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**April 8 RCC Dakota Co. Cities & Communities Cluster Commissioner Panel Notes and Next Steps**

Dear Friends a quick reminder to[Please RSVP](https://secure.everyaction.com/GdHmiGAeQ0SRk39tWpxnKg2) to join us tomorrow night Wed May 12 @ 7pm [**on zoom**](https://zoom.us/j/5156358735?pwd=K1FMVGdjVHJvVlc5UHhDSHpWNnhjUT09)for our

**Conversation to brainstorm Next Steps** to grow **City-County Collaboration in Dakota County** tomorrow

**Wednesday May 12 7p.m. to 8:30p.m.** [**on zoom**](https://zoom.us/j/5156358735?pwd=K1FMVGdjVHJvVlc5UHhDSHpWNnhjUT09)

* **Introductions and City Updates**
* **Small Group Conversations** to brainstorm ways we can support collaborative city-county next steps based on the exciting initiatives we heard from County Commissioners during our April 8 Dakota Co. Commissioners Panel related to **energy & buildings, equity, green jobs, transportation, land conservation, local food, water and zero waste.**
* **Large Group Conversation** – to share from the small groups and plan next steps

Visit our Dakota County Cities & Communities page <http://rccmn.co/dakota-communities/> for our

[Notes and next steps from **April 8**](http://rccmn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/April-8-NotesNextSteps-Dakota-Co-Commissioner-Panel.docx) **Dakota County Board of Commissioners Panel Discussion**

THANKS so much! Sean

Sean Gosiewski, Program Director, 612 250-0389 sean@rccmn.co

Resilient Cities & Communities [www.rccmn.co/dakota-communities/](http://www.rccmn.co/dakota-communities/)

**Notes and Next StepsDakota County Board of Commissioners Panel**

with Commissioners **Laurie Halverson** (District 3) **Joe Atkins** (District 4) **Mary Hamann-Roland** (District 7)

on [2021 Board Priorities](https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/Analysis/StrategicPlan/Pages/board-priorities.aspx), and [topics of concern](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QOAbd3PWPGFjI-kW3Ce5r9llLVdtf3eo/view?usp=sharing).

**Thursday, April 8, 2021, 7 PM to 8:30 PM**

**Dakota County Commissioners Panel Discussion, Equity and Climate Actions**

Convened by Vicky O’Day, Resilient Cities and Communities, <http://rccmn.co>, April 8, 2021

Meeting notes of the first 45 minutes by Michael Orange, [orange\_michael@msn.com](mailto:orange_michael@msn.com)

**Introduction:** Ms. Vicky O’Day opened the meeting at 7 pm via Zoom. Most of her remarks can be found in the [April 8 power point presentation](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1m49c6Ofw1w9CJrbIuCV0SmZemd-G7Ldu4D1b1k2k224/present?ueb=true&slide=id.g81629af96b_0_823) : “Land Coexistence Statement” from the Native Peoples Caucus of the Minnesota DFL, purpose of the Resilient Cities and Communities Introduced the three attending Dakota County Commissioners

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**Mary Hamann-Roland (she/her)** **Commissioner – District 7**

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| **Commissioner**  **Mary Hamann-Roland**,  District 7 | District 7 Communities:  Cities of Rosemount Precincts 3 and 5, Apple Valley.  Committee Appointments:   * Dakota County Community Development Agency Board * Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority – Vice-Chair * Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board * Metropolitan Emergency Services Board * Metropolitan Mosquito Control District Commission * Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board |

**The Commissioner’s notes are attached at the end of these notes.**

Loves my community and working with the other two commissioners. We are making a big difference in the world.

* + Mayor of Apple Valley for 22 years.
  + Listen deeply to make decisions create strategies, healthy system. When we work together, we are stronger.
  + Goals and plans, how equitable? 2009 adopted CO reduction strategies and measures. 2009-15, tracked and have good data for plan in 2017. Invest where cost effective. Not a countywide Climate Action Plan, imbedded them into their plans. Solid waste, land conservation etc.
  + For example, 8A groundwater action connected to climate change. And water demand needs. Preserve storage and prevent flooding. And quantify change.
  + 2020-30, groundwater plan had equitability principles. Inclusive etc. Low income would have service. Private well getting drinking water tested. Education and convenient affordable services.
  + Bad wells, county a pioneering system for low income households.
  + Collaborate with St. Paul on PACE grants.
  + Byllesby dam, clean hydro to 2,00 homes. Doubling output and adding solar and community soar.
  + Goals:
    - Employee recycling 15-19%
    - 19% 45% fuel efficiency
    - Green purchasing policy
    - Education of waste reduction
    - 10%-16% bldg.. efficiency.
    - Hybrid electric, and compact heavy equipment.
    - Charging stations
    - Save 300,000 per year.
    - All bldgs. LED lighting.
    - Sustainable design for new/remodel over past 10 years. 15% reduced consumption.
    - Economics and work force:
  + Partners with Dakota County Technical College and Com. College. Michael Barent is on committee.
  + Not a focus on green jobs but focus on workshops for work readiness. Hiring youth for summer programs, Dakota County Library. Job fairs and student-led projects. Green industry preparation at last Teen Fair.
  + Introduce bison at Spring Lake Park.

**Questions and Answers**

**Renewable Energy Supply for Dakota County**

* Doug Shoemaker: Asked whether Great River Energy (GRE) is pulling back from shutting down its coal plant.
* Stacy Miller: She’s on the board of the Dakota Electric Cooperative. There is a possible sale of GRE’s Coke Creek Station in North Dakota. If sold, it won’t close. Briefed in coming weeks.

**Permitting Solar with residents in Home Owner Associations**

* Nancy simmet : Minnesota legislature is looking at a bill to allow homeowners ,regulated by HOA rules and regulations, to install solar panels on their homes. Are Commisioners putting in their input at a State level on this issue?
* Leslie Pilgrim : I second Nancy's question. I have a good friend in MH who would like to put solar on her roof, but her HOA won't let her for aesthetic reasons. Not possible to change her HOA's position but she is feeling it is her right. Solar was not "a thing" when she bought her unit.

**Transportation Question** Ken Paulman : MnDOT has announced a goal of reducing VMT by 20% by 2050 b/c the state can't hit climate targets with EVs alone. This is obviously a difficult challenge for a suburban/rural county, but is there any conversation going on about how to tackle this?

* Mary Hamann-Roland: Greening County fleet. Connect 200 miles of greenway.
* Joe Atkins: Mark Kresbac: Driving less and riding and walking more. Even before COVID. Build less roads/lanes and focus more on multimobile transportation.
* Laurie Halverson: Bubling up from grass roots how people want to use our roads. Worked on Complete Streets legislation. Voices make a difference. People want multi-mobile.
* Mary Hamann-Roland: Joyful. Pedestrian orientation via design-build to connect.
* Liz Niemioja: Zoom re. Equity. Safe routes to school. Zoom at all levels even when COVID over. Also ability to translate.

**Workforce** How are you working to create green jobs with the colleges in Dakota County? How is the County partnering with schools in workforce development?

**Responses to Questions for the Dakota County Commissioners Panel Discussion on Equity and Climate Actions**

April 8,2021

**Mary Hamann-Roland (she/her)**

**Commissioner – District 7**

**Climate & Energy**

*1. Is the County open to exploring climate goals? Is the County exploring a Climate Action Plan? How will it be an equitable plan?*

In some previous years, the county adopted specific goals for carbon reduction and adopted strategies and measures in 2009. When the County Board reviewed the results of the 2009-2015 plan in 2017, the Board adopted investing in reducing energy use wherever cost-effective.

There are no current plans to develop a Climate Action Plan. Still, some aspects of Climate Change have been incorporated into other Plans (All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, Land Conservation Plan, Solid Waste Management Plan, etc.)

Example: The Dakota County groundwater plan addresses climate change in Chapter 8, Section A. It addresses the relationship between climate change/weather variability in temperatures and rainfall, leading to droughts, floods, and other impacts in Dakota County related to water resources. The strategies within the Water Quantity Goal take into account the changing climate and water demand needs – such as preserving and protecting groundwater recharge areas (2B1), preserving or restoring wetlands (helps with water storage to prevent flooding) (2B2); and quantifying changes to groundwater levels and flow patterns in response to weather (2C). The 2020-2030 Dakota County Groundwater Plan includes a principle to "Ensure services and events are accessible, equitable, inclusive, convenient, and practical." This is addressed directly within the plan by identifying specific programs that will be targeted to address issues in low-income homes, such as the following:

"1A3: Assist private well owners in having their drinking water tested, understanding their results, and using appropriate water treatment since private well owners are responsible for protecting, maintaining, and testing their own wells after the well is constructed. While public water systems are required to meet MDH health standards, residents with contaminated private wells are usually responsible for their own water treatment. Assistance will include education, communication, convenient testing services, and equitable access to water treatment systems for those that need them."

And "1AC3: Facilitate the installation of appropriate, effective drinking water treatment systems for low-income households that use a private well and have contaminated groundwater."

*2. How is the County working to sequester carbon and reduce carbon emissions in energy supply, buildings, and transportation? (County Operations and Countywide)*

* The County collaborates with St Paul Port Authority to offer PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy Program) Loans. A total of 20 projects have been started, for a total of $6,655,459.
* Owns and operates the Byllesby Dam, generating enough clean hydroelectric power to power 2000 homes. Upgrading the turbines to double energy production
* Added 160KW of solar panels (2007-2017)
* Purchases power generated from solar through Solar Garden Agreements

*3. What are the County's clean energy goals and GHG reduction goals?*

* The County had a 2009 Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse GHG Emission Report, and an update was provided to the County Board in Jan 2017. Plan Goals had been:
  + Increase employee recycling by 15%: Result: 19%
  + Increase Annual Fuel Efficiency by 10% per vehicle: Result: 40.5% increased fuel efficiency
  + Promote Employee transit use: No action
  + Harvest 40 Acres of Biomass production for cellulosic biofuel: No action- determined not to be feasible
* Dakota County supports the purchase of sustainable products and services that reduce negative impacts on health and the environment (Policy 2740 Procurement) and is committed to implementing greener purchasing in county operations.
* County policy directs departments to seek out products made from recycled materials and can be recycled or composted.
* Countywide purchasing standards that support these efforts are:
  + Use recycled-content copy paper o 8.5-inch x 11-inch, 20# copy paper (white) must contain 100 percent recycled content
  + All other paper types must contain a minimum of 30 percent recycled content
  + Reduce waste at County-sponsored meetings and events o Use reusable, recyclable, and/or certified compostable items and tableware products (i.e., plates, cups, bowls, and service ware) instead of the use of disposables that go in the trash
* Improve total building energy efficiency by 10%: 16% increase in efficiency
* Build a 1-megawatt wind turbine: No action
* 30% increase in MPG from 2005 to date for fleet.
  + 2% of County sedans are hybrid electric.
  + 43% of Sheriff utility vehicles are hybrid electric.
  + 17% of SUVs are hybrid electric.
  + Pickups that were once all ¾ ton units are now 47% compact, 10% ½ ton and 40% ¾ ton.
  + Almost 50% of all chainsaws, trimmers, blowers, push mowers, and walk behind snowblowers are battery-powered units.
  + 7 all-electric off-road utility vehicles, chainsaws, snowblowers, lawnmowers
  + Installed Electric Vehicle charging stations in 3 regional and 1 County Park and at our main vehicle maintenance facility.
  + Fuel savings, reduce maintenance and repair costs, salt use reduction from telematics result in annual savings of over $300,000 per year.
* Almost all County buildings and parking lots have been converted to LED lighting.
* County has developed and been using sustainable building design standards to construct and remodel our facilities to reduce energy consumption for over 10 years, resulting in building energy cost per square foot that is 10 to 15% lower than comparable non-county buildings.
* Vehicles: 34.1% reduction
* Buildings: 7.3% reduction

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| **Commissioner Laurie Halverson,** District 3,  Commissioner Laurie Halverson. | District 3, Communities: Cities of Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Eagan Precincts 1-7 and 9-12  Committee Appointments:   * Association of Minnesota Counties Health and Human Services Policy Committee * Dakota County Community Development Agency Board * Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority – Secretary * Facility Operations Advisory Committee for Thompson Park Centers * Metro Alliance for Healthy Families Governing Board * Metropolitan Library Service Agency Board * Metropolitan Mosquito Control District Commission * Minnesota Inter-County Association Board |

**Commissioner Laurie Halverson,** District 3, Communities: Cities of Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Eagan Precincts 1-7 and 9-12 [laurie.halverson@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:laurie.halverson@co.dakota.mn.us)

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/Board/District3/Pages/default.aspx>

* Elected with Mary Hamann-Roland last Nov.
* State Legislator for 3 years
* Chair of Commerce Com. for Energy Policy and the Public Health Policy Com. and Clean Indoor Air Com.
* Policies at state level implemented by counties

**Dakota County and Equity:** How does Dakota County know who lives here? Immigrants, BIPOC, Vets, Disabled, etc? How is the County tracking diverse needs, health and climate/environmental impacts?

* + Include a value of equity in all departments and levels.
  + Muscle not exercised well yet but working on reducing systemic racism, unfair housing practices and racist covenants.
  + Have lots of data for the County:
    - Census: 23% people of color and growing. 10% foreign born. 6% under 65 and live with a disability. 15% aging.
    - Growing at a pace to overtake Ramsey County as 2nd largest county in state.
  + Interactions with public health changing. Health surveys. Visiting nursing program and pre-school screening for community health assessments.
  + MN Dept of Health partners.
  + Relationship building: schools, community systems e.g.
    - Refugee health program
    - Child and teen health checkups
    - Statewide Health Improvement (SHIP) program
    - Tracking of needs. Can do better.
  + Old approach: expect people to come to us. New approach: Making sure outreach efforts to assess needs. Show up in community, e.g. who are the caterers at local community centers. More than welcoming. Creating partnerships.

**How is the County balancing equality in the “culture” of our parks and addressing equity in our ordinances?**

* + Safety: Anti-Asian hate crimes. Global movement growing after George Floyd incident.
  + nancy simmet : Its happening in Dakota Cty…friend from Thailand was confronted in Lebanon Hills about her ethnicity…
  + commisioner Halverson… found the number//thanks nancy simmet : 1-833-454-0148

**Where are the known food deserts in Dakota County? What’s the plan?**

* + Four Food deserts in Dakota County – South St. Paul, Apple Valley
  + . Food insecurity. Suburban and rural poverty is growing. Take it out of the shadows.
  + Four identified food deserts in the County where low income households intersect where 1/3 people have no grocery store within 1 mile.
  + Goal: Meeting people where they are.
  + SHIP pilot project
* Local farmers delivering to a mobile home park in Apple valley
* Open door are bringing food into the trailer park
* Moving beyond food scarcity
* Open door food pantry, Theopendoorpantry.org
* Community gardens
* harvesting fruit trees, can register your trees for gleaning
* Looking at changing foraging rules in the parks
* From Leslie Pilgrim Please don't invite park foraging unless you introduce the concept of the "honorable harvest"

Vicki O Food Access, Food Systems:

* Headwaters food and farm bill <https://www.justfoodandwater.org/headwaters-bill>
* Sean G Amazing regenerative farming pilot projects in Dakota County HAFA farm and Project Main StreeT

**Dakota County will have new funds available from the American Rescue plan**

* They will be workshopping this to support dislocated workers and employment
* Advocating to maintain the increased child tax credits after the pandemic will help

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| **Commissioner Joe Atkins**, District 4  Commissioner Joe Atkins | District 4 – Communities Cities of Inver Grove Heights Precincts 2-7;  Eagan Precincts 8 and 13-17; Rosemount Precincts 1-2, 4, and 6-7  Committee Appointments   * + Association of Minnesota Counties District X   + Association of Minnesota Counties Public Safety Policy Committee   + Dakota Broadband Board (alternate)   + Dakota County Legislative Lead   + Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority   + Facility Operations Committee for Thompson Park Center   + Metropolitan Emergency Services Board Executive Committee   + National Association of Counties Telecommunications and Technology Committee   + State Community Health Services Advisory Committee   + Suburban County Work Group on Regional Issues |

**Commissioner Joe Atkins**, District 4 - Communities

Cities of Inver Grove Heights Precincts 2-7;

Eagan Precincts 8 and 13-17; Rosemount Precincts 1-2, 4, and 6-7

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<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/Board/District4/Pages/default.aspx>

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Commissioner **Joe Atkins** (District 4)

**Waste Management, Water & Land Stewardship**

**BISON Restoration project** <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/Resources>

* Started with an informal comment
* Restoring keystone species, chat on bison
* Bison and prairie, restoration
* Bison being introduced to Spring Lake Park, recentering who we are and who has been here and what it has meant to them, with the keystone, partnering with the Native Community on it

**National Public Health Week**

- Very good public health department

- 2019 the best Public Health Department in the nation

- Their commissioner Bonnie will be missed when she retires

**What are the goals and next steps of the Solid Waste Management and Master Recycling Composting program?**

* Very strong 75% recycling/ waste diversion goal
* 52 percent now and need to reduce more to reach 75%
* Colleges
* Multi family
* Business
* Organics drop off
* Land fills in dakota county do raise environmental legacy funds for county and city projects
* <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Environment/ReportsStudies/solid-waste-master-plan/Documents/SolidWasteMasterPlan.pdf>
* Waste Management

**What next steps do you see for implementing the Land Conservation Plan?** <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Environment/LandConservation>

**Land Conservation Plan** <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/CAC/Planning/PCMeetingMaterials/Land%20Conservation%20Plan.pdf>

* has excellent strategies for city county collaboration
* Wilderness in the city really helped to get the land conservation plan developed
* Had an extra tax back in 2002 that was well invested, after it expired the county kept making investments
* 2002 wide stretches of farmland have been put into land conservation
* Much farmland was preserved via agricultural easements
* Now we need to focus on saving woods, wetlands and streams near developed areas, Once they are gone, they are
* Woodlands, wetlands and natural areas, in the very populated areas
* New partnerships between county, cities and parks and recs, and city land conservation efforts
* Pockets in the each of the cities that need to be preserved

**Mary Haman Rolland** Greenways and pollinators

* A big priority on open space development
* Eagan had a developer that wanted to have a private park, but the city turned them down

**Commissioner Joe Atkins - Reauthorizing** the **property tax increase for land conservation**

* Recently tried to pass the through the board to ask voters if they want to support it failed 3 to 4 vote
* Likely can get approved to put on the ballot again in 2022
* Many more favorable factors now and great work being done.
* Wilderness in the city strongly supports putting the land conservation fund tax on the ballot to let the voters decide
* Holy Jenkens – make sure the state funds and The new county funds are not used for new unrelated purposes

**Land stewardship/Habitat Stewardship** – Leslie Pilgrim What has been conserved now needs to stewarded/managed. Key point Commissioner Atkins.

* Commissioner Atkins Leslie,thanks for your point about upkeep. These are primarily woodlands, wetlands and natural areas that have been permanently preserved. By their nature, many do not require maintenance. However, there are some areas for which Dakota County has received grants for restoration efforts and/or removal of invasive species like buckthorn. Landfills in Dakota County also contribute funding for these sorts of efforts. Thanks again for making this critical point.
* County owns a lot of Land , both Joe Atkins, Laurie Halverson
* Sean G sean@rccmn.co : Great example of conservation development in southern Dakota county near Northfield, 300 acre cluster development that preserved 100 acres of farm land for the demonstration farm with the Mainstreet project

**Please give us an update about the steps to prevent water export/ water train from the County.**

* Water exportation Threats. They are using the water for fracking in Colorado
* Preventing the water train to export half a billion gallons
* Will update the county ordinance to prevent new wells that would be for water export
* Many of the cities in Dakota county could have issues with their aquifers low in the near future
* Dakota County will update its ordinance soon to prevent new wells that would be for out of state export
* State legislative fix is needed, because dakota co aquifers can be drained from outside of the county
* HF1294 Rep Hanson

**SUCCESS! Dakota County passes stronger water regulations** after company sought to ship water via rail to Southwest U.S. [Pioneer Press Article Nick Ferraro April 22, 2021](-%09https:/www.twincities.com/2021/04/22/dakota-county-passes-stronger-water-regulations-after-company-sought-to-ship-water-via-rail-to-southwest-u-s/amp/?fbclid=IwAR1tvxzAF-8GIO7uYApmLzbwHybX2qDnjgBTNvX6nvD7-xFMsdyhWSYBGl4) Dakota County has passed stronger water regulations to prohibit bulk exportation of groundwater from the county. Ordinance amendments approved Tuesday by the county board of commissioners are a response to interest from a local company to export 500 million gallons of Dakota County groundwater annually and ship it to be sold in the Southwest United States, where water is scarcer.

**Wetland Health Evaluation volunteer opportunities.** [**Laurie.Halverson@CO.DAKOTA.MN.US**](mailto:Laurie.Halverson@CO.DAKOTA.MN.US) **:** <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Environment/EducationResources/Water>

**Joe Atkins Dakota Co Land conservation plan – protects water**

* Landfill operations, environmental legacy funds sharing with cities
* Can fund rain gardens, rain barrels etc.

**Questions and Answers**

**Emerald Ash Borer Response – question from Michael Orange**

* Coordinating on EAB for the county and city lands is important and along county right of ways
* Joe Atkins shared the link from the county web site on forestry and EAB response for each specific park <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/About/ResourcePlans/Documents/NaturalResourcesManagementReport.pdf#search=borer>
* Mary Haman Rollan asked Michael what the county should do
* Michael Orange Save the best trees and cut the rest, need an inventory its properties and along county right of ways
* Michael Orange helped write the Green Step Cities and MNSTAC model emerald ash borer action plan <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/media/471>

**Water quality Questions from Brad B, Water Steward Volunteer**

* Our lakes are impaired, citizen water stewards help home owners to install rain gardens
* Rain garden study Burnsville had a great study, cleaning up Keller and Crystal Lake with Burnsville and Curb Cuts
* Open Space – many cities have used up all up the space
* **Apple Valley Golfcourse redevelopment issue** Brad B - related to water quality some Apple Valley volunteers were asking the city to use some of the wetlands that had been dredged to create a golf course could be restored for flood storage with bigger rain events.
  + Mary Hamman Roland - up to the land owner to decide, she is in touch with Al Singer for options for the county to buy the land and preserve the open space and restore wetlands if the development project falls through

**Mendota Heights next steps –**

* + Leslie Pilgrim : I'd like to give a shout out to our city's public works director Ryan Ruzek for being a champion for our city's curb cut raingarden program. Glad to give anyone a tour of what our city has done in the past couple of years. A nice collaboration with the city of MH, MN water stewards and Master gardeners.
  + Leslie with Mendota Heights will be working on a natural resources conservation plan for their cityMH has a NR commission on its top priority goal for 2021. I think it will happen. I will get on the team that puts the bylaws together. Vanessa has ideas for that.