

1 **DRAFT**

2 **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

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5 **February 19, 2015 2015**

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7 **CALL TO ORDER**

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9 The Planning and Policy Committee was called to order by Committee Chair Calkins at 6:45
10 p.m. at the District offices, 15320 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, Minnesota 55345.

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12 **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

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14 James Calkins, Richard Miller, and Brian Shekleton.

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16 **NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

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18 Sherry Davis White,

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20 **OTHERS PRESENT**

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22 Lars Erdahl, District Administrator; Brett Eidem, Cost-Share Specialist; Becky Christopher,
23 Senior Planner-Project Manager; James Wisker, Director of Planning and Projects; and Chris
24 Meehan, District Consulting Engineer.

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27 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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29 Manager Miller offered an addition to the agenda to revisit wetland restoration policy as it
30 related to the Comprehensive Plan update. Chair Calkins added a discussion of upcoming
31 Committee agenda topics. The agenda was approved as amended.

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33 **COMMITTEE MEETING**

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35 **Cost Share Criteria:**

36 The February 19, 2015 Planning and Policy Committee reviewed proposed cost-share criteria
37 and how the cost-share program fit within the two-track approach for the Comprehensive Plan
38 update, with cost-share as a policy tool to remain responsive to implementation opportunities.

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40 Brett Eidem introduced the criteria seeking the Committee's recommendation to the Board for
41 approval at the February 26, 2015 Board Meeting. He reviewed the chronology of discussions
42 beginning with the program audit in July 2014, the draft workplan review in August 2014,
43 acceptance of the final workplan in December 2014, and the February 2015 Citizens Advisory
44 Committee review.

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48 Mr. Eidem reviewed the need to differentiate cost-share program categories and refine criteria
49 based on program evolution since 2011 which contained no specific scoring of weighting. He
50 outlined three basic categories: Single Family, Community Engagement and Green
51 Infrastructure.

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53 Mr. Eidem summarized that these categories funded projects across a spectrum of capital
54 improvement projects for physical improvements in the watershed to projects oriented around
55 subwatershed education, awareness and behavior change.

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57 He noted that emphasis within the single family home category would be placed on completed
58 and robust designs to reduce administration costs while increasing homeowner subwatershed
59 awareness and need for the project. The community engagement category, he summarized,
60 would focus on the quality of education and outreach programming with a strong emphasis on
61 reporting how broad of a network was reached, how and what further behaviors or actions were
62 catalyzed as a result of MCWD investment. Mr. Eidem concluded with an overview of the green
63 infrastructure category which would be available to fund projects on a priority basis across the
64 District that made substantial physical improvements to watershed health.

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66 Following review of the proposed criteria Becky Christopher summarized the value of the
67 proposed structure in relation to the District's two-track Comprehensive Plan framework. She
68 noted that the proposed structure would complement MCWD priorities moving forward while
69 providing the ability to remain responsive to project opportunities presented by public and
70 private partners.

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72 The Committee discussed the policy implications of maintaining a single family home category
73 of the cost-share program. It was noted that the incentive program resulted in projects scattered
74 across the District's geography with little profile and a nominal aggregation of water quality or
75 water quantity benefits. The Committee discussed that while the goal of the program was to
76 establish a norm for the integration of stormwater management into the residential landscape,
77 this may be best achieved through other policy approaches such as uniform municipal standards
78 for tear-down-rebuilds. It was noted that this was a general topic area for discussion within the
79 Comprehensive Plan update.

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81 The Committee also discussed the need for green infrastructure projects to exceed regulatory
82 requirements, and questioned how planned unit developments (PUDs) would be approached in
83 the future. Staff highlighted that PUDs represent an opportunity and need for the District,
84 developer and city to be engaged in collaboration early in the process. While revisions to the
85 proposed criteria were not deemed necessary, the Committee asked staff to examine PUD
86 processes with municipal partners and to report back on what procedural requirements the
87 District would employ to minimize expenditures while maximizing water resource benefit in
88 future projects.

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Following discussion Manager Miller moved, seconded by Manager Shekleton to recommend adoption of the proposed cost-share criteria to the full Board at the February 26, 2015 Meeting. Manager Calkins proposed a friendly amendment, which was accepted, to require an annual review of the program’s effectiveness and a reexamination of the policy framework for the cost-share program.

Large-Scale Wetland Restoration:

Manager Miller identified his desire to see large-scale visible wetland restorations adequately integrated into the implementation framework of the Comprehensive Plan update. He referenced the adopted resolution 14-026 and requested that staff consider the Board’s resolution while examining implementation opportunities across the District.

Future Planning & Policy Committee Agenda Topics:

Committee Chair Calkins asked for a discussion of upcoming agenda topics proposed for consideration by the Planning and Policy Committee. Becky Christopher summarized the next several months topics related to the Comprehensive Plan update. She noted that the intent was to work from broad-global policy topics to more narrow topics later in the planning process. For example, she noted the need to discuss policies associated with the proposed two-track framework of focal geographies complemented by a programmatic responsive model. She identified in particular the need to discuss and formulate criteria and processes for establishing future focal geographies versus which subwatersheds would be better served with a responsive mode of capital implementation and programming. The Committee generally agreed this was a sensible approach and requested a refined agenda list and schedule for the next Committee meeting.

James Wisker identified several additional topics suited to review by the Planning and Policy Committee. He noted that Laura Domyancich was working under the approved Memorandum of Understanding with Stonegate Farm to assess the potential for the District to accept the stewardship of approximately 90 acres of conservation easement within the proposed 171 acre development in the City of Medina. He estimated this would be ready for Committee discussion in March.

He also identified that staff had been in contact with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to investigate opportunities to reexamine the potential for partnership within the Painter Creek subwatershed. Mr. Wisker noted that within the proposed context of the Comprehensive Plan’s focal geography approach, Painter Creek was a logical companion to Six Mile Creek and Minnehaha Creek based on its scale, the opportunity for large-scale landscape improvements draining to an impaired bay of Lake Minnetonka (Jennings) and existing MCWD land holdings. He identified that staff was working at both a technical and legal level to evaluate, with the USACE, opportunities to deviate from the proposed implementation study and the agreement structure.

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The Committee asked what had changed since previous Board resolution to terminate partnership with the USACE. Mr. Wisker identified that the USACE no longer required fee title for the local cost-share match, and now allowed easements. The Committee acknowledged this was significant given the inability to acquire all lands needed through fee title given the restrictions associated with local planning and zoning ordinances. Mr. Wisker also outlined the USACE's willingness to phase implementation, rather than only initiating implementation once all necessary easements were acquired. He noted that given the District's current land holdings, at least two capital projects may be eligible for initiating construction.

Mr. Wisker introduced staff's intent to develop a risk management framework, for Planning and Policy Committee review, in coordination with the USACE, technical consultants, legal counsel and the District Administrator. The Committee discussed the relationship between large-scale implementation within focal geographies, the previously identified need for policy discussion of non-ad-valorem financing, and the possibility of cultivating USACE Section 206 federal funding pipelines for Painter Creek and Six Mile Creek. Mr. Wisker estimated this discussion may be ready for Committee discussion in April or May of 2015.

As a corollary to planned future discussions of Painter Creek, Mr. Wisker recalled previous Committee desire to revisit the Land Conservation Program; how it operates District wide versus in focal geographies; emerging models to increase easements over fee title (Mader, Stonegate, etc); and program financing.

The Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

James Wisker
Director of Planning and Projects