



RAMSEY COUNTY GIS USER GROUP

An alliance of communities sharing Geographical Information Systems

Meeting Minutes
2:00 – 4:00 PM, April 1, 2010
Shoreview City Hall, 4600 Victoria St N

1. Introductions

Carrie Mack, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District
Mike Goodnature, Ramsey Conservation District
Mark Andrie, City of New Brighton
Jan Vanderwall, Roseville School District
Meagan Beekman, City of Arden Hills
Deb Jones, City of Falcon Heights
Ger Pha, City of Saint Paul
Heather Butkowski, City of Lauderdale
Dan Holzemer, City of White Bear Lake
Brian Corcoran, Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization
Curt Peterson, Ramsey County
Chad Bergo, City of Maplewood
Joel Koeppe, City of Roseville/City of North St Paul

The meeting was called to order by Carrie Mack, Chair of the User Group at 2:05 PM.

2. March 2010 minutes

Chad Bergo made a motion, Deb Jones seconded, to approve the March 2010 minutes as submitted.

3. Ramsey Conservation District 1991 Imagery Funding

Carrie Mack reintroduced the RCD funding request action item from the March meeting. Curt Peterson explained that after the \$6,000 from the User Group and the \$5,500 from Ramsey Conservation District, the remaining \$4,000 would come from \$800 contributions from 4 watershed districts and the Ramsey County Information Technology department. Curt described the previous group efforts to fund digitizing old aerial photography sets from the 1970s and 1980s.

Meagan Beekman inquired about the image quality of the 1991 photographs, since her organization had found the 1985 photos to be of only limited usefulness due to poor resolution. Curt detailed the technical specifications of the 1991 flight, which had better equipment and more overlap between images. The output of the proposed digitization would be sets of GeoTIFF and JPG2000 images.

Mike Goodnature asked about the difference between the set of photos and MnGEO's metro-wide 1991 imagery available on their WMS server. Curt replied that the spatial accuracy of the photos proposed to be digitized would be better, and would have about 1 foot pixel resolution, compared to the 1 meter resolution of the MnGEO imagery.

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Chad Bergo noted that the User Group's balance was in excess of \$120,000 and was capable of funding the request safely. He supported the funding, noting how it followed the precedent of previous User Group projects to make historical aerial imagery available.

Mike Goodnature asked if the images were black and white like the MnGEO imagery. Curt confirmed that the imagery is black and white.

Jan Vanderwall moved, Chad Bergo seconding, that the User Group authorize the expenditure of \$6,000 to contribute to the digitization of the Ramsey Conservation District 1991 aerial images.

Brian Corcoran asked what the turnaround time of the project would be. Curt explained the process of packaging up the negatives, shipping them to the vendor in Canada, and receiving them back on a hard drive. He estimated a completion of mid-August.

Dan Holzemer asked if member fees for User Group would go up as a result of this expense. Chad replied that membership fees had remained static since 2003. The only thing that will alter fees will be the normal apportioning of fees according to population after final Census 2010 data is in, which could raise fees for some communities that have grown.

Deb Jones noted how the cost of the County's normal aerial imagery gathering and physical feature updates has gone down over time, leaving the User Group in a good position to be able to fund projects. She felt this project was in keeping with the mission of the User Group, and that Falcon Heights staff and residents use and enjoy the historical imagery already available quite a bit.

Curt Peterson said that the court system has already recognized these photos as primary evidence in successfully convicting violators of the state Wetland Conservation Act.

Chad Bergo asked for a breakdown of the total costs. Curt replied that the total cost was \$15,000 plus \$500 to cover the cost of shipping and an external hard drive for the vendor to load the digital images on. 50% of the total cost would be paid up front, 40% upon substantial completion, and the final 10% after the digital images have been reviewed and accepted.

Dan Holzemer asked Curt to briefly summarize what the User Group stood to gain from the project. Curt said the User Group would have full access to the digital images and be able to put them on the public online mapping application with the other historical images.

Meagan Beekman called the question. Members Koepp, Bergo, Beekman, Jones, Pha, Corcoran, Butkowski, Mack, Andrie, and Vanderwall voted to approve the motion. Dan Holzemer and Mike Goodnature abstained.

Carrie Mack asked about the details of the User Group acting as the fiscal agent for the project (paying the vendor and collecting funds from the other contributors). White Bear Lake, which handles all the User Group finances, will need the approved minutes of the meeting before they begin sending invoices.

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4. User Group Meetings and Voting Procedures

Carrie Mack introduced the topic by explaining some of the research into the User Group historical documents about the group by-laws and about doing votes by email.

Joel Koepp noted that he had not found any by-laws document in the Group's records, and consultation with previous officers indicated that while by-laws had been brought up as a discussion item, none were ever actually drafted. He shared the opinion from the City of Roseville attorney that voting by email is not a procedure that conforms to the state Open Meeting Law (Chapter 13 of state statutes). As a joint powers organization, the User Group is considered a public body that is spending public funds, so it must vote openly.

Jan Vanderwall asked if proxy voting would satisfy the Open Meeting Law requirement. Heather Butkowski said that she had read articles from the League of Minnesota Cities stating that only open voting at meetings satisfies the law.

Deb Jones recalled that at first email had been used as an informal means of gathering opinions on a topic that didn't require a vote, and that over time it had unintentionally started being used for votes when forming a quorum became uncommon.

Joel Koepp asked if it would be helpful to member organizations who cannot regularly attend if there was a schedule of specific meetings during the year where voting would occur on items (for example, voting on next year's officers at the December meeting). Brian Corcoran said he thought that would be helpful for him. In cases where a vote is required that doesn't fall into a normal schedule, members thought if the email notification of the meeting included a note highlighting the vote, that would be sufficient.

Jan Vanderwall moved that the User Group establish December as the monthly meeting where the User Group would vote on officers, approve a budget, and vote on other routine business items per the Joint Powers Agreement.

Joel asked if nominations for officers needed to be voted on at a meeting prior to their election. Meagan and Heather responded that anyone can be put forward for nomination and voted on at the same meeting.

Mike Goodnature seconded Jan Vanderwall's motion. All members voted in favor, approving the motion.

Deb Jones, Meagan Beekman, and Joel Koepp discussed whether or not there was a need to draft a set of by-laws for the Group. There was agreement that the items spelled out in the JPAs were sufficient.

5. CivXplorer Update Demonstration and Discussion

Carrie Mack shared the contents of an email from Suzanne Fliege, formerly of Plansight, who designed the User Group's CivXplorer online mapping application. Suzanne has installed a version 5 of the interface for Goodhue County and the City of Red Wing. The proposed cost of the upgrade and installation was \$1,800.

Meagan Beekman asked about the possibility of having city zoning as an attribute on the parcel data. Arden Hills is very interested in having this functionality. Other members agreed it would be a valuable item,

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although the task of collecting the data would be tricky, and that some cities may not be able to supply it, so the data field would be blank for those areas.

Joel Koepp used the projector to demonstrate the new version of the application on the City of Red Wing's site. He opined that it was mostly a cosmetic update, with only a few new features, such as the ability to draw annotation on the map and have it appear on PDF exported maps. The different menus can now be expanded and collapsed on the lefthand side of the application. There is some modified symbology for roads and other features.

Members determined that there didn't appear to be enough enhancements to be worth spending the money for the upgrade.

6. Ramsey County Updates: Curt Peterson

Curt Peterson said that the County Parks and Recreation Department is hiring a software developer to build an ArcGIS Server application for their project to collect recreational facility data. Meanwhile they have an intern for the summer who will be helping with data collection.

The 2010 County map is done, and they've received the 10,000 copies that were printed. Curt thanked User Group members for their participation in suggesting additions and providing corrections to data. Jan Vanderwall asked if he could get leftover copies of the previous County map to use in the school district.

The final physical feature data from the 2009 aerial flight have been received from the vendor Kucera. Curt provided Roseville with a copy of the files on CD-ROM and they will be uploaded to the FTP site. Joel Koepp mentioned that Jolinda Stapleton had completed the usual monthly update of the County online mapping application the previous day.

Curt Peterson and Meagan Beekman discussed an unusual situation about an old plat in Arden Hills where the parcel lines were badly out of alignment compared to the aerial photography. This required some correction by the surveyors using monumentation in the field. Meagan also announced that Arden Hills had sent numerous street and address corrections to John Jacobson at County Records and Revenue in the process of doing their first city map update in almost 10 years.

7. Address Updates

Joel Koepp thanked all the User Group members who had sent back street name and address range corrections to Curt Peterson to forward on to the County E-911 staff. Any communities that received the spreadsheet should send their updates to Marsha Pacolt at Ramsey County (marsha.pacolt@co.ramsey.mn.us).

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8. Community Announcements

Curt Peterson notified the group that the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium Spring Workshops would be held on May 20. He mentioned that members could still go to the Consortium website to make suggestions for seminars at the event.

Jan Vanderwall said he had received an email from Will Craig at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs that an article Jan wrote years ago about using the County online mapping application in a school setting had been referred to by Representative Betty McCollum in a hearing in Washington, DC recently.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 PM.

Minutes submitted by Joel Koepp, Secretary

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