



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: James Wisker, Administrator
Date: June 25, 2018
Re: 2018 MCWD Citizen Advisory Committee Focus

Purpose:

This memorandum outlines a proposed area of focus for the 2018 – 2019 Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

Background:

In accordance with §103D.331, and Section 2 of the MCWD By-Laws, the CAC is organized exclusively to assist the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers on matters affecting the interests of the Watershed District.

The purpose of this [CAC] organization is to:

- Support the mission statement and goals of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District;
- Review and comment on reports, minutes, activities and projects of the Watershed District as necessary;
- Consider issues pertinent to the functions and purposes of the Watershed District;
- Advise and assist in decision-making;
- Raise issues of concern from the public;
- Report to the Board of Managers on the general content of CAC meetings and resulting recommendations.

Periodically, sometimes at the request of the CAC, the Board of Managers has revisited the role, structure and focus of the CAC. In October 2017, CAC members expressed a desire for more focused direction on how the CAC might best assist the MCWD moving into 2018 and beyond.

Historically, the CAC has been engaged in major policy initiatives like rule revisions and the development of the Watershed Management Plan, and in an auxiliary operational capacity reviewing grant applications with program staff.

However, with the conclusion of the Watershed Management Plan development process, and with the suspension of the MCWD's grant program, directional focus is needed to maximize the utility of the CAC.

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At the October 26, 2017 Meeting, the MCWD Board of Managers discussed a framework for focusing the 2018-2019 CAC agenda in alignment with the District’s strategic priorities. The framework proposed to focus the CAC’s advisory role in the two strategic priority areas for the organization: (1) Policy; and (2) Projects, while providing structure for ongoing education and liaison opportunities for the group.

Area	Initiative
Policy	Land Use - Water Policy Initiative Grant Program Development Streamlining Regulations Budget
Projects	Regional Planning Initiatives Responsive Planning Initiatives Capital Project Development Annual CIP
Ongoing Education	Annual Kickoff Training Strategic Action Plan Reporting Technical Training
Liaison	Environmental Scan Reporting Ambassador Opportunities Board & PPC

Current Status:

At the June 13, 2018 CAC Meeting, members expressed concern with the ongoing lack of alignment and integration of the CAC’s role with the District’s strategic priorities. These concerns were relayed to the Board of Managers on June 14, 2018.

Subsequently, the District Administrator and staff liaison to the CAC (Darren Lochner) met on June 20, 2018 with members of the CAC Executive Team (Bill Bushnell, Peter Rechelbacher, Liz Crow) to debrief and discuss immediate steps to implement the framework outlined above.

The Executive Team supported the next steps as outline below.

Next Steps:

Beginning in August 2018, the CAC will focus its advisory role on the following parts (at a minimum) of the District’s strategic plan:

- Responsive Model
 - To complement the focal geography approach, the District will develop a model for scanning for opportunities, prioritizing opportunities and requests for partnership, and responding with projects and programming. This work may include developing a project priority list and responsive capital improvement program.

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- Streamlined Regulations
 - District regulations will be optimized for natural resource protection, simplicity and efficient administration, while developing clear pathways for partnership for applicants.

- Balanced Urban Ecology Policy Program
 - The District will identify local, regional and state changes in policy that create positive feedback loops for prong one of MCWD's strategy – high impact balanced urban ecology projects. Strategic communications plans will then be developed to cultivate support and influence policy change.

The CAC staff liaison (Darren Lochner) will work with key staff and the Board to design and implement a process of scoping these topics, facilitating brainstorming discussions, and synthesizing findings and recommendations from the CAC.

These deliverables will be used to inform discussions by the Planning and Policy Committee, and to refine the process for externally engaging MCWD public and private partners in these policy development areas.

June 28, Planning and Policy Committee:

At the June 28, 2018 Planning and Policy Committee, staff will provide an overview of this memo and facilitate discussion and questions.

If you have questions in advance of the meeting, please feel free to contact me at Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org or 952-641-4524.

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