



Wednesday, November 9, 2022

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MCWD Office, Hybrid (Board Room/Zoom)**  
[www.minnehahacreek.org](http://www.minnehahacreek.org)

**Board of Managers:**

**Sherry White, President; William Olson, Vice President; Jessica Loftus, Treasurer;**  
**Eugene Maxwell, Secretary; Richard Miller, Manager; Arun Hejmadi, Manager; Steve Sando, Manager**

**Board Liaison: Manager Hejmadi**

**Citizens Advisory Committee Members in attendance:**

**Bill Bushnell, Dan Flo, Lisa Fowler, Laurie Goldsmith, John Iverson, Drew McGovern, Rich Nyquist,**  
**David Oltmans, Peter Rechelbacher, Marc Rosenberg, John Salditt**

**Citizens Advisory Committee Members absent:**

**Emily Balogh, Cassy Ordway**

**MCWD Staff:**

**Samantha Maul, Becky Christopher, Stacy Carlson**

6:31 pm

1. **Committee Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call**  
*Chair Salditt calls the meeting to order.*  
Introduction of Stacy Carlson, MCWD Communications Coordinator
2. **Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**  
*Bushnell, Nyquist–All approved*  
2.1 November 9, 2022, agenda
3. **Approval of Minutes (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**  
*Nyquist, Iverson – All approved*  
3.1 September 29, 2022, minutes
4. **Action Items**  
4.1 No action items

6:44 pm

5. **Discussion Items**  
5.1 CAC Diagnostic – **Maul**

Maul presented on the CAC diagnostic process, including the groundwork of continuous improvement, background on 2021 CAC realignment, and the objectives and early findings of the diagnostic. The diagnostic aims to check-in on changes implemented in June 2021 by involving all audiences (CAC, Board of Managers, and staff) and using several methods of data collection. The process was presented in July and refined through the fall of 2022. An online survey was released in October, coupled with voluntary interviews with staff and CAC

members. The November CAC meeting is an opportunity for further data gathering through discussion. A summary report will be drafted and shared with the Board of Managers.

Maul explained the aggregate results and early insights from the online survey for discussion. The diagnostic online survey yielded twenty-one responses from nine CAC members, four managers, and eight staff members. The online survey included Likert scale questions related to the respondent's level of agreement with the effectiveness of the current operating model and several open-ended questions. The survey focused on several categories of changes implemented with 2021 alignment: scope of work, meeting frequency, content planning, pre-meeting materials, executive team, information flow between the CAC and the Board of Managers, and membership and recruitment. The average response across all Likert scale questions was between neutral and agreement with the current operating model. Maul stepped through the responses from each category and then explained some of the responses from open-ended questions in the survey.

Maul concluded the presentation of the diagnostic by highlighting some key takeaways and early insights. The results demonstrate that the Board is comfortable with the current operating model, CAC members and staff have symmetrical survey responses that demonstrate similar concerns, and interviews conducted yielded consistent responses with the online survey. Based on the findings, staff noted two key areas of continued improvement: refining the internal meeting content planning process and working toward the goals of membership and recruitment. After the presentation, Maul opened the floor for discussion.

One CAC member began by expressing disappointment with the low participation on the survey, especially from the Board of Managers and CAC members, noting the disconnect between the responses from the CAC and staff, and the Board. The Board answered that the current operating model of membership and recruitment is adequate, while both staff and CAC respondents had much lower levels of agreement with questions in that category.

The discussion then migrated to the role and function of the CAC over time. One CAC member noted that in past years, there has been a larger emphasis on education and development of CAC members to enhance their value to MCWD. However, another participant noted that organizations change over time and that the underlying questions at play are: What value can the CAC provide to staff and the Board and what changes could or should be made to make better use of the CAC's value?

Maul prompted further discussion on in-meeting engagement. A CAC member recognized that it is hard to get up to speed in a two-year term, which demonstrates how we should continue to emphasize education in our on-boarding and pre-meeting preparation and recognize the value of continuity and the perspectives of experienced CAC members. Several CAC members noted that they had expected meetings to focus on more practical issues like drought conditions or the public-facing elements of capital projects. CAC members emphasized that clear expectations for meeting inputs and outputs are essential to creating meaningful engagement opportunities.

Christopher chimed in to note that staff are still dialing in on the right depth of education and engagement to create value from CAC meetings, since the shift in

2021. The idea behind the changes were to use CAC members for their fresh perspectives and vet communications pieces, workshop plans, and stress test initiatives. Staff remain curious as to how that is playing out from the CAC perspective.

CAC members shared that the Lake Nokomis Town Hall presentation session was a good example of the effectiveness of the new operating model. Members were able to act as a sounding board and provide constructive feedback as a proxy for the true audience. CAC members suggested that both the natural cycle of our projects and the global pandemic of COVID-19 have presented challenges for engaging the CAC constructively over the past year and a half.

Several CAC members noted that the statute's language indicates the need for CAC members to advise managers as directly as they do staff. CAC members would like clear expectations for how they can provide feedback to the Board of Managers and understand how that feedback is being leveraged for decision-making.

Maul directed the conversation to operations going forward. CAC members indicated that the District needs to recruit and appoint the right people, who can meaningfully contribute and bring fresh perspectives. They also noted that it is essential that CAC members are prepared with a clear understanding of what feedback staff or managers are looking for at each meeting as well as understand what input has been most useful, so the feedback loop is generative and two-directional.

The group indicated that content planning, recruitment of new members, and tighter engagement with the Board are opportunities for operational improvements and expressed interest in continued dialogue. Christopher noted that the direction that was set in alignment still seems to be a good fit, but that we're still learning how to do it effectively. Staff is experimenting with more frequent connections with Outreach to anticipate and proactively coordinate touchpoints with the CAC. Members shared that a good metric of CAC engagement is staff's attitudes toward presenting for the group and suggested that a tighter coupling between the stakeholder groups of staff, the Board, and CAC may help balance the challenging dynamics of meeting planning and engagement.

Maul thanked all members for taking part in the discussion and agreed to include the input received at the meeting in the report for the Board. Outreach staff welcome continued thoughts and feedback.

8:17pm

## 6. Informational Items + Updates

### 6.1 CAC Member Updates

Maul read and presented Resolutions of Recognition for Peter Rechelbacher and John Salditt. Maul also recognized Bill Bushnell for his many years of service and stated that a formal Resolution of Recognition is also in the works for Bushnell.

### 6.2 Board Liaison Updates

Manager Hejmadi shared that it has been some time since his last CAC meeting, and he is excited by the evolution and conversation presented. Hejmadi also thanked Rechelbacher, Salditt, and Bushnell for their long service to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

### 6.3 Staff Updates

Maul shared updates on a number of topics:

- Helen Schnoes, previously the Outreach Manager, has left MCWD for other opportunities. James is working closely with Outreach staff to ensure a smooth transition.
- Staff continues to make progress on the update of MCWD's website and will engage the CAC for Beta testing when the site is ready.
- Staff and the Board of Managers have conducted an initial review of applications to the 2023 CAC and are planning the appointment of four new members at the December 1, 2022, Board meeting.
- Groundbreaking for Building A of the 325 Blake Rd project began in October and MCWD celebrated with its partners at a ceremony hosted by the developer last month.
- Staff are planning for the second meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee that was formed to advise on the direction of the Land & Water Partnership Initiative. Shaped by the input of the CAC, this program continues to be refined ahead of implementation.
- The watershed remains in severe drought, the Gray's Bay Dam was recently winterized.

8:35 pm

7. **Adjournment**

*Nyquist, Rechelbacher – all approved.*

**Upcoming Meeting**

TBD - 2023 CAC schedule will be shared in December