

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
BOARD OF MANAGERS**

October 20, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District was called to order by President Sherry White at 7:00 p.m. on October 20, 2022.

MANAGERS PRESENT

Sherry White, William Olson, Richard Miller, Arun Hejmadi, Eugene Maxwell and Stephen Sando.

MANAGERS ABSENT

Jessica Loftus.

DISTRICT STAFF AND CONSULTANTS PRESENT

Becky Christopher, Policy Planning Manager; Kayla Westerlund, Permitting Program Manager; Daniel Mock, Planner – Project Manager; Kailey Cermak, Hydrologist; Abigail Ernst, Permitting Technician; Chris Meehan, District Consulting Engineer; and Louis Smith, District Counsel.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Manager Miller, seconded by Manager Sando to approve the Agenda as distributed. Upon vote, the motion carried 6-0 (Manager Loftus absent).

MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Manager Hejmadi, seconded by Manager Maxwell, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda consisting of approval of the October 6, 2022, Board meeting minutes, approval of the General Check Register, including check numbers 42057 through 42086 in the amount of \$334,194.36, electronic funds withdrawals of \$39,950.08, Managers Per Diems and Reimbursements of \$2,730.00, employee reimbursements of \$1,791.09, payroll electronic funds withdrawals and disbursements of \$151,693.11 for a total of \$530,358.64; the Surety Check Register for check numbers 2174 through 2180 in the amount of \$50,927.00; and the Wire Check Register

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in the amount of \$52,461.58 to Bremer Bank for Office Building Refinance; and the following resolution:

Resolution 22-061: Appointment of Additional TAC Member for the Land & Water Partnership Initiative

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers appoints the following individuals to represent the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Land & Water Partnership Initiative:

- *Madeline Hudek, Data Insights Analyst – primary representative*
- *Adam Arvidson, Director of Strategic Planning - alternate*

Upon vote, the motion carried 6-0 (Manager Loftus absent).

BOARD, COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS

President's Report: President White noted the recent groundbreaking event for 325 Blake Road and praised the partnership and collaboration leading to this step.

Policy and Planning Committee: Manager Miller noted that the Committee met earlier in the evening and received a staff presentation on the Edina Local Water Management Plan. Some important concerns and long-term issues relating to climate impacts were identified for ongoing discussion with the City.

Metro MAWD: Managers Maxwell, Hejmadi and White attended the recent meeting of the Metro Chapter of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts. The meeting included presentations on septic programs, street sweeping, and funding opportunities concerning climate impacts and water management and nutrient reduction. President White noted that some leadership changes are coming in Metro MAWD. She also noted that the Metropolitan Council reported upcoming policy papers on subjects such as reuse and source protection, and that the Stormwater Research Council has openings on its citizen advisory committee.

Upcoming Meeting and Event Schedule: President White directed the managers to the meetings listed on the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARINGS & PRESENTATIONS

Public Hearing for the Lamplighter Pond Water Quality Project

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Ms. Kayla Westerlund appeared before the Board of Managers to present the background and feasibility study for the Project. She noted that District staff and the District Engineer reviewed the feasibility study with City of St. Louis Park staff, and collectively have recommended a manufactured treatment device be constructed at Northside Park, 2200 Louisiana Ave S in St Louis Park, in the eastern boulevard to Nevada Avenue adjacent to the Northside Park parking lot. The project consists of pumping water through a Contech StormFilter (CSF), from where it will drain via gravity downstream to Lamplighter Pond, ultimately making its way to Twin Lake.

President White invited comments from the public and there were none. Ms. Westerlund confirmed that no written comments on the project had been received by staff. President White thanked Ms. Westerlund and closed the public hearing.

ACTION ITEMS

Permit 22-106 Morningside Amendment Approval and Cooperative Agreement Update

Ms. Abigail Ernst appeared before the Board of Managers to review the request for board action. She explained that the City of Edina is seeking approval to amend the permit to reflect grading changes within Weber Pond. By operating Weber Pond at a slightly higher normal water level and by predictively pumping ~1 foot of volume prior to smaller (~1 inch or less events) rain events, the project can reduce TP and TSS at the point of discharge to Bde Maka Ska.

It was moved by Manager Miller, seconded by Manager Olson to approve the amendment of Permit 22-062, incorporating the revised Weber Pond grading plans. Upon vote, the motion carried 6-0.

Resolution 22-062: Authorization to Release Request for Proposals for East Auburn Wetlands Feasibility Study

Mr. Daniel Mock appeared before the Board of Managers to review the request for board action. He reviewed the setting within the Six Mile Creek – Halsted Bay Subwatershed, and the concerns about phosphorus loading. He explained that previous water quality sampling, hydrology, and vegetation analysis in the wetland system between Wassermann Lake and East Auburn Lake identified a relatively small portion of the wetland as the primary driver of phosphorus export. A wetland monitoring assessment was completed in late September 2022, and the key findings are: water quality sampling in the groundwater wells and stream samples indicated that median total phosphorus concentrations in groundwater were approximately 4.5-times higher than the median total phosphorus concentrations in the stream channel; solid-phase mobile phosphorus from soils is likely driving elevated groundwater concentrations; and phosphorus-rich

groundwater is then transported downstream, via Six Mile Creek, to East Auburn Lake. The next step in project development is to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for feasibility to identify opportunities to address phosphorus export from the wetland.

It was moved by Manager Olson, seconded by Manager Miller to adopt Resolution 22-063 as follows:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes staff to release a Request for Proposals for the East Auburn Wetlands feasibility study.

Upon vote, the motion carried 6-0.

Resolution 22-064: Authorization to Release RFP for Stormwater Infrastructure Data Standardization

Ms. Kailey Cermak appeared before the Board of Managers to review the request for board action. She noted the context of the MCWD climate action framework, and the status of the 2D modeling pilot project. She explained how the proposed work of the stormwater infrastructure data standardization fits with the 2D model build.

It was moved by Manager Maxwell, seconded by Manager Olson to adopt Resolution 22-064 as follows:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the release of the request for proposals for stormwater infrastructure data standardization, and allows for the administrator to make non-substantive edits to the document and schedule based on advice of MCWD legal counsel.

Upon vote, the motion carried, 6-0.

Resolution 22-065: Authorization to Contract for Stream Channel LiDAR Collection

Ms. Cermak reviewed the request for board action, explaining that the current severe drought conditions created the opportunity to capture high-resolution creek morphology data using LiDAR, as the creek bed is fully dry in most locations. This approach would also be a significant cost savings compared to manual data collection.

It was moved by Manager Hejmadi, seconded by Manager Miller to adopt Resolution 22-065 as follows:

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator to contract, on advice of MCWD legal counsel, for a not to exceed amount of \$32,800 with MnDOT for stream channel LiDAR collection in accordance with the proposed vendor/MnDOT scope.

Upon questions from Managers Sando, Olson and Miller, Ms. Cermak explained the LiDAR data collection in further detail and its potential applications beyond the 2D model work. *Upon vote, the motion carried, 6-0.*

BOARD INQUIRIES, ISSUES, AND IDEAS

Manager Sando noted the opportunity to explore creek restoration work given the drought conditions and dry creek bed.

STAFF UPDATES

Administrator's Report

Ms Christopher reported on the following items:

1. Harrison's Bay: the Harrison's Bay Association formed non-profit status within the last year, and through their process of formation, Harrison's Bay leadership has had repeated points of engagement with MCWD, on topics including understanding the water quality profile and sources of nutrient loading to Harrison's Bay; seeking guidance on potentially evaluating and managing carp populations; and investigation of County Road 110 as a potential source of sediment to the west end of the bay, where, in part due to drought, residents are exploring dredging to maintain navigable access to the lake. Communication with the Association has been coordinated with the Mound City Manager, and most recently, Harrison's Bay Association appeared before the Mound City Council during the MS4 public hearing, and raised concerns over stormwater runoff. The City Council appointed a liaison councilmember, Paula Larson, to meet with MCWD and Hennepin County, to investigate the source of silt into the bay. Staff will keep the Board informed about these developments.
2. CAC Diagnostic: At this point, managers should have received an invitation to the CAC diagnostic survey from Samantha Maul. This survey is the first step in the CAC diagnostic which aims to check in about operational changes implemented with the 2021 CAC Alignment Report. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the results of this diagnostic will be used to produce any new operational recommendations for the CAC.
3. CAC Appointments: Through the ongoing recruitment and reappointment process for the CAC, John Salditt and Peter Rechelbacher have both communicated that they will be

stepping down from the CAC this cycle. Both expressed a deep appreciation for MCWD's work. Mr. Salditt noted, in part that with the new format and fewer meetings, he felt the opportunity for impact was more constrained than in the past. The Administrator has reached out to both members, and will be making a connection and debriefing with both when he returns.

4. Permitting New Hire: Maria Friedges will be joining the permitting team on October 25th in the permitting technician role. Maria studied Environmental Science at the College of Saint Benedict. She started at the City of Shoreview as an intern in 2019, and since 2020 has continued her work at the City as a Natural Resources Specialist where she coordinates the NPDES erosion control program. Maria also has experience with the MS4 permit, coordinating stakeholders, and various conservation programs. She will make a great addition to the permitting team.
5. Water Level Update:
 - a. The Twin Cities has received 18.67 inches of precipitation this year, which is 9.38 inches below normal; AND ~ 3 inches less than we had received by this time last year (10/20/21).
 - i. Currently 2022 ranks as the 20th driest year to date on record.
 - b. Today, the U.S. Drought Monitor update identified that MCWD remains in Extreme Drought. This is the first time MCWD has been classified with Extreme Drought since the U.S. Drought Monitor was created 22 years ago.
 - i. Currently 4.2% of the state is experiencing Extreme Drought.
 - c. The current level for lake Minnetonka is 927.50 feet, which is 22.8 inches below the OHW of 929.40; and 13.2 inches below the runout elevation of 928.60 feet.
 - i. This is the lowest the lake has been in 10 years
 - ii. Last year on this date, Lake Minnetonka was at 928.07 feet, which is 6.1 inches higher than it is today.
 - d. The dam has remained closed since July 21, as is required by the operating plan when Lake Minnetonka falls below its runout elevation of 928.60 feet.
 - i. Since the dam's closure on July 21, the lake's level has fallen 13 inches due to evaporation.
 - e. Minnehaha Creek is no longer flowing in most areas.
 - f. There is approximately 0.5 inches of rain predicted Sunday night into Monday.
 - g. Over the past couple of weeks there have been a few media inquiries on the low water levels. Staff will package these media stories in an email and share with the Board.

Adjournment

There being no further business, President White declared the meeting of the Board of Managers adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Eugene J Maxwell
Eugene Maxwell, Secretary

