dimisso*:

Reference Note: In 1996, recognizing the importance of GPS to civilian users as well as military users, U.S. President Bill Clinton issued a policy directive declaring GPS to be a dual-use system and establishing an Interagency GPS Executive Board to manage it as a national asset. In 1998, United States Vice President Al Gore announced plans to upgrade GPS with two new civilian signals for enhanced user accuracy and reliability, particularly with respect to aviation safety and in 2000 the United States Congress authorized the effort, referring to it as GPS III. On May 2, 2000 "Selective Availability" was discontinued as a result of the 1996 executive order, allowing users to receive a non-degraded signal globally.

Source: National Archives and Records Administration. U.S. Global Positioning System Policy

Knippel: As the need for data continued to climb, general recognition by higher orders of government that the locally created data was the best (parcels, streets, etc. created by counties and municipalities); federal entities looked to consume that data for a variety of uses, including homeland security.

Knippel: With the dramatic rise in computing power, Internet use, smart phone and tablet device use, mobile computing, social media, the entire 'app economy', there remains a large appetite for data and more potential for that data to be used in creative ways. These changes and this demand are challenging the policies we presently maintain at the local level. Even within the state of Minnesota we do not have uniformity among our counties on how these issues are handled. This represents a need for a shift in the general philosophy on how we should be treating the data. Federal agencies are working toward the development of a national dataset; the National Map is leveraging volunteers to update its content. Even the Department of Homeland Security, which has purchased commercial base layer data needs to still engage local units of government for updates.

Federal, state, regional, county and local governments can maximize the cost savings by working on these issues collectively and ensuring the best data by promoting the use from the authoritative source.

Mr. Knippel described examples of volunteer and citizen engagement in data creation including Open Street Map and crisis event mapping groups where volunteers contributed to assist with disasters; these are primary ways of having value added to existing government-produced datasets.

Knippel: In the 'white paper' and one-page resource we have provided the assumed direct and indirect benefits that we are likely to encounter and we recognize the following general challenges we will need to address:

- Making data freely available has the potential to decrease revenue collected from data;

- May be an increase in potential for liability; we will need to develop consistent disclaimers among governments that cover us from liability
- Issues of privacy, only truly public data should be shared;

A short group discussion took place of county applications which allow users to search properties by name versus using addresses and how these considerations are related to the actual county business need for collecting and providing that data for internal use or external use;

Knippel: We make the following foundational assumptions:

- Investment in GIS and data development is justified;
- The primary reason is to support county (or city) business needs and purposes but that others can benefit in that investment;
- The data is created and prepared not with the expressed purpose of charging fees and collecting revenue;

We also need to address the notion of value, particularly the value of closed data vs. open data; With 'open data' the value is less defined in terms of revenue than in terms of how widely the data is used and how useful the data is to other users and to our own purposes;

With 'closed data' the value may be termed in how revenues from fees are collected versus the cost of administering those fees; time and effort spent on keeping the data locked down may keep us from realizing the other values which arise from allowing the data to be used openly;

Rettman: *Ramsey County Commissioner Rettman made reference to the needs of her constituents in regard to the 'digital divide'. The issues that communities of color, communities of economic need and traditionally under-represented communities are presently lacking technology access or resources and would benefit greatly from increased access to this part of the economy. Commissioner Rettman asked if costs are presently borne unfairly by those groups that perhaps have less exposure and access to or skill with these technologies.*

Schneider: These are of course important considerations but not directly addressed in the specifics we are discussing tonight, that of benefit and risk to the producers of the data. At present, non-profit and community support groups that in many cases already work to serve these under-represented populations do not themselves have, at present, free access to this data, we are looking to address that hurdle with our discussion.

Kordiak: We create the data for county use and purpose, we then put it out there and they can just take it, what are the reciprocal benefits to the county with what they do with our data?

Knippel: Granted, the residual impact and benefit may not always be immediately evident or tangible, but we are creating an environment of data sharing, derivative products will emerge that we can capitalize on.

Kotz: I can provide a solid example, at the Metropolitan Council, we have freely allowed our transit data to be made available, Google maps have picked it up and are using it; transit customers now access it directly via Google, developers can use it create their own uses as well. By making the data available, the developer community can make use of it for public benefit.

Ross: *Dan Ross described the upcoming 'hackathon' events in the Twin Cities ("May 25, Visualizing Neighborhoods: A Hackathon for Good" and June 1-2 "Hack for MN"), described what a 'hackathon' was and that the focus of these events was to determine benefits for communities and neighborhoods from working with publicly available data, look at trends, gaps, needs, etc. Volunteers come together use public data to build applications for general public and government use.*

Bitner: These events are co-sponsored by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (associated with the University of Minnesota), with the intent of fostering public good: how do we use this data to help people do things with their neighborhoods, they have a very humanitarian purpose in their intent.

Gelbmann: To follow up on Commissioner Kordiak's comment, what might MetroGIS stand to benefit from having the data freely available? It leverages or frees the way for other organizations to free up their data in kind. Also, with the parcels out there, it being acknowledged as the best data available from the authoritative source, it's trusted and can be relied upon, and from which many projects and ideas can emerge.

Kordiak: We have discussed in the past the ability to search parcel data by owner name, does this remain an issue?

Knippel: The bottom line is that it is that, yes, this is public information; and that no one is truly anonymous, if you are active member of the community, land owner or not, you can be found one way or another; there are obvious ways to protect yourself if you need to due to your job or other condition. Given the national trend on data of this kind, we see the discussion is happening on a national level, the direction is continually toward more free and open GIS data. Our question to ourselves is do we want to follow or lead?

Schneider: I remember the discussions from the early days of MetroGIS and how 'sticky' some of the topics became, however, many years down the road we now have a region full with shared data, that is always getting better at lower and lower cost. Do we remain in a maintenance mode or do we embrace this opportunity to leverage what we've accomplished at the regional cooperative level and move forward? With making the data free, perhaps we could take a look at phasing it out, begin with making things available to the quasi-publics and utilities to test it out; open it up gradually and include phasing in the agreements on the data's use. Here is our free data, but here are the restrictions.

Johnson: In the early days of these discussions, I championed the idea of selling our data for recovering the costs of developing it, and I have changed my mind on that. Even in Hennepin County, arguably one of the most valuable databases in the state, it is just not a cash cow for us anymore.

We should have our County Attorney's Office carefully examine the statutes that make us immune from intentional tortes.

We still need to be prepared for when data is potentially acquired and misused (*Commissioner Johnson cited an example of someone searching for homes valued at \$500,000 or more without a security system*) If more and more and more people are coming for the data and county staff is spending increased amounts of time with licensing and administering the licenses, this isn't efficient.

Are there opportunities to remove names or and scrub the data or redact the private data prior to its release and then have an agency such as MetroGIS or the Metropolitan Council or MnGeo handle the disbursement of the data itself to the requestors?

Kotz: Much of that dispersal mechanism is already in place, each county updates their data to the Council quarterly and we distribute it to the licensed users under the MetroGIS license agreement. Under that same agreement, all three (3) year old and older is presently available.

Group discussion: If we were to release the data only to organizations engaged in public purpose. How do we determine who is fit to receive the data, and if they are in fact using it for public purpose?

Knippel: We (the GIS managers) would have significant concerns on evaluating the fitness of the requestor, their status and their intention. We are simply not equipped to be making those kind of subjective determinations. Currently, at least in Dakota County, if a non-profit or similar group asks for the data, we encourage them to seek out a government sponsor and work it out in a third-party agreement; we would likely need some kind of legal protection (or be inviting litigation) if we turned someone down.

Texer: Could the dispersion issue be solved if we give everything (all the data) to the MetCouncil?

Kotz: If the data is free, there is no problem, we have the ability to take in the data, aggregate it and publish it through the [MetroGIS] DataFinder; we do this already.

Ross: The intention is for this to eventually be statewide, all state data can be acquired in one place, the Geospatial Commons; if we work collectively on this, we will all benefit. These discussions and our future work together will—with the county attorney’s—will lead to a standard that we can make use of and all share the data.

Schneider: Exactly, our charge is to refine this work and this process, to discuss what are the pro’s and con’s of evolving that idea.

Knippel: The phased approach might work best on which data we make available; non-sensitive layers, aerials, topography, others that are easy to distribute. We simply cannot distribute some private data (even at a fee). Perhaps we begin with a subset of our data and expand from there.

Kordiak: Well, we tried to sell the data, and it didn’t pan out, so now we give it away with protection and get the indirect benefits.

Johnson: It is evident we are no longer protecting a huge revenue stream by selling it, however, we still need to protect sensitive populations (*Commissioner Johnson provided the examples of women’s shelters and of certain people who by statute do not have their data publicly available*);

Brief group discussion of merits of exclusion or “scrubbing” of owner name from publicly available data. Several members revealed that is it possible and likely that with some work owner name can be determined; not including owner name might diminish the value of the data for certain user groups such as real estate interests; group discussion on how it gets harder and harder to hide in the data and the diminishment of anonymity in our society.

Johnson: One of my favorite movies of all time is “Doctor Zhivago”, and one of the quotes that stays with me in light of this discussion (when the Red Army are assuming control of Russia) is *‘The private life is gone’*; how true that is happening now with the advent and proliferation of these databases.

Brief group discussion on the context of free data availability beyond just the parcel data.

Is there precedent for collecting fees for one set of data and making other sets free?

Are there consequences and/or diminishing returns on this approach?

What is the investment the public has made in this data?

What are the public’s expectations to be met from this investment?

In order for this to be possible, would counties have to completely re-vamp their licensing agreements?

Draft Resolution Discussion; general consensus statement: there is an articulated need for some foundational base language that each county can take back to its board and review for its relevance and fitness for adoption.

Schneider: It is appropriate for this body to develop that [draft resolution] as a resource to be taken back to each county board; it should be a goal.

Knippel: In Dakota County this is certainly on our radar; doing this in a broader contest, with the guidance of the Policy Board makes it easier for the GIS Managers; it will be stronger if we can do it together.

Kordiak: Am I to understand that licensing agreements aren’t the way we are moving? Would making the data freely available with a click of a disclaimer solve these issues? Maybe make the first few layers available, see how it progresses and add more data layers as we get comfortable.

Ross: If possible, try to avoid the agreement route, there is much more value when you can share. We (MnGeo/MetroGIS/et. al.) can work to research and cover the liability issues; by way of example, Clay County, has had open data for thirteen years and they have never had a suit against them;

Retzman: In terms to all the issues, is a making the data freely available *fiscally neutral*?

Knippel: No, there is still an impact to county revenue in making the data free. Some revenue is helping to offset county program or department costs, particularly in Greater Minnesota counties and some smaller departments. If that revenue went away they would need an offset in their budget, it certainly doesn’t cost us to just *give* the data away; but the county can dictate how and where the data is available, through MetroGIS handling it or some other option.

Kotz: As we’ve stated we have that mechanism largely already in place with MetroGIS at the Metropolitan Council.

Ross: As we progress, MnGeo, MetroGIS and the Council will continue to work together on that.

Knippel: We (managers and technical staff) need your (Board’s) direction moving forward; we have provided the ‘white paper’ as an overview, what other materials can we provide to you specifically to advance the discussion?

Brief group discussion on the potential means forward; the resulting conversation yielding the following initial request list, broken down into three 'aspects':

Data Aspect:

Goal (1):

To provide a clear understanding of which data is available in full, available in part and/or not available for public release;

- A list of the current data layers that could be readily shared freely presumably without modification and without risk to the counties;
- A list of other layers with the potential to be shared but may be in need of having some information reserved or removed;
- An indication of the kinds of data that are not considered for free and open access to the public;

Legal Aspect:

Goals (2):

To provide proper legal protection and disclaimer language that supports and protects the data providing interests;

To provide framework language and resources for the participating counties and cities to review and suggest modifications which meet their legal and operating requirements;

- A summary resource indicating the existing legal protections presently in place; (state statute language and relevant county ordinance language if such applies)
- A resource indicating where/what parts of the existing language of legal protections does not adequately cover the proposed direction;
- A summary of any desired legal protections not covered or considered in existing statute language or other legal controls;
- A compilation of summary disclaimer language as a reference resource;

Data Transmission Aspect:

Goals (2):

To provide the Policy Board and other officials with a description on how the data would be made publicly available including technical applications, inter-agency transfer and on-going maintenance.

To establish clear roles for each participating entity (city, county, regional and state) on what is expected in ensuring ease-of-use and access to the data consumer community;

- A description on how the data would be provided to the public (what interface, what means);
- An indication of what agencies would be involved and what their specific roles would be;
- An indication of the frequency of data updates;

Schneider: The final language of this does not have to be uniform from county to county; a base or framework of language and other material from which the counties can draw from and build their own would be a beneficial starting point. We can, at the Policy Board level, work toward a resolution to support this.

Motion to proceed with development and presentation of the 'list' above:

Motion: Schneider; Second: Gerlach, motion carried.

Data Producers Work Group with the support of MetroGIS staff will develop and present the requested materials at the next Policy Board meeting and to other appropriate audiences.

7) Next Meeting

The next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday July 24, 2013, 6 pm.**

8) Adjournment

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM.



MetroGIS Policy Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Minutes approved, Thursday, October 23, 2014

Metropolitan County Government Center
2099 University Avenue, St. Paul, MN

Attendees:

Debbie Goettel, City of Richfield/Metro Cities	Terry Schneider, Chair, City of Minnetonka/Metro Cities
Jim Kordiak, Anoka County	Chris Gerlach, Dakota County
Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County	Mjyke Nelson, Washington County
Randy Knippel, Dakota County (alternate)	Dave Hinrichs, Metropolitan Council (alternate)
Gary Swenson, Hennepin County (alternate)	Peter Henschel, Carver County (alternate)

Guests:

Erik Dahl, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	David Brandt, Washington County
Dan Ross, Minnesota Geospatial Information Office	Matt Koukol, Ramsey County
William Brown, Hennepin County	Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council
Nancy Read, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District	

Staff:

Geoff Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator

(1) **Call To Order**

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm

(2) **Approval of Agenda**

Minor revision advanced to Chair Schneider

Convert Agenda Item (5) to (5a)

Add Agenda Item (5b) "Free and Open Data Issue Recap" (Knippel, Dakota County)

Motion to approve: Goettel; Second: Hinrichs, motion carried.

(3) **Approve Meeting Minutes from April 24, 2013 Meeting**

Motion to approve: Kordiak; Second: Goettel, motion carried.

(4) **Project Updates**

Maas provided brief overview updates of the status of current MetroGIS Projects

These included:

- State Centerline Initiative (Pilot plan complete and under review)
- Regional Address Point Tool and Aggregation (Version 2.0 of tool nearly complete)
- Geospatial Commons (Version 1.0 internal roll-up conducted in September)
- Free and Open Data Research (presented later in the meeting)
- Leadership Succession Plan and Operational Guidelines Revisions (completed summer 2013)

- MetroGIS Outreach in 2013 (eight presentations made to groups and departments)
- New MetroGIS website (contract pending with vendor through Metropolitan Council)
- Update on 2014 Work Plan (draft is complete, to be approved in Dec by Coordinating Committee)
- New MetroGIS Logo; Maas described the symbolic references and intended uses for the new logo;

(5a) Free & Open Data Context

G. Maas provided a brief recap of the Free and Open Data research conducted through the summer/fall of 2013, including demonstration of the value of making data freely available, understanding the legal framework under which data producers operate, covering the issue of potential liability to data producers and the need for a change in existing policies;

Maas provided a graphic example of “what free and open data looks like” using Douglas County, Wisconsin as an example and briefly discussing the benefits they have realized by making this data available.

Key Benefits of Free and Open Data (Summary Points):

Benefits to government:

- Transparency of operations;*
- Increased level of public service;*
- Pro-actively (vs. reactive) meeting the demand for data;*
- The authoritative data being available is the norm;*
- Less staff time handling licenses, fees, data transfer, etc.;*

Benefits to businesses:

- Facilitates the ‘information economy’/’app economy’*
- Data consuming industries can operate more efficiently and cost-effectively (insurance, real estate, telecom, utilities, pipelines, telecommunications, etc.)*
- Enables our region and our state to be more competitive economically;*

(5b) Free and Open Data Issues Recap

R. Knippel provided a brief recap of the issues to fresh the board on the leading up to the discussion of and need for Free and Open Data. This included the historical context since the 1980s, significant original expense of the technology, continued decrease in the cost and increasing availability of the technology, continual rising demand for data augmented by the rise of the Internet, changing public expectations for government data.

Knippel re-iterated the benefits and challenges of making the data available; including the potential liability and privacy issues raised in previous meetings and discussions, and stated that the actual liability doesn’t change if a government is charging fees or selling the data or just giving the data away;

Knippel cited the pieces of state statute (Chapter 13; Chapter 16E, Sec 30, Subd. 11 and Chapter 466, Sec 3. Subd. 21) that specifically reference the liability issue and protections for data producers;

Knippel also indicated that the data producers would retain the right to charge for services such as special customized 'cuts' of the data, and charge fees for services such as custom mapping and related activities.

Gerlach: I have some questions about the data, will this include the entirety of the Census data?

Knippel: Yes, at present most of the federal Census is fully publicly available, there are some parts of it retained to protect privacy; however the tabular data are public.

Gerlach: Another example are the Minnesota Secretary of State registered voter lists, they presently sell this data, for a nominal fee you can buy a list of your entire district including names and addresses, generally used for mailing addresses; would this be included as well?

Ross: Glad you asked that, we will be meeting with them (Sec. of State) in coming weeks to discuss that very issue; it is very likely they will still need to cover their overhead for slicing out the data into districts as the counties and cities do;

(6) Department of Administration: Information Policy Analysis Division (IPAD) Position Results

D. Ross introduced the group to what IPAD is and does and provided the group with the results of the ten (10) questions submitted and the next steps for acquiring satisfactory answers to those questions.

After the April 24, 2013 MetroGIS Policy Board meeting, MN.IT Services (on behalf of MnGeo, MetroGIS and the stakeholders) submitted a set of questions to IPAD for an opinion to inform our discussion. IPAD reviewed these questions and determined that they:

- ***Lacked the specificity needed;***
- ***Lacked specific case context;***
- ***Did not provide concise enough practical examples;***
- ***Were "too hypothetical" in nature;***

IPAD has encouraged **MN.IT Services** to work with a local government to re-draft and re-submit the questions so they can provide more satisfactory answers.

Ross: The following summarizes their answers, direction and guidance returned from IPAD in reviewing the initial questions tendered to them from MN.IT Services

Regarding liability to data producing government agencies: IPAD volunteered that 'if data is deemed public, then no liability is attached to it' and any party who feels that they have been the recipient of damage or harm due to inaccuracies in public data , must 'prove or demonstrate that harm';

Regarding the need for disclaimer language: IPAD reiterated that data categorized as public is exempt from liability, however, MN Stat 466.03.21 indicates that a disclaimer needs to run with publicly distributed GIS data;

Regarding the issue of copyrighting public data: IPAD indicated that they need a specific case to respond to before they can provide and answer. The core issue regarding copyright is the balance between:

Protection of the data producer interest in/control of its data vs. the accessibility and availability of the data for public use;

IPAD recommended interested parties review the Minnesota Attorney General's 1995 opinion on copy written materials: <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/resources/opinions/120495.htm>

On the issue if licensing agreements are still needed: Again, IPAD indicated they needed a specific example of a license agreement to review and comment on and review against the language of Chapter 13. IPAD volunteered that they didn't think that license agreements were necessary where public data is concerned and may be in violation of Chapter 13 if license agreements abridge the availability or use of public data;

On the presence of 'protected classes' in public data: IPAD indicated that there are no 'protected classes' listed in statute. Statute language in Chapter 5B (Data Protection for Victims of Violence) and Chapter 13.37 (Nonpublic Data) would be applied. A data producer is not responsible for data that has not already been shared nor is the party the data was shared with;

Final guidance from IPAD indicated that we (MN.IT Services, in concert with MnGeo and MetroGIS) should work with a local government and ask them for specific examples and re-submit the reconfigured questions.

(Also, please refer to Dan Ross's PowerPoint presentation available on the MetroGIS Website, under Policy Board, Oct 23, 2013: 'Agenda')

Reinhardt: We should keep in mind that IPAD is not the Attorney General's (AG) office; they can offer legal options related to Chapter 13, but cannot rule on the liability issue.

Ross: Correct, they cannot *rule* on it, however, the AG will appropriate the findings of IPAD into opinions provided;

Reinhardt: When Ramsey County and the other counties drafted their license agreements and the regional license [MetroGIS Regional Parcel Dataset License Agreement], we had our attorneys look closely at these materials; with the new [statute] language and the demand by the public for the data means we need to re-examine this.

Ross: IPAD suggested that when you are creating a license agreement, you need to be careful not violate Chapter 13, some restrictions placed in the language of the in license agreements particularly in the redistribution of data might be in conflict with Chapter 13;

Koukol: From a practice standpoint, we should be in favor of leaving license agreements behind, this is not the direction we should be going; these aren't the kinds of things we [county staff] don't want to have to administer.

Ross: Moving forward, we will need to work with a county to re-craft and re-submit questions to IPAD to acquire answers and a position we can use;

(7) Free & Open Data: Policies, Legal Aspects, Next Steps & Discussion

Randy Knippel provided summary points on the entirety of the issue, submitting that there is ample evidence of the value of open data vs. closed data, the benefits to the public and to the producing agencies on making their data openly available and that we need to put in place the practices and policies without restrictions on the data to leverage that value;

Other summary statements included:

GIS is an investment for everyone, not just the business unit producing it;
The investment in GIS is justified by the government business processes;
Government entities can proactively collaborate to distribute GIS data costs;

A summary of remaining roles for county governments specifically include:

- To address any remaining liability issues;
- Start with making data available that is already available under current licensing/fee policy;
- Leverage current and emerging data warehousing opportunities;
- Demonstrate leadership on the issue;
- Put work flows in place that support data availability;

With the existence of the MetroGIS DataFinder and the forthcoming Minnesota Geospatial Commons, we are well positioned to make data available.

In the Metropolitan Counties, we can demonstrate leadership in making data available, acknowledging the change in direction, other counties in the state will then follow suit;

Discussion: Next Steps for MetroGIS Policy Board

The Coordinating Committee and Data Producers Work Group ask that the Policy Board:

- Adopt a resolution supporting policies of free and open data in the governments and agencies of MetroGIS stakeholders;
- Direct a letter from the Policy Board Chair
- Include a sample resolution that each data producing stakeholder entity could utilize or modify
- Be the ‘messengers’ and the ‘champions’ for this initiative in their constituent governments and help make this happen;

Reinhardt: This has been a long time coming, we want to make sure we dot the i’s and cross the t’s. Also, if we need disclaimer language, perhaps you [Coordinating Committee/Data Producers Work Group] can come back to us [Policy Board] with recommended language.

Kordiak: Agreed, a standard disclaimer, supported in statute that all governments producing data could use without need for additional modification would be a good resource.

Kotz: Currently, the three year old and older parcel data is publicly available with no license agreement. With the Regional Parcel Dataset License Agreement, there is a disclaimer in place, so in some sense we

have already addressed this, we could use that disclaimer language, which the counties have already agreed to and we are making use of and move forward.

Knippel: agree with making use of what we already have in place for language, but, I want us to keep in mind that we not be focused exclusively on parcel data, we want to avoid creating language or policies around specific datasets. Other examples such as address points and street centerlines need to be included and may require the engagement of emergency services, cities and others.

Ross: Agreed; unneeded restrictions on the data will limit its usefulness to the wider data consuming public.

Gerlach: This is the right direction to go and I agree with Commissioner Reinhardt, that we offer up support to move forward on this;

Knippel: This board is best positioned to offer a vision for our counties and constituent stakeholders in MetroGIS, rather than the specific details; at the county level, we realize we will need to talk to our attorneys.

Gerlach: Are you getting pushback on any aspects of this work toward freeing up the data?

Knippel: Not with the Metropolitan Counties, but there is some resistance in Greater Minnesota counties.

Reinhardt: As a member of the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council, I can speak to that issue from the larger state perspective, a number of questions have been brought on the issue through the Association of Minnesota Counties. Dan Ross had offered up some language changes in the last legislative session, but weren't adopted by the legislature, we know there is commitment from MnGeo and others to address that; many counties are comfortable with it, there are a handful of them having difficulty with the issue of making their data open.

Knippel: I will say, that around budget time, we [county staff] are given a strong message to generate revenue and with open data, counties are trying to push that in the opposite direction, we need to message that larger value curve;

Kordiak: What I took from our last meeting in April, Commissioner Johnson (Hennepin County) wants to be sure we are covered from liability, it appears that we are. I will say I have been rooting for this for the past dozen years and Anoka County is going to move forward on this, we have already removed the expected revenue from sale of GIS data for the next year.

Gerlach: At our last meeting we covered that revenue was declining, is there a chart of that available?

Knippel: Yes on page (X) of the 'White Paper' document, again, that revenue was not consistently tied to operating costs from county to county, that variation is also shown in that chart.

Gerlach: *[Referring to the numbers on Page (X) of the 'White Paper']*; These numbers for 2012 are low to the point of being near negligible, and this is all public data? Primarily the parcels?

Knippel: It is, parcel data is aggregated from the surveyors' office, this data (parcels) is already public; we are providing it in a format so it can readily be consumed by GIS users.

Reinhardt: Many of those issues we referenced earlier with liability, there is more information out there that is easily searchable and there is a ‘fine line’ we need to stay on one side of. We as counties need to be careful about Social Security Numbers and so on, but as far as GIS data is concerned, we already know how to do this, and we know what is public is what is not, and I feel we are covered and are in a good position to make this available. With that said, I would suggest the specific changes to the resolution language: where it refers to ‘data’ please use the term public geospatial data. With that revision, I feel we are able to support and adopt it. The sample resolution statement should be provided as a point of reference, but with the encouragement that they pursue policies and practices with the outcome of free and open data. As far as the counties go, we can use this body to agree on the vision, counties can then use the material for their own resolution.

Schneider: To move us forward then, this sample resolution, once it is modified as recommended by Commissioner Reinhardt, will be provided to each county with a letter of support.

Group Discussion: *Does the county board even need to formally pass a resolution on this, could they simply just make data available? Merits of formal vs. informal adoption of a policy was briefly debated.*

Knippel: From a county staff perspective, it is difficult for me as the GIS Manager, and likely for other GIS Managers, to push this change up our respective chains of command. What we as staff are looking for, is for direction from this body, so we can work in a coordinated way, and we then can offer the assurance to our county government that it has been discussed and vetted through this body [Policy Board].

Reinhardt: This language found in the draft resolution provided does that.

Schneider: Our MetroGIS letter of support and accompanying materials would be enhanced by a parallel endorsement from MnGeo; could we ask that be provided as well? Joint support of MnGeo and MetroGIS would be more impactful and raise the level of attention than simply a letter from one.

Knippel: I would suggest we finish drafting up these materials with the changes you have recommended and place them up on a website—MetroGIS’ site or MnGeo’s site if we wanted to reach greater Minnesota—for any and all stakeholders to review. We should ensure we are all working from the same source materials.

Kordiak: Do we want every county to create their individual disclaimer language statements? Or do we continue the discussion of the need for a standard disclaimer as part of moving this forward? Also, is giving them a sample that they all rework individually efficient? Are we simply giving them reference points to create their own?

Reinhardt: As part of the letter of support, we’d provide that sample disclaimer as a resource. We can be clear that this is the recommended language for their use, but it is not dictated to them.

Koukol: I would suggest not providing them with a standard language, simply provide them a disclaimer that is in use and stating ‘this works for us’, adopt as you see fit.

Kotz: Again, I would suggest, we already have that language assembled for the Regional Parcel Dataset, I would say we stay with that one, provide it to them and say ‘Here is a disclaimer and state that it has been in use for years by MetroGIS.’

Reinhardt: With the changes I mentioned to the language earlier [*insert 'public geospatial data' wherever data is mentioned*] we the Policy Board can support a motion to adopt the resolution and advance the issues in our respective governments. Also, this has been a long and arduous process of many years of work; I want to acknowledge the staff of the counties and of the Council who deserves the credit for getting us here and making this work.

Maas: The materials to be advanced from this meeting then, are the following:

- The letter of support for the policy of Free and Open data from the MetroGIS Policy Board signed by Chairman Schneider;
- An accompanying parallel letter of support from MnGeo, drafted and signed by Dan Ross;
- A disclaimer language sample drawn from the MetroGIS Regional Parcel Dataset as a reference;
- The sample resolution language;
- A copy of, or web direction to access to the research materials prepared for this body's review;
- Summary statutory references they can work with easily;

Other remaining steps include working with a county to provide a new set of specific questions to IPAD and making those findings available as well when ready; this will likely have a bit longer timeline than the other materials which are largely ready. Dan Ross and I can continue to carry this out.

Schneider: These materials, when ready, are to be directed to the County Administrator and Chair of each County Board, plus each County GIS Manager and other offices or recipient as they see fit for their internal processes. We can then await their responses and work from there. We needn't bring this to every city individually, we can work through LOGIS, Metro Cities and the like.

Schneider: Is there a motion for the support of Free and Open Data by the MetroGIS Policy Board and to advance the materials we have discussed to county governments?

Motion to approve: Reinhardt; Second: Kordiak, motion carried.

[\[Resolution language is found on Page 9 of this document\]](#)

(8) Next Meeting

Schneider: 'Good work' to all involved, our next meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2014.

(9) Adjourn

[Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM]

Resolution: MetroGIS Policy Board Resolution of Support for MetroGIS government stakeholder organizations to make their public geospatial data freely and openly available;

WHEREAS, the MetroGIS Policy Board (*herein after referred to as the ‘Board’*)—comprised of county commissioners, mayors, senior management and administration officials representing the diverse set of government and agency stakeholders in the Seven Metropolitan Counties of Minnesota—has been in continuous operation since 1997 to review the policies, practices and investments of governments deploying geographic information systems technology and geospatial data development; and

WHEREAS, the Board has engaged in on-going, in depth discussions and review of the fiscal, legal, policy, technical and functional considerations of making public geospatial data freely and openly available; and

WHEREAS, the Board understands that the government agencies producing public geospatial data in the Seven Metropolitan Counties can provide an enhanced and more transparent level of public service, and leverage a higher return on its investment in geospatial technologies by making its data freely available; and

WHEREAS, the Board understands that the practice of making public geospatial data freely and openly available is occurring in other regions of the United States with amply documented benefits to both the data producer and data user communities; and

WHEREAS, the Board acknowledges the emergence, continued refinement and benefit of new information technologies that have dramatically changed the way citizens search for and expect to find, consume and utilize government information, and that such technological advancements can aggregate ever larger quantities of data and allow government to provide information to the public with increasing efficiency;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the MetroGIS Policy Board recommends and supports the policy and practice of county, city and other government jurisdictions and agencies making their public geospatial data freely and openly available without charge or licensure to the public including private citizens and private sector interests in accordance with all applicable laws;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MetroGIS Policy Board directs its Chair to publish a letter directed to all MetroGIS government stakeholder organizations encouraging them to pursue such policies and practices;

RESOLVED THIS DAY, the 23rd of October 2013 in St Paul, Minnesota;

Update notification to the MetroGIS Policy Board in lieu of meeting on January 22, 2014



Greetings MetroGIS Policy Board and Alternates,

First off, a very Happy New Year to you all.

No meeting on January 22, 2014:

We will **not** be convening in person on our next scheduled meeting date of January 22, 2014.

This email is intended to provide an update brief in lieu of that meeting.

Our next scheduled meeting is set for Wednesday, April 23, 2014.

Free and Open Public Geospatial Data Update:

As per your direction at our October 23, 2013 meeting, a Letter of Support and related materials have been directed to the County Board Chairs and County Administrators of the Seven Metropolitan Counties.

Currently, the recommendation for the adoption of policies for free and open public geospatial data are under review and consideration in several of the Seven Metropolitan Counties. Responses from counties currently acting on the recommendation is favorable.

In Hennepin County, a draft resolution for Free and Open Public Geospatial Data will be communicated at the January 28 Board Meeting and will be in Committee for approval on February 4th.

Additional outreach by MetroGIS to cities (*including to Metro Cities, League of Minnesota Cities and similar organizations*) and other data producing agencies and governments on the issue of free and open data is anticipated in 2014 by members of the MetroGIS community.

Coordinating Committee Activity

After serving a term as Committee Chair, David Bitner was awarded MetroGIS' Leadership Service Award at our January 9, 2014 meeting. The Committee gave its sincere thanks to David for his guidance and leadership during his term as Chair.

Erik Dahl, GIS Analyst/Planner from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District has been elected as the new Committee Chair for 2014-2015.

David Brandt, GIS Coordinator for Washington County, was elected to a second term as Vice Chair for 2014-2015.

Budget and Work Plan

The Coordinating Committee approved the MetroGIS Work Plan for 2014.

The updated work plan document is on front page of our existing website: www.metrogis.org

The Metropolitan Council has once again allotted \$86,000 in program funding for MetroGIS in 2014, the majority of which will be used for the new website.

Key initiatives for 2014 include:

- Continual development and refinement of the **Address Points Editor Tool**

- **Address Points Aggregation**
- Continued support for the **Statewide Centerlines Initiative**
- Continued support for the **Minnesota Geospatial Commons** (statewide geodata clearinghouse)
- Outreach to **counties adjacent to the metro on shared issues of interest for cost savings and reducing redundant effort**
- Planning for a **private sector/public sector data summit**
- Formal support for research and documentation for the development of a **regional stormsewer dataset** and analysis of the existing stormsewer data standard.

At the heart of all these initiatives is the aim of making and sharing data so **governments at all levels can operate easier, cheaper and more efficiently.**

New MetroGIS Website

The Metropolitan Council executed a contract with High Monkey, a Roseville, Minnesota based web design and development firm in December 2013. The new site is anticipated to launch in early April 2014.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns or comments about the work of MetroGIS. I am happy to assist you in any way I can.

Many thanks for your continued interest in and attention to MetroGIS.

Respectfully,
Geoff



Geoffrey Maas, GISP

MetroGIS Coordinator | www.metrogis.org
geoffrey.maas@metc.state.mn.us | 651.602.1638
390 North Robert Street | St. Paul, MN 55101
www.metrocouncil.org | www.datafinder.org

Update notification to the MetroGIS Policy Board in lieu of meeting on April 23, 2014



Greetings Policy Board Members and Alternates,

This email serves as a brief update on MetroGIS projects and a notice that **we will not convene** the Policy Board on Wednesday, April 23, 2014 as scheduled.

At its March 27 meeting, the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee did not identify any fiscal or policy matters requiring the Policy Board to convene.

MetroGIS Summary Updates:

Free and Open Public Geospatial Data: I am pleased to announce that based on your recommendation from last October, four of the Seven Metropolitan County Boards have passed resolutions supporting free and open public geospatial data.

- Ramsey County and Hennepin County adopted their resolution on February 11, 2014
- Dakota County adopted its resolution on March 25, 2014
- Carver County adopted its resolution on April 1, 2014

Anoka County is set to review and act upon the issue at its upcoming County Board meeting on Tuesday, April 22, 2014.

Many thanks to all of you involved in, and committed to, this important step in expanding data availability and public service!

Project Updates.

Website: The new MetroGIS website is very near completion. Live deployment is anticipated in early May. Thank you for your patience.

Regional Address Points Data: Significant advances have been made with version 2.0 of the Address Editor Tool deploying in April 2014. The tool is in full production in Dakota County, is being tested in Ramsey and Carver counties, being installed in Anoka and is under review and consideration in Hennepin, Scott and Washington counties. Dakota County's address point data is now being distributed on the MetroGIS DataFinder web site.

Road Centerline Data: The Statewide Centerline Initiative is currently focused on MnDOT converting its existing systems to a more readily available data model. The Seven Metropolitan Counties and Metropolitan Emergency Services Board with support from MetroGIS and the Metropolitan Council are set to convene in May to fully document their core business needs for the data.

Geospatial Commons: The forthcoming statewide data clearing house is in development. A viewable evaluation version of the site is viewable here: <http://gisdata.mn.gov/>

Working with partners bordering the Metro: Through summer and fall of 2014, a series of meetings are anticipated with GIS partners that border the metro (including Wisconsin) to build relationships, share information and find areas of common interest.

Stormsewer Dataset Project Research: Interest in a regional stormsewer dataset solution continues to grow. Through 2014, we anticipate documentation of business needs from interested partners and developing a more complete understanding of the regulatory and permitting authorities which govern stormwater in Minnesota.

As always, your continued interest in MetroGIS is appreciated.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,
Geoff Maas
MetroGIS Coordinator



Geoffrey Maas, GISP

MetroGIS Coordinator | www.metrogis.org
geoffrey.maas@metc.state.mn.us | 651.602.1638
390 North Robert Street | St. Paul, MN 55101
www.metrocouncil.org | www.datafinder.org



MetroGIS Policy Board Meeting Minutes

Draft Minutes: Pending Approval at 2015 Annual Meeting: April 30, 2015

Thursday, October 23, 2014, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Metropolitan County Government Center
2099 University Avenue, St. Paul, MN

Board Members Present:

Terry Schneider, Metro Cities/ City of Minnetonka, Policy Board Chair
Debbie Goettel, Metro Cities/City of Richfield
Mary Texer, Capitol Region Watershed District
Steve Elkins, Metropolitan Council
Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioner
Mjyke Nelson, Washington County, Director of Information Technology
Chris Gerlach, Dakota County Commissioner
Pete Henschel, Carver County GIS Manager (Alternate for R. Maluchnik)

Board Members Absent:

Jim Kordiak, Anoka County
Randy Maluchnik, Vice Chair, Carver County
Dave Menden, Scott County
Randy Johnson, Hennepin County

Present:

Dave Hinrichs, Metropolitan Council Chief Information Officer
Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council, Coordinating Committee Member
Randy Knippel, Dakota County GIS Manager, Coordinating Committee Member
Erik Dahl, Environmental Quality Board, Coordinating Committee Chair
David Brandt, Washington County, Vice-Chair MetroGIS Coordinating Committee
Matt Koukol, Ramsey County GIS Manager, Coordinating Committee Member
Dan Ross, State GIO, MnGeo, Coordinating Committee Member
Nancy Read, Metropolitan Mosquito Control Board, Coordinating Committee Member
Curt Carlson, Northstar MLS, MetroGIS Coordinating Member

Staff:

Geoff Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator

1) Call to Order

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM

2) Approval of Meeting Agenda

Chair Schneider called for a motion to approve the meeting agenda
Motion: Texer, Second: Reinhardt, motion carried

3) Approve Meeting Summary from 10/23/2013

Chair Schneider called for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting (10/23/2013)

Motion: Texer, Second: Reinhardt, motion carried

4) Confirmation of Change of Practice regarding Policy Board Operation

Chair Schneider reaffirmed the changing nature of the MetroGIS collaborative and the need for the Policy Board to respond to this change. He directed Coordinator Maas to summarize the points of recommended modification from prior discussions for the group, these included:

- The MetroGIS Policy Board is to continue operation as the policy body for the MetroGIS collaborative and to formally convene once per calendar year;
- The Policy Board will hold its annual meeting each April beginning in calendar year 2015. Holding the annual meeting in April provides ample time for review by the Board of any relevant actions or proposals anticipated in upcoming Legislative sessions;
- The Coordinating Committee can request that the Policy Board convene if there are items of significant fiscal or political import requiring policy-maker level attention, decision-making and support.
- The Policy Board can be called to convene at other times than the annual meeting with a 30-day notice to members. Any meeting dates desired outside of the annual meeting will be as near as possible to the usual established dates of the original quarterly schedule.
- Quarterly report briefs to the Policy Board members from the MetroGIS Coordinator on the activities and projects of the stakeholder community—*in lieu of formally scheduled quarterly meetings*—are to continue and will serve as a primary means of updating the Policy Board between the annual April meetings.
- The next scheduled Annual Meeting would convene on Thursday, April 30, 2015 at the Metropolitan Counties Government Center, 2099 University Avenue, St Paul, Minnesota.

Chair Schneider made a further recommendation that future meeting times be pushed to 7 pm and asked for a motion to approve the statements defining the change in operation.

Motion: Reinhardt, Second: Texer, motion carried. Chair Schneider directed Coordinator Maas to add these formal revisions to the language of the MetroGIS Operational Guidelines and Procedures.

Agenda Item 5) MetroGIS Project Updates

Members of the Coordinating Committee and MetroGIS staff provided updates on the progress of the numerous MetroGIS projects presently underway.

5a) Free and Open Data Update and Summary

Randy Knippel (MetroGIS Data Producer Work Group Chair) provided an update on the current status and progress of the adoption of open data policies by counties in the metro and in Greater Minnesota. These included the adoption of formal open data policies in spring 2014 by Ramsey, Hennepin, Dakota, Carver and Anoka Counties, the consideration of policies by Washington and Scott Counties and the potential of counties in Greater Minnesota such as Stearns and Clay Counties working toward policy adoption.

Knippel went on to describe the benefits being realized by county staff with the change such as the elimination of the burden of administering licenses and fee transactions for marginal benefit and eliminating the need to implement onerous security measures. Knippel stated that the counties are well positioned to leverage the benefits of the Minnesota Geospatial Commons and at the present counties with open data have begun to pursue publishing their data through individual portals.

Knippel summarized the metro open data effort as a successful collaborative project and next steps include building an awareness of the availability of the data and promoting the use of that data. One event to meet that aim is the upcoming Hennepin County 'code-a-thon' called Hennepin Geo:Code which will partner Open Twin Cities, Code For America and eDemocracy.org and the 'civic technologist' community of the Twin Cities. In the language describing the event as the desire to create technology solutions that *"... improve county services, give residents greater access to government data and make a difference ..."*

Among the benefits of the open data is the ability for the public to use the data in innovative ways; open data leverages creativity for applications development which saves the county from having to anticipate every need and try to develop applications for it. Knippel described that this is a new frontier for us in Minnesota, that open data has opened new doors of possibility for making use of the data.

Coordinator Maas described the opportunity he had in September to present nationally on the topic at NSGIC (National States Geographic Information Council) at their annual conference in Charleston, South Carolina, co-presenting with New York GIO William Johnson. The topic was well received and Minnesota is seen as a strong test case example for the benefits of open geospatial data.

Mayor Goettel noted that we should work to benchmark other cities that are doing well with these efforts and work to capture the same benefits they have realized. She cited the City of Detroit deploying GIS in innovative ways to assist and serve marginalized communities, and using fire fighters and fire departments as a means of outreach; citizens perceive fire fighters different than other officials or police officers.

Commissioner Reinhardt noted that in Ramsey County, GIS analysis is critical for identifying areas of economic need and understanding areas of concentrated poverty and how to leverage their improvement.

Mayor Schneider indicated he would appreciate seeing examples of these benefits in future summary reports and meetings and providing links to their work, applications and analyses.

Curtis Carlson, Northstar Multiple Listing Service Presentation:

Curtis Carlson is the GIS Coordinator of NorthStar MLS which provides information services to the over 14,000 real estate industry professionals in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin.

Mr. Carlson's presentation highlighted the specifics of the services they offer, the volume of data they manage and how they acquire that data. He cited the crucial role of GIS in serving their customers with good data and the tremendous benefit of access to open data for serving their client base. His presentation is appended to the end of these minutes.

5b) Changes to the Regional Parcel Dataset Agreement between the Seven Metropolitan Counties and the Metropolitan Council

Coordinator Maas refreshed the group on the status of the Legal Agreement between the Metropolitan Council and the County governments; under which:

The Counties have provided parcel data in the MetroGIS standard, consistently updated metadata for the parcel data and access the historical parcel data (three years old and older) while the Metropolitan Council provides distribution of the data through DataFinder, administration of license agreements and \$4000/year to each county from MetroGIS' budget.

The current agreement which was executed in January 1, 2012 currently extends to January 1, 2016 and will end at that time. Both County and Council staff are seeking the transition to a Memorandum of Agreement to replace the legal contract which Highlights the value of continued collaboration between partners, does not focus on parcel data exclusively and still enables a portion of the MetroGIS budget to be directed to the county GIS departments to build applications and translation engines to get data into regional (and state) formats and standards.

County and Metropolitan Council staff proposed the development of a draft Memorandum of Agreement over the winter of 2014-2015, submittal of that document to the Policy Board members for their review, comment and approval at the April 30, 2015 Policy Board meeting.

Commissioner Reinhardt voiced her support for transitioning to a Memorandum of Agreement stating that this is an excellent demonstration of cooperation and trust among the partners and how the collaborative has evolved since the early days of working with each County Attorney's Office to craft the agreement language with significant cost and effort. She cited that the technology has evolved and our policies as governments need to evolve as well. She further stated that Minnesota and MetroGIS are examples to other states and regions in the arena of GIS and that this kind of agreement is a continued demonstration of our ability to work together to serve the public.

Nancy Read (Technical Director, Metropolitan Mosquito Control Board) stated that as a regional government, the Mosquito Control Board benefits greatly from not just the availability of the data but also its proliferation in a standardized format for the counties and having a means to maintain the data in the standard was a significant benefit to her organizations interest.

Mayor Schneider also voiced his support for the transition out from the encumbrances of the legal agreement to something that leverages the benefit of open data, benefiting the general public, private sector and how these various actors can to continue to work easily and effectively with one another.

Board Member Texer motioned that a draft Memorandum of Agreement be drafted by County and Council staff and submitted to the members of the Policy Board for formal review, comment and approval at the April 30, 2015. Commissioner Reinhardt seconded, motion carried. County and Council staff—working through the MetroGIS Data Producers Work Group/Eight County Collaborative—will commence work on the draft document for submittal to the Board.

5c) U.S. National Grid Emergency Response Signage in Regional Parks and Trails

Randy Knippel provided a presentation on the deployment of U.S. National Grid (USNG) Emergency Response Signage in regional parks and trails in Dakota County. He cited the need for this resource in large park areas with significant trail networks for guiding first-responders to respond to emergency situations.

The USNG has been a national standard since 2001, adopted by a range of federal agencies and states (by Minnesota in March 2009) and how it emerged from the Military Grid Referencing System as is in use by the National Guard and NATO forces, National Search and Rescue Committee. He highlighted its ease of use, the range of mobile applications available with make use of USNG, the work of SharedGeo in developing the signage and web application (usngapp.org) and the on-going work with first-responders to ensure they were able to use the system effectively and efficiently.

Commissioner Gerlach asked how this system differed from traditional latitude and longitude coordinates. Knippel indicated that the USNG functions better in the local arena as longitudes have east/west coordinates that use negative decimals (moving west). He also cited that the use of the USNG is part of the standard military training and that the on-the-ground interpretation is much easier in a situation than working with latitude and longitude.

He further cited that simply because USNG is a national standard does not mean it has been effectively implemented nationwide. Upcoming efforts in the metro region include working with the City of St Paul (citing the recent tragedy in Lilydale Park) and Lebanon Hills Park working with the mountain biking groups who use that park.

The USNG presentation is appended to the end of these meeting minutes.

5d) General Fund Allocation for Geospatial Projects

State Geospatial Information Officer Dan Ross presented the current state of statewide GIS and the current absence of full statewide layers of core geospatial data. He cited that at present, GIS is underfunded. As we ramp up to NextGen911 we need to be addressing the gaps in our data layers, but also for the many other uses and needs. Emergency response is a major driver to help leverage funding and awareness at the policy maker level. He stated he has strong support from Commissioner Parnell to keep the funding discussion moving.

Ross indicated that the Minnesota Geospatial Commons will be the focal point for delivery of data and collaboration. The site has been active since summer of 2014; however, it is not complete of fully populated with the data it needs to fulfill its intended purpose.

The future legislative proposal will focus on support for statewide data aggregation and standardization, the premise of publicly available data and services and that the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council will prioritize and guide those investments. The focus will be on working with local governments to build and sustain the foundational data layers; we can leverage the work here in the metro and capitalize on that for work in Greater Minnesota.

Ross cited recent examples of successful programs including LIDAR data, a \$9 million dollar program creating a wealth of public useful data. He also cited the challenges of acquiring aerial imagery due to the seasonal conditions (leaf-on/leaf-off) and the one-time grants rather than sustainable funding that have made the program work thus far.

He further cited the need for working toward a standardized hydrographic data layer as at present the data is created, maintained and used by number of agencies interests. He indicated he will return to the Policy Board with updates on these development and potentially be seeking letters of support for advancing them further.

Board Member Texer indicated that when the time comes for support from the Policy Board, if we are between meeting cycles, some sort of email contact to solicit letters of support would be useful.

5e) Road Centerline Initiatives Updates

Maas provided a brief update on the need for and progress of the Statewide Centerline Initiative and Metro Regional Centerline Collaborative and the sunseting of the NCompass contract in January of 2016. The Statewide effort has been centered around the needs of MnDOT for federal reporting and the eventual support of a linear reference system, while the metro effort has focused on meeting the specifically documented needs of the metro partners for routing, geocoding and emergency response.

Councilman Elkins stressed the need for the road data systems to conform to the State Aid data as it is linked to the funding to local jurisdictions. Dan Ross and Ramsey County GIS Manager Matt Koukol, both former employees of MnDOT, concurred that is an essential need that will take some effort as the State Aid practices are firmly in place to meet their specific needs.

Maas summarized the update with a chart showing the status of the state project, the metro project and the timeline for phasing out the NCompass contract in 2016. These materials are available in the presentation slides appending to the end of these minutes.

5f) Address Point Data Progress

Mark Kotz, Chair of the MetroGIS Addressing Work Group provided an update on the development of the standardized address point dataset in the Metro region. He provided a brief refresher on what address points are and why they are a needed core geospatial data layer for many business purposes such as emergency response, unit tracking, mailing and delivery and change notification streamlining. He reiterated the MetroGIS vision of having a point for every official address arising from the authoritative source (addressing authority) that are updated frequently, maintained in a standardized format and freely available to the public.

Kotz indicated that currently Dakota and Carver Counties have deployed the MetroGIS Addressing Tool (version 2.0) and have their points available via DataFinder. Three other counties, Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey are actively testing the tool and that Scott and Washington Counties are considering the tool at present.

A new version of the tool (version 3.0) is in development and is anticipated to be available in January 2015, improvements to the tool include functionality for address change reporting, proposed address reports, calculation of a hypothetical address and improvements to the user interface. Version 3.0, like the previous versions will be freely available to any government in

Minnesota and he cited that interest across the state is increasing in deploying this tool for creation of address point data.

Councilman Elkins asked how this tool and the resulting data synced up with the U.S. Postal Services mailing data and data standard. Kotz replied that the official address point represents the 'situs' address, which is technically not the same as the postal delivery address, however there is the potential to carry both addresses in the MetroGIS tool and standard; both addresses can exist in the same database. His presentation is appending to the end of the minutes.

5g) Stormsewer Dataset Initiative

Geoff Maas provided an overview of the past and current effort toward a project focused on a metro-wide stormsewer network dataset. He indicated the multi-faceted nature of this issue as there are many local, regional, state and federal legal and technical interests in the issue. He cited examples of groundwater recharge, aging infrastructure, management of intense storm events, water consumptions and changing regulations as compelling points for working to standardize the data so agencies and interests can work together effectively. Maas cited recent work in documenting the business cases and needs of self-identifying agencies and listed a number of other interests he would be interviewing in coming weeks and months to document their need. His presentation is appending to the end of the minutes.

5h) MetroGIS Awards in 2014

Geoff Maas listed the three awards received by the MetroGIS Community in 2014. Commissioner Reinhardt was honored by the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium with the Lifetime Achievement Award, Coordinating Committee Member Hal Watson of the Department of Natural Resources was honored with the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium Polaris Award and the MetroGIS collaborative was honored by the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs and Bush Foundation with a State Government Innovation Award for its Free and Open Public Geospatial Data Initiative.

6) Open Forum/Other Business

No other topics were offered for discussion.

7) Next Meeting

The next in-person meeting of the Board will be on Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 7 pm;
The next quarterly update to the Board will occur on (or near) Thursday, January 22, 2015.

8) Adjournment

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 8:16 pm