



Thursday, September 29, 2022

## CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MCWD Office

[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 Sando*

### Citizens Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

Emily Balogh, Bill Bushnell, Dan Flo, Lisa Fowler, John Iverson, Drew McGovern, Rich Nyquist, David Oltmans,

### Citizens Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Cassy Ordway, Peter Rechelbacher, Marc Rosenberg, John Salditt, Laurie Goldsmith

### MCWD Staff:

Samantha Maul, Helen Schnoes, James Wisker

### Guest:

Louis Smith, District Counsel

- 6:30 pm
1. **Committee Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call 6:36pm**  
Executive Officer Nyquist calls meeting to order
  2. **Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**  
*Iverson, Balogh – All approved*  
2.1 September 29, 2022 agenda
  3. **Approval of Minutes (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**  
Nyquist suggested an edit to 3.1, Schnoes and Maul committed to the revision.  
*Bushnell, Fowler – All approved with revision*  
3.1 July 20, 2022 minutes
  4. **Action Items**  
4.1 No action items
- 6:45pm
5. **Discussion Items**  
5.1 MCWD Strategic Dialogs – Historic Analysis –Draft Principles – **Smith and Wisker**  
Wisker introduced Discussion Item 5.1 with a brief overview of the Historic Analysis – Draft Principles work and an explanation of the intended purpose of the principles. The final principles will serve as a guide to educate new generations of staff, CAC members, and Managers on the history of MCWD and the values that have shaped our success. The

principles were drafted at the request of the Board to reflect on our history as we look ahead and begin planning for the next Watershed Management Plan. Wisker posed several questions to prompt feedback from CAC members: What resonates from these draft principles? What principles or explanations make sense? Where do you have questions? What principles would you like to dig deeper into? What value do you see in the process of writing these principles for future generations? How can you see the District carrying this work forward? What processes can help us assimilate these principles into our everyday work? What processes can help us continually improve these principles?

A CAC member asked a clarifying question about whether the principles represented our current vision or provide support for a future vision. Wisker responded that these principles outline how we reached our vision of Balanced Urban Ecology and can now serve as rules to guide us as we look ahead and consider our vision for the future.

To prime CAC members before stepping through the Draft Principles, Louis Smith, MCWD's legal counsel, gave an overview of MCWD's history as recorded in White Papers presented to the Board of Managers over the past several months. Smith's overview included MCWD's genesis, times of conflict, and the experiences that led us to our Balanced Urban Ecology vision and partnership approach. Following Smith's historical overview, CAC members posed several clarifying questions regarding the timing of events, Gray's Bay Dam operation and development, and our transition to focusing on water quality as well as quantity. After addressing CAC members' questions, Wisker and Smith led the group through each of the Draft Principles.

Wisker and Smith introduced the first principle, which alludes to the necessity of considering the District's history. Flood mitigation was the catalyst of MCWD's genesis, and Gray's Bay Dam is the fulcrum of that focus. The dam continues to be a source of interest and conflict for communities upstream and downstream. The District's vision of Balanced Urban Ecology has led MCWD to focus on projects that create maximum benefits and shared value. Several CAC members noted that the first principle suggests that communication with stakeholders and the public has been a struggle throughout MCWD's history. Wisker agreed that communication has been a challenge, but that the District has focused its relationship-building efforts on stakeholders that have the potential to become partners, because that is how MCWD can make the most impact.

Smith introduced the following principle, which represents how MCWD applies science to deliver solutions to water resource issues. Partners have long turned to the District for its scientific resources. The impacts of climate change continue to highlight the value of sound science in our work. CAC members noted additions to the second principle, including that our data-driven culture is not limited to our organization, it is affirmed and validated through collaboration with other agencies and institutions, which helps establish the credibility of the District.

Wisker introduced the next principle, which considers the District's vision and focus. A clear vision energizes the organization and focuses daily work

with meaning and direction. A strong vision helps staff prioritize and make decisions for maximum impact. MCWD has narrowed its focus recently, which has produced clear results, such as delisting lakes from the MPCA's impaired waters list. Although the District values bold thinking, we can use our vision to filter ideas and evaluate the risks and impact of our work. One CAC member pointed out that the District's achievement of delisting water bodies highlights a need to celebrate our wins, both at the staff level and through communication with the public, which could be considered an addition to the principle.

Smith introduced the next principle, regarding partnership. What happens on the landscape affects our natural resources, which means MCWD must partner with the land use community to make an impact. Partnership takes trust and patience but can deliver high reward, especially when integrated at every level of the organization. Opportunities for engagement and partnership can be valuable, no matter where they come from. CAC members suggested that collaboration might be a better way to frame partnership, because it emphasizes that the MCWD's partnerships are often more than two-way and involve engagement with many agencies. Collaboration often includes coalition-building and validation.

In setting up the next principle, Smith shared that throughout MCWD's history, we learned that when we stand on our rules and values, we can weather times of conflict. Tools like imminent domain can be useful, but they can present conflicts that are easier to navigate with friends and partners. When the District is thought of as a partner, and not just a regulator, we are in a better position to make an impact. It was noted by CAC members that partnerships can soften regulation, and although we have regulatory authority, this authority is paired with a responsibility to the District's stakeholders.

Smith prompted discussion of the next principle, regarding the Board of Managers. An organization's culture is essential to its effectiveness; idea meritocracy and the balance of perspectives create a culture of trust. All attendees agreed that although the District's Board of Managers can manage MCWD's staff, the Board facilitates great work when it governs them.

Wisker introduced the final principle, about the District's staff. The success of the organization is decided by its people. As an organization, MCWD can maximize the talent and potential of each staff member with evaluation and accountability. Idea meritocracy recognizes that good ideas can come from every level of the organization, which necessitates trust and clarity around decision-making. CAC members applauded the focus on culture and staff, noting that culture trumps strategy, and therefore it is vital to create a culture of kindness and honesty.

Wisker opened the floor to final feedback on how to carry the Draft Principles forward. CAC members suggested using the principles to create job descriptions and guide hiring evaluations. Wisker thanked the CAC for their insight and shared that they would be using their suggestions to refine the final principles before they are presented to the Board of Managers.

8:10pm

**6. Informational Items + Updates**

**6.1 CAC Member Updates**

McGovern shared an update:

- CAC meetings for the Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan wrapped up at the end of August. The plan has a big focus on water quality and builds off the work of the Clean Water Partnership.

Oltmans shared an update:

- The mound of substrate at the 325 Blake Road site has been the subject of public art.

**6.2 Board Liaison Updates**

Manager Sando shared an update on Arden Park in Edina. Arden Park recently received the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of MN Grand Award, and a separate national award of excellence.

**6.3 Staff Updates**

Schnoes provided updates:

- The website Beta launch timeline has been pushed back to November, with final launch one month later. It is likely that Beta site testing will be included on the November CAC meeting's agenda.
- Last week, the District hired its new Communications Coordinator, Stacy Carlson, who will be the final staff addition to our Outreach program.

Maul provided updates:

- The upcoming diagnostic check-in will consider operational changes introduced in the 2021 CAC Alignment Report. CAC members can expect to engage with an online survey in the next few weeks as well as a discussion at the November CAC meeting.
- 2023 CAC recruitment is underway. Individual instructions were sent to each member for confirming their interest in serving out a second year of their term or reapplying competitively. Applications are due by October 21, 2022.

Wisker provided updates:

- The 325 Blake Road project has reached a 90% design milestone. Part of the 17-acre site's development is ahead of schedule due to funding for affordable housing. A groundbreaking ceremony for Building A is scheduled on-site on Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm and will include entertainment and refreshments. Invitations will be sent shortly.
- The District is working with partners to revamp the Chain of Lakes partnership to integrate municipal master plans and identify shared priorities for future work.
- The watershed has received 18.5in of rain this year, making this the driest September ever recorded. Lake Minnetonka is 19.8in below ordinary high-water level and below runout elevation. MCWD is working to measure and predict rain fall and flow to better operate the dam and recently received LCCMR funding to support this work.

8:30pm

**7. Adjournment 8:46pm Oltmans, Bushnell—all approved.**

**Upcoming Meeting**

Wednesday, November 9, 2022 Citizen Advisory Committee (Manager Hejmadi, Board Liaison)