

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT  
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
March 9, 2016**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Citizens Advisory Committee was called to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Community Room at the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District offices.

**2. CAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Peter Rechelbacher, Dave Oltmans, Sliv Carlson, Bill Bushnell, Colin Cox, Brian Girard, Jerry Ciardelli, Val McGruder, Richard Nyquist, Marc Rosenberg, Jacqueline di Giacomo

**MANAGERS PRESENT**

Dick Miller

**OTHERS PRESENT**

MCWD staff - Darren Lochner, Brett Eidem, Anna Brown, Matt Cook, Becky Christopher, Kelly Dooley, Roma Rowland

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*The agenda was approved.*

**4. APPROVAL OF February 10<sup>th</sup> MINUTES**

**4.1 February 10, 2016 minutes**

Girard moved to approve minutes of the meeting, seconded by Rechelbacher. Motion carried, none opposed.

**5. REPORT FROM STAFF**

The MCWD 2015 Annual Report was completed in the last couple weeks and is available as a hardcopy or online here:

[http://minnehahacreek.org/sites/minnehahacreek.org/files/attachments/MCWD%202015%20Year%20in%20Review\\_web.pdf](http://minnehahacreek.org/sites/minnehahacreek.org/files/attachments/MCWD%202015%20Year%20in%20Review_web.pdf) (2015 Year in Review). Staff also distributed fact sheets on the Six-Mile Creek focal geography.

The District was also highlighted in "Business and Nature do mix" article in the Minnesota Business Journal for its work in the Minnehaha Creek Greenway. <http://www.minnesotabusiness.com/business-and-nature-do-mix>

**Upcoming events:**

Saturday April 23, 8:00am-Noon, **Urban Waters Forum** at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum [www.arboretum.umn.edu/2016UrbanWaters.aspx](http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/2016UrbanWaters.aspx)

**Raingarden Workshops:**

Wednesday, April 6, 6:00pm-9:00pm, Victoria City Hall

Wednesday, April 13, 6:00pm-9:00pm, City of Edina Public Works Building

Wednesday, May 25, 6:00pm-9:00pm, St. Louis Park Rec Center

Information on additional workshops – [www.metroblooms.org.workshops](http://www.metroblooms.org.workshops)

**Sunday, July 24, Minnehaha Creek Clean-Up.**

Locations include Lake Hiawatha (Headquarters), St. Louis Park and Minnetonka Freshwater Society, 2016 State of Water Conference, April 14-15 in Alexandria.

<http://freshwater.org/state-of-water-conference/>

## **6. REPORT FROM CAC MEMBERS**

Peter Rechelbacher and Roma Rowland reported on the Governor's Water Summit. Oil pipeline protestors interrupted Governor Dayton's introduction speech, however the general feeling of the Summit was respectful and a place where the Governor and State agencies were simply listening and recording what was said in each session. Nine sessions included: Investing in Clean Water; Ensure Minnesota is Resilient to Extreme Weather; Living Cover; Sustaining our water supplies; water and wastewater management; Water in the Urban and Built Environment; Aquatic invasive species; Water in the rural environment; and Challenges Facing Minnesota's Iconic Waters. Rechelbacher attended Living Cover and Ensuring Minnesota is Resilient to Extreme Weather. He also mentioned that MCWD Managers Shekleton, Blixt and White were also in attendance. There was also a panel discussion among water technology companies where they discussed innovative solutions to many of the issues affecting Minnesota's waters.

Brian Girard presented on John Oliver's program where he addressed "special districts" that spend a billion dollars that are unaccountable to constituents. The video can be found on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE> Girard commended the MCWD for its accountability and transparency in comparison. Girard also shared that technical how-to videos on rain barrel installation can be found on [www.house.com](http://www.house.com) and Home Depot even has kits for building rain barrels. He suggested that MCWD upload these videos or have links to these types of resources of best practices listed on the District website. Lochner suggested that this type of link could be on the "resources" website and could be shared via Facebook and Twitter.

David Oltmans wondered if there was a policy in place for dealing with media inquiries or presence at CAC meetings. Manager Miller mentioned that the Board meetings are taped and that all Board and Committee meetings are open to the public, which means they are also open to the possibility of media presence. Lochner said he will get some guidance from Telly Mamayek and bring it back to the CAC.

Colin Cox said MPR would present on water and invasive species on March 10<sup>th</sup> during their morning call in show: "MPR News with Kerri Miller and Tom Weber" with Dr. Deb Schwackhamer & Carl Ganter. <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/03/10/water-questions>

Marc Rosenberg shared the current state of affairs in Flint, MI. He noted that there was a chemical added to restrict the lead leaching into the water due to lead pipes, or copper pipes with lead solder. Minneapolis doesn't have this type of problem and is not as risk. Manager Miller also noted that the MPCA does require private homeowners to submit samples from their own wells as well. Rosenberg also brought up a Washington Post article mentioning that the Zika virus has been combatted by treating water with a larvaecide, however this also affects drinking water and could possibly be a culprit in the health crisis. Rosenberg wondered whether the MCWD has any mosquito involvement. Dooley responded that the MN Department of Agriculture monitors the pesticides used in Minnesota and Manager Miller responded that the Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission covers 9 counties in monitoring and treating mosquito issues. Lastly, Rosenberg reported that the city of Racine, WI has requested to draw water from the Great Lakes rather than use their water treatment facilities.

## **7. REPORT FROM BOARD OF MANAGERS LIAISON**

In response to hearing how the CAC wishes to be involved at future Board meetings, Manager Miller said it would be helpful to have the CAC represented at the Board meetings and looks forward to hearing how that works. He also reported that Governor Dayton's State of the State address that evening made mention of Long Lake's degradation.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Ecosystem Evaluation Program – Dooley**

Kelly Dooley, Water Quality Manager, presented on the Ecosystem Evaluation Program (E-grade).

What is an Ecosystem Function? It's what Nature provides to humans for free, such as clean water, recreation, fish, ground water, etc. The District currently only looks at clean water and surface water and is looking to look at water systems holistically by looking at habitat, biodiversity, nutrient cycling, flood control, recreation, groundwater supply and measuring these various functions within various landscapes. That way, for example, marshes and wetland water quality is not compared and graded by the same narrow criteria for deep lakes only as previously graded.

**E-grade Mission:** An integrated watershed ecosystem management evaluation tool to assess condition of the watershed, identify target areas that need improvement or protection, and link management strategies to improve and protect the target areas.

Lakes will still get a grade as has been previously done, but now uplands, streams, shallow lakes, ground water, and other wetlands will all be graded. These grades, then compiled together, will allow each subwatershed and the entire watershed to be graded comprehensively. E-grade has been a 10 year process beginning in 2014. Currently, the District is determining the stressors and opportunities for targeted landscapes. Identifying the grade, plus the stressors to an area, helps planning by looking at opportunities and projects to protect and improve these waters.

While the grades have not yet been decided (whether it would be an A-F scale, numeric scale, or using narrative text categories), the proposed E-grades would be: Exceptional, Supporting, Impaired and Degraded. A "supporting" or "impaired" grade would drive planning action. Exceptional lakes wouldn't require anything except prevention. "Degraded" wetlands are beyond help, and wouldn't be a priority for the District.

The first test group for E-grade is Schutz Lake, Six Mile Marsh and Minnehaha Creek. Because it will take three years to collect the data to grade each wetland, in addition to MCWD's partnerships with the DNR, the process has been staged so that by the autumn of 2024, the District will have the full comprehensive E-grade report for the entire watershed. At the end of the cycle, all of the monitoring and analysis will be repeated. The 9 year cycle of monitoring lines up with the District's 10 year planning process and the State's cycle for monitoring TMDL's.

This E-grade monitoring process doesn't replace routine monitoring at each site and it will only be introduced to selected water bodies in the watershed, *not* every body of water. Every deep lake will be monitored, but not all wetlands or shallow lakes. Inferences will be made after a sampling of those which had been monitored. The District uses and will continue to use volunteers and staff for the monitoring process and it is estimated that it will cost \$250-300,000 to cover the E-grade program.

Other watershed districts are part of the E-grade Technical Advisory Team and will use the MCWD research as an example, however no other watershed districts have something like this in place just yet.

Dooley said she could come back after the E-grade meeting in June to present final plan to the CAC.

## **8.2 MCWD Comprehensive Plan – Christopher & Brown**

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> presentation on the Comprehensive Plan to the CAC.

Becky Christopher presented the official, newly approved Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Goals which were adopted January 28, 2016.

### **Two-Track Approach: Focus Track and Responsive Tract**

Integration of land-use and water planning is the focus of this approach.

Focus track: MCWD acts as a convener in high-need areas, concentrating efforts. The Six Mile Creek Subwatershed focal geography is going to be the first example of using this approach.

The District has identified the following as factors that will be taken into consideration when selecting focal geographies:

- Water resource issues and impairments
- Public value of resources
- Local partnerships and support
- Known opportunities (landowner relationships, partner projects, funding sources)
- System scale and complexity (multiple jurisdictions, waterbodies, and stressors)
- Development/redevelopment pressure
- Probability of success (available data, land rights, restorability of waterbody)
- Past investment by District or others

In 2014, the Board identified the Six Mile Creek Subwatershed (a 27 square mile area in the southwestern portion of the District) as a priority focal geography for the following reasons:

- The subwatershed includes 16 lakes and over 6,000 acres of wetland, with 58 % of the subwatershed classified as open water or wetland and 6 of the lakes classified as impaired;
- The receiving water, Halsted Bay, also is impaired and, under the Upper Minnehaha Creek Watershed TMDL, requires the largest load reduction of any other waterbody in the District to meet state standards;
- The area is subject to growth and development activity that may adversely affect natural corridors and water quality and which will benefit from careful integration of land-use management and water resource protection, as well as District program activity and investments;
- The District has completed a comprehensive study to diagnose the water quality stressors within the subwatershed and identify actions to improve the water quality of the system;
- Implementation strategies and priorities will be developed that are unique to the needs of individual drainage areas within the Six Mile Creek subwatershed; and
- The Cities of Victoria, Minnetrista and St. Bonifacius; Laketown Township; the Three Rivers Park District; Carver and Hennepin County; lake associations and others, have expressed support for a cooperative effort toward fulfilling water quality, flood management, land-use and related public goals and offer the opportunity for collaboration.

Oltmans asked how far out the District does its budgeting. Previously, larger capital projects could be budgeted long-term, and this Six-Mile Creek budget might be considered a shorter-term project. Manager Miller, as treasurer, said the District has never had a budget, only proposed budgets that were developed by consultants. This plan has flexibility in taking advantage of opportunities and not doing geo-political distributions of resources, but focusing on a problem-distribution of resources and leveraging federal and state funds to implement these projects. Most of the projects done previously were opportunistic and not ones that were in the plans despite the District's targeted plans—The District's plans just weren't feasible in the end. Manager Miller is excited about this approach because funding sources will also be excited and invested in these science-driven projects. Similarly, the MCWD never had debt because projects were just appropriated into larger budgets. Currently, Hennepin County issues the MCWD's debt and the District has an agreement with them. Manager Miller also pointed out that the MCWD Board of Managers has the authority to run the watershed district, but chooses to have a staff to be specialists in the field and run day to day operations.

Anna Brown provided an overview of the Six-Mile subwatershed. This watershed is complicated because it spans political and municipal boundaries, and has natural assets, future growth and development and a connection to Halsted Bay, the headwaters of the Watershed. The District chose Six-Mile in order to approach projects from a systems perspective and follow the growth trajectory of the area. The planning process will serve as the model for future focal-track planning. Lessons learned will be written into the comprehensive plan. This process is modelled off of the success the District had in the Greenway.

The first step of the focal-track is the diagnostic study. The Six-Mile diagnostic, which looked at the natural resources of the area and its impairments (i.e.: phosphorous and internal loading, hydrology, vegetation and AIS, carp), is now complete. The second step is to understand the work of others and see

how these components intersect with these water resources. (i.e.: natural resources, roads and infrastructure, development of homes and businesses, recreational features and facilities). This will not only help identify projects, but help in the phasing of projects. The third step will then be to develop a proactive investment framework by leveraging federal agencies and funds (USACE, US EPA) and state agencies and funds (MNDOT, LSOHC grants, LCCMR grants).

Responsive track: MCWD will foster coordination among partners and be opportunistic when new project come up. Some changes already going to be made to District programs are:

Plan structure: Goal-oriented, flexible/adaptable, incorporating partner goals

Partnership Approach: regular coordination, exchange CIPs. Memorandums of Understanding. Looking at the intersection between city's planning and MCWD planning.

Changes to the cost share program: refined criteria, project priority list (focusing on District priority areas), biannual deadlines, cross-departmental review team.

Permitting: partnership development. Baseline permitting will still be there along with field compliance. The goal is to show the value to applicants and planners to come to the District early in the process. The district can then provide technical and planning assistance (helping applicants navigate state and federal requirements, coming to the District early as opposed to the last 'hoop' to jump through), streamlining regulation, flexibility, customer services.

Responsive Education Program- support for meeting MS4 requirements, fee-for-service arrangement, coordination for Lakes Associations and Master Water Stewards which are all resources to cities.

Christopher reported that cities are enthusiastic about this process. Manager Miller also expressed his enthusiasm about this approach and commended the staff for their enthusiasm and talents. He provided an example of the City of Edina who were actively looking at opportunities to solve problems based on the MCWD approach. Resolutions and letters of support have been coming in to the District because the District is providing value both to natural resources and to the built environment.

If there are any questions please contact Becky Christopher (bchristopher@minnehahacreek.org, 952-641-4512) or Anna Brown (abrown@minnehahacreek.org, 952-641-4522).

### **8.3 Cost Share – Eidem**

The first of the three deadlines is coming **up next Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016** and Brett Eidem was looking to establish a CAC subcommittee prior to next April meeting to review the grant applications. He presented an overview of the staff-review process and used the two following homeowner projects as examples. Shoreline and streambank homeowner projects, such as Tom Rose's, are incentivized and may be accepted earlier or off-schedule from the main deadlines. Eidem shared the evaluation form staff use to rate projects. After presenting the two proposals, Eidem looked for CAC approval of staff-recommended funding.

Brian Girard, Jerry Ciardelli, Peter Rechelbacher, and Richard Nyquist volunteered to be part of the subcommittee and will meet on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to review applications.

#### **BUDGET UPDATE**

**Cost Share 2016 Budget: \$600,000**

**Amount Approved in 2016: \$0**

**March Cost Share Requested Amount: \$7,208.65**

#### **Project #1- Tom Rose, 5011 Wooddale La, Edina      Shoreline Stabilization**

Tom and Amanda Rose live just a couple houses in from 50th and Wooddale in Edina. They are on the creek and their streambank faces St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Their awareness and interest in streambank restoration grew from direct outreach in the Arden Park neighborhood on streambank stabilization. This outreach campaign was developed through a collaboration between MCWD, the City of

Edina and Master Water Stewards. Master Water Stewards directly engaged Tom and he attended an informational meeting hosted by the District. This streambank would be the second install tied to the direct outreach, and we are hopeful that a few more residents will develop plans and install this summer.

The Rose residence receives runoff from their own roof and patio, as well as part of the neighbor's runoff. Their streambank was degraded from the high flows from the 2014 flooding, and with a lot of mature trees shading the area it has been difficult for sod to reestablish, causing some small erosion. The proposed plan of Natural Shore Technologies addresses these issues, and will use native plants to stabilize the immediate streambank and the upland area. The proposed plan will create a 15 ft. wide native planted buffer along 125 ft. of streambank.

The total project cost for materials, labor and two years maintenance is \$9,417.30. Staff recommends 50% funding, not to exceed \$4,708.65.

***Oltmans motioned to approve staff's recommendation of funding and Bushnell seconded the recommendation. All were in favor, none opposed.***

### **Project #2- Linda Bergh, 4315 Xerxes Ave S, Minneapolis                      Raingarden**

The Bergh residence is on a fairly busy Xerxes Ave, nearly kiddy corner from Linden Hills Park and 2 blocks from Lake Harriet. Linda has been working on transforming her front yard into a sustainable landscape in honor of her husband. After working with her neighbor of Morning Dew Landscapes, as well as working with Energyscapes, she has a design that will divert water from three downspouts, as well as collect and divert yard drainage, to a large raingarden in the middle of her front yard. Linda will divert the roof runoff through dry creek beds and a berm to redirect and hold back the water, promoting infiltration. This raingarden will collect a total of 1200 sf of drainage, 900 of which is roof runoff. The 200 sf raingarden should be able to retain a 2" rain event. As Linda lives on a street with a large slope, she even went to the city to see if she could divert sidewalk runoff into her front yard raingarden. The city would not let her place a speed bump on the sidewalk to divert runoff, but she is more than willing to create further impact and outreach in the community.

Linda is willing to put up educational signage in her front yard, as well as an info box with education materials and brochures about raingardens and runoff. She intends to hold a gathering when she finishes to celebrate the raingarden. And classes. Linda's home is used for classes. She teaches some adult education classes out of her home, and Tal (Morning Dew Landscapes) teaches 3-4 garden classes a year at the property. Raingardens will become part of the curriculum. Tal also regularly uses U of M SUSTAG and MNURBANFARMERS listservs to send information to students, and would be willing to mention the project in these posts.

Brett had met with Linda late summer 2015, and she applied in September of 2015, knowing it would not get reviewed until 2016. Staff feels that this is a strong enough proposal to approve cost share funding ahead of the deadline so Linda can begin construction in the spring of 2016.

The total project cost that would qualify for cost share funding is \$7,470. Staff recommends 50% funding, not to exceed the homeowner cap of \$2,500.

***Carlson made a motion to approve staff's recommended funding and Bushnell seconded All were in favor, none opposed.***

## **9.        NEW BUSINESS**

### **9.1        Involvement of CAC with MCWD Board meetings**

Bushnell recommended the CAC plan Board presence two months out and have an alternate CAC member signup, or that the signup person could arrange for their own alternate. It is also okay if more than one CAC member attend the Board meetings. It was also discussed that CAC members attend the

Operations and Programs Committee (OPC) or Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) meetings. Manager Miller thought having someone at the PPC meetings would be helpful, even having the entire CAC there on occasion, because that is where a lot of in-depth discussions happen prior to going to the Board. He suggested that Lochner alert the CAC when big topics for discussion come up.

All meetings begin at 6.45pm, and CAC members should RSVP to be included in the food order for dinner prior to the meeting. The monthly meetings are as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the Month: Operations and Programs Committee
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday: Board Workshop
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday: Policy and Planning Committee
- 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday: Board Meeting

Girard will attend the next PPC meeting on March 17.

Carlson will attend the PPC meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>

Rechelbacher will attend the next OPC meeting April 7th

**10. SPECIAL ITEMS TO ADDRESS BY CAC/STAFF BEFORE NEXT MEETING**

None.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

***Oltmans motioned to adjourn the CAC meeting at 9:22 p.m. Girard seconded the motion. Motion carried, none opposed.***

**Next meeting date is Wednesday, April 13, 2016**