

1 **DRAFT**

2 **MINUTES OF THE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

3 **June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

4 **CALL TO ORDER**

5 Ms. White called the Committee to order at 10:05 a.m. at the District Offices,

6 15320 Minnetonka Blvd

7 Minnetonka, MN 55345

8 **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

9 Bob Stewart, Marvin Johnson, Marty Schneider, Scott Johnson, Ken Dahler, Patty Acomb, Lisa  
10 Whalen, Lili McMillan, Sliv Carlson, and Terri Yearwood.

11 **OTHERS PRESENT**

12 Sherry Davis White, MCWD Board President; Derek Asche, Technical Advisory Committee  
13 Liaison; Becky Christopher, Lead Planner & Project Manager; and Matthew Cook, Planning  
14 Assistant.

15 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

16 The agenda was approved without amendment.

17 **COMMITTEE MEETING**

18 Ms. Christopher stated that District staff would transition to drafting the 2017 Comprehensive  
19 Plan soon, so any future meetings of the Committee to review Plan drafts would be scheduled as  
20 needed.

21 Ms. Christopher stated that the District seeks the Committee's input on which new roles (if any)  
22 the District should undertake concerning natural resource management. She noted that any new  
23 roles identified by the Committee that are incorporated into the Plan may not be operationalized  
24 immediately upon adoption of the Plan. Ms. Christopher added that potential roles for the  
25 District that she would lay out had not yet been vetted by the Board.

26 **Long-term Maintenance of Best Management Practices (BMPs)**

27 Ms. Christopher stated that across the watershed, there are many old stormwater ponds and other  
28 BMPs that are not being inspected or maintained. She noted that currently, the District maintains  
29 District-owned BMPs, requires BMPs and declarations through rules, inspects BMPs, and leads  
30 education efforts on BMP maintenance. Ms. Christopher stated that the District could expand its

47 inspection and enforcement initiatives, expand its education programming, or develop a  
48 programmatic approach to address BMPs that are not being maintained.

49  
50 Ms. Whalen noted that inspection costs would be substantial. She added that it would be costly  
51 and difficult to enforce requests for BMPs to be brought into compliance. Ms. Whalen stated that  
52 the District would be best suited in continuing and expanding its education and outreach efforts.  
53 She suggested that the District partner with another organization in its outreach, and target  
54 Homeowners Associations and public works staff.

55  
56 Mr. Stewart asked what proportion of the BMPs District staff would expect to need maintenance.  
57 Ms. Christopher stated that nearly all BMPs would likely need some form of maintenance.

58  
59 Mr. Asche offered his knowledge of BMP type and maintenance to the Committee. He noted that  
60 cleaning stormwater ponds, done once every 15-30 years, costs between \$30,000 and \$40,000  
61 per pond. Mr. Asche added that rain gardens often become overgrown with weeds, which  
62 prompts residents to call city staff and request maintenance. Mr. Asche stated that cities do not  
63 have enough staff to inspect all installed BMPs.

64  
65 Mr. Asche stated that in 1991, prompted by flooding issues, the City of Plymouth adopted  
66 policies that required written agreements that assigned responsibility for installed BMPs.

67  
68 Ms. McMillan suggested that the District educate city staff on what kinds of BMPs are available,  
69 and what the tradeoffs of certain BMPs are. S. Johnson added that the District could use  
70 examples of ideal policies from bigger cities for smaller cities to consider adopting.

71  
72 Wetland Banking

73  
74 Ms. Christopher stated that there are currently no wetland banks in the District, and that  
75 developers do not want to take on the associated risks. She noted that the District's rules allow  
76 for the District to own and operate a wetland credit bank. Ms. Christopher presented a map of the  
77 Mader wetland bank, which was being developed by a permit applicant in cooperation with the  
78 District.

79  
80 Ms. Christopher stated that, moving forward, the District could consider establishing its own  
81 wetland banks and promoting the creation of private wetland banks, as done with the Mader  
82 wetland bank.

83  
84 Ms. Christopher noted that only larger wetlands would make viable wetland banking sites. Mr.  
85 Asche added that the USACE only certifies wetland banks of five or more acres in size. Ms.  
86 Whalen stated that there are not many properties in the urban area of the Twin Cities that would  
87 be eligible for USACE certification, so the District should focus efforts to create wetland banks  
88 in rural areas.

89

90 Mr. Asche stated that the BWSR favored using wetland banks to compensate for wetland impact,  
91 as wetland banks tend to be larger, more robust wetlands. He explained that on-site mitigation  
92 projects are typically small, and have a low rate of success in remaining a wetland.  
93

94 Ms. Whalen suggested that the District encourage private landowners and developers to establish  
95 private banks. She explained that the owners could make money on the credits, or at least cover  
96 some of the costs of mitigating wetland impact.  
97

98 Ms. McMillan stated that the District should partner with Hennepin County in identifying and  
99 developing a wetland bank. She underscored that the District should not be the lead agency for  
100 an undertaking as resource-intensive as the establishment of a major wetland bank.  
101

### 102 Chloride Management

103  
104 Ms. Christopher stated that the EPA had recently approved new TMDLs for chlorides. She  
105 explained that currently, the District focuses on monitoring, education, and training efforts  
106 concerning chloride management. Ms. Christopher suggested that the District could explore  
107 expanding its role to include the following:  
108

- 109 • Targeted outreach events
- 110 • Research
- 111 • Supporting relevant legislation (such as limiting liability of salt applicators)
- 112 • Offering cost share funding for salt application equipment upgrades and innovative  
113 practices  
114

115 Ms. Yearwood asked if the new TMDL identified the role of watershed districts. Ms. Christopher  
116 confirmed that the TMDL recommended that watershed districts offer educational resources,  
117 trainings, and cost share funding as available. She noted that the District may seek to educate salt  
118 applicators for commercial sites on means to reduce chloride use.  
119

### 120 Bacteria Management

121  
122 Ms. Christopher stated that TMDLs for bacteria currently indicate pet waste, wild animal waste,  
123 and septic system / sanitary sewer seepage as main contributors to bacteria impairments to  
124 waterbodies.  
125

126 Ms. Christopher noted that the District currently monitors for bacteria in waterbodies and  
127 performs education and outreach surrounding pet and wild animal waste management. She added  
128 that the District includes promotes installation of infiltration and filtration BMPs through capital  
129 projects, cost share grants, and permitting rules. Ms. Christopher stated that the District could  
130 increase its role in research regarding bacteria management.  
131

### 132 Climate Change Adaptation

133

134 Ms. Christopher stated that the District currently encourages and implements water quantity  
135 management across the watershed through education efforts, capital projects, and permit  
136 requirements. She explained that the District also offers technical assistance and baseline  
137 modeling to inform city flood management planning. Ms. Christopher noted that the District  
138 recently coordinated with the NOAA on the Stormwater Adaptation Study of the watershed.  
139

140 Ms. Carlson stated that there are those who doubt the existence of climate change. She added that  
141 the District could provide data and analysis that displays the effects climate change has on the  
142 watershed.  
143

144 Ms. McMillan expressed her concern for the effect of rising temperatures on fish populations and  
145 water quality in the watershed. Ms. Christopher noted that the District collects temperature data.  
146

147 Ms. Acomb suggested that the District could coordinate with cities to model and evaluate cities'  
148 flood resilience.  
149

150 Ms. Whalen noted that while floods on the scale of those in 2014 cannot be prepared for, the  
151 District should ensure that stormwater ponds are being sized properly as they are being installed.  
152 She added that the District should explore the possibility of retrofitting old stormwater BMPs  
153 that do not meet current standards.  
154

#### 155 Aquatic Invasive Species

156

157 Ms. Christopher stated that the District currently fills many roles concerning AIS management:  
158

- 159 • Monitoring
- 160 • Research
- 161 • Prevention and management
- 162 • Education and outreach
- 163 • Lobbying

164

165 Ms. Christopher noted that the District would be discontinuing some prevention efforts due to  
166 lack of partner interest. She added that the District will focus on monitoring, education, and  
167 research efforts moving forward.  
168

169 Ms. McMillan suggested that the District could create maps that depict the locations of various  
170 AIS populations.  
171

172 Ms. Whalen underscored that the District should only look to manage AIS that could realistically  
173 be contained.  
174

175 Ms. Yearwood noted that counties will receive more funding from the state than the DNR for  
176 AIS inspections. She encouraged the District to focus on AIS research and mapping efforts.  
177

#### 178 Groundwater

179

180 Ms. Christopher stated that the District is currently involved in managing the interaction between  
181 groundwater aquifers and surface water bodies. She explained that the District's role largely  
182 comprises of implementing and promoting infiltration, where possible.

183

184 Ms. Whalen noted that large-scale groundwater management comes with significant cost, and  
185 that the District is better-suited to maintain its current level of involvement. She suggested that  
186 the District could promote sustainable usage rates of groundwater and encourage water capture  
187 and reuse.

188

189 Ms. McMillan noted that the Twin Cities are a "net exporter" of water, considering the amount  
190 of groundwater used in the area that gets sent down the Mississippi River. Ms. Carlson stated  
191 that the District could show how its work contributes to water recharge, which keeps water  
192 within the watershed. Ms. McMillan added that wetland protection and restoration helps with  
193 water storage and recharge. Ms. Carlson noted that the District could also message wetlands as  
194 assets.

195

196 Agriculture and the State Buffer Law

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198 Ms. Christopher stated that the District does not currently play a notable role in managing  
199 agricultural land. She noted that the District used to offer grants – in partnership with the NRCS  
200 – for BMPs to manage agricultural runoff, as well as habitat restoration grants.

201

202 Concerning the state buffer law, Ms. Christopher stated that the law targets cropland and open  
203 soils. She explained that because any perennial groundcover – including conventional turf grass  
204 – meets the requirement of the law, much of the District will not be affected by the law. Ms.  
205 Christopher noted that the District could opt to pursue an enforcement role regarding the buffer  
206 law, but would likely offer technical assistance, where applicable, instead.

207

208 Ms. McMillan recommended that the District leave most buffer law duties to the county.

209

210 Next Steps

211

212 Ms. Christopher encouraged the Committee members to fill out the survey distributed at the  
213 meeting if they had any additional feedback for the District to consider. She stated that the  
214 District had begun drafting sections of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan, and would schedule  
215 additional meetings of the Committee as needed for review of draft materials.

216

217 The Committee meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

218

219 Respectfully submitted,

220

221 Matthew Cook

222 Planning Assistant