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MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

**MINUTES OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

October 20, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Stewart, Marvin Johnson, Scott Johnson, Emily Ziring (for Linea Palmisano), Patty Acomb, Lili McMillan, Scott Zerby, Jeff Clapp, Sliv Carlson, Terri Yearwood, Gene Kay.

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherry Davis White, MCWD Board President; Derek Asche, Technical Advisory Committee Liaison; Becky Christopher, Lead Planner and Project Manager; Anna Brown, Planner and Project Manager; James Wisker, Director of Planning and Projects; Matthew Cook, Planning Assistant.

COMMITTEE MEETING

President White called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming. Following introductions, Ms. Christopher reviewed the meeting agenda, which included an overview of the Plan development process, an introduction to the District's internal strategic planning framework, an outline of the proposed Plan structure, and a few updates. She noted that the primary purpose of the meeting was to provide additional context for the committee before delving into different elements of implementation framework over next four meetings.

Plan Development Process

Ms. Christopher noted that, at the last meeting in August, she proposed a list of future agenda topics for the committee with their role focused primarily on helping the District improve its implementation model. She explained that one of the goals for the meeting was to show how these agenda topics and the committee's role fit into the overall Plan development process.

Ms. Christopher walked the committee through a flow diagram outlining the Plan development process. Starting at the bottom, the diagram showed the foundational elements that feed into and inform the Plan:

- **2007 Comprehensive Plan** – provides strong foundation of data, issue identification, and water resource goals.
- **Progress since 2007** – lessons learned, new programs, projects implemented, progress toward 2007 nutrient goals – these will be compiled into a self-assessment report.
- **New policies and guiding principles** – Balanced Urban Ecology Policy, priority geography identification, TMDL Credit Sharing Policy, Ecosystem Evaluation Program.
- **New data since 2007** – hydrodata and trend analyses, AIS data, stream assessment update, Six Mile Diagnostic and carp study, TMDLs, Minnehaha Creek Baseflow Study, Atlas 14.

47 Next, the diagram showed the Plan development process, divided into three primary buckets of
48 work with the areas of committee/stakeholder involvement highlighted (orange = committees,
49 blue = other stakeholder inputs):

- 50 • **Strategic planning framework** – This would be a largely internal process to refine the
51 organization’s mission and goals and evaluate its programs (discussed more later in the
52 meeting).
- 53 • **Data updates** – A District and consultant-led process to incorporate new studies and data
54 that will feed into the subwatershed plans.
- 55 • **Implementation framework** – This area was highlighted as the primary focus of the
56 Plan update and where the District will be seeking the most help from the advisory
57 committees. Discussions will include refining implementation processes for focal and
58 responsive geographies; developing the partnership framework by exploring streamlined
59 regulation, the role of LGUs in supporting the Plan goals, and the integration of land-use
60 and water planning; and defining the District’s role in specific management areas (e.g.
61 AIS, chlorides, groundwater).

62
63 The diagram then showed these areas of plan development feeding into the three volumes of the
64 Plan – Executive Summary, Data and Issue Identification, and Goals and Implementation Plan.
65 Finally, it showed the formal plan review process, including a 60-day and 90-day review period.
66 Ms. Christopher also referred the group to the corresponding Gantt chart and agenda list in their
67 packet.

68
69 Ms. McMillan asked Ms. Christopher when the District was expecting specific input from
70 members of the Committee, explaining that she would like to get the input of her city’s planning
71 staff to better understand how her organization and the District could better align. Ms.
72 Christopher responded that, as the District begins seeking the Committee’s input on the
73 implementation framework over the next several meetings, she intends to send out materials and
74 questions in advance for the Committee’s consideration.

75
76 Mr. Johnson asked what water quality data was collected by the District during the 2014 flooding
77 and how it would be used. Ms. Christopher responded that the District has long-term records that
78 provide a good picture of normal conditions and trends, and they continued monitoring during
79 the flood to get a better understanding of what happens during extreme high water events. The
80 District is putting together a report to document what it experienced during the 2014 flood and
81 what the organization learned to help it and communities better prepare for future flood events.

82
83 Mr. Zerby inquired as to where in the plan development process Shorewood would have an
84 opportunity to interface with the District, voicing their concerns and interests as they relate to
85 District initiatives. He explained that because Shorewood has a small tax base, his city’s staff
86 were few in number and kept quite busy. Mr. Zerby mentioned that the information request sent
87 out by the District (as per the revised MN 8410 rules) was not replied to by his city’s staff due to
88 their limited availability. He asked how smaller cities could make sure their voices were heard.

89
90 Ms. Christopher explained that the information request was just one of multiple ways for cities to
91 provide input into the planning process. Another key opportunity will be through the local

92 subwatershed plan meetings that will take place in early 2016. Even more importantly, the
93 District will be seeking the Committee's input on how to develop a partnership framework to
94 support continued coordination and collaboration after the Plan is adopted.
95

96 Ms. McMillan mentioned that the City of Orono had recently updated its stormwater ordinance
97 and that she would have found it helpful to know what other cities in the watershed require.
98 Similarly, she noted that it would be useful for their council to know how other cities collect and
99 use their stormwater fund. She added that councils turn over frequently, and it would be good to
100 provide education and recommendations to councils on these matters.
101

102 Mr. Asche commented that the installation and maintenance of stormwater management facilities
103 (as required by the MPCA and various WMOs) ought to be considered elements of regular
104 municipal infrastructure, much like water service, sewer service, and road systems.
105

106 Mr. Wisker responded that, while all cities will do things a little differently based on their unique
107 situation, this planning process is a good opportunity to learn from each other and discuss how to
108 best address these shared issues.
109

110 Ms. Acomb asked how the city staff of Minnetonka could expect to stay updated on District
111 projects and areas of interest – and vice versa – in the interest of establishing a partnership in
112 which opportunities are recognized and explored. She added that it is challenging to anticipate
113 future activities, and it would be good to have a system in place to dialogue on partnership
114 opportunities as they arise. Ms. Christopher agreed and stated that developing such a partnership
115 framework is a major focus for the District through this planning process.
116

117 Strategic Planning Framework

118 Ms. Christopher continued the presentation by providing an overview of the internal strategic
119 planning process the District is undertaking. The first graphic illustrated how the District will
120 conduct its planning and evaluation at different levels and time scales, including:

- 121 • Long-range mission and vision
- 122 • 10-year Comprehensive Plan
- 123 • 5-year self-assessment and strategic planning
- 124 • 2-year progress reporting
- 125 • Annual work plans

126 After providing a brief background on why the strategic planning framework was developed, Ms.
127 Christopher explained that the purpose of the framework is to facilitate evaluation of existing
128 programs and future initiatives to ensure that the District is allocating its resources to their
129 highest and best use. It provides context for decision-making by linking program activities back
130 to the District's mission and goals; identifying the outcomes, metrics, and resource allocation for
131 each activity; and showing how the District's various programs align. She walked through a
132 series of diagrams explaining how the District staff and Board will use the tool to evaluate each

133 program as part of this plan update. She noted that the District intends to go through a similar
134 process every five years to assess priorities and recalibrate program activities, as needed.

135
136 Mr. Stewart asked what the difference was between the unofficial goals of “water quality” and
137 “ecological integrity” noted in the diagrams. Ms. Christopher explained that water quality
138 focuses more on chemical parameters such as phosphorus while ecological integrity
139 encompasses things like habitat quality and presence of invasive species. She noted that the goals
140 listed are placeholders as the District is still refining its list of goals and will develop clear
141 descriptions for each.

142
143 Plan Structure

144 Ms. Christopher provided a brief overview of the proposed plan structure and the content that
145 would be included under each of the three volumes - Executive Summary, Data and Issue
146 Identification, and Goals and Implementation Plan. She explained that the District’s intent is for
147 the implementation section of this Plan to focus more on establishing processes for how the
148 District will coordinate with communities to integrate efforts and remain responsive and less on
149 laying out a prescriptive list of activities in each subwatershed, as with the previous plan.

150
151 Mr. Clapp brought up the effect of zebra mussels on water clarity, asking if any trends have yet
152 been observed in water quality on Lake Minnetonka. Ms. Christopher responded that it was
153 likely too soon to have enough data to identify a statistically significant change in water quality.
154 Ms. Yearwood noted that, while zebra mussels may improve water clarity, their presence in a
155 given waterbody threatens that waterbody’s populations of desirable biota. Ms. Christopher
156 added that the Ecosystem Evaluation Program the District is developing is intended to provide a
157 more holistic picture of ecosystem health, which would reflect both the potential positive and
158 negative effects of zebra mussels.

159
160 Ms. Carlson asked to have the elements of the District’s plan structure from the presentation
161 listed out and sent to her. Ms. Christopher confirmed that she would do so.

162
163 Updates

164 Ms. Christopher provided a brief overview of the information that was submitted in response to
165 the District’s information request. She noted that a summary was also provided in their packet,
166 and the full submittals are available on the District website. She stated that the District will
167 continue to refer back to the submittals as the Plan is developed to ensure that the priorities
168 provided by the cities and agencies are being considered and addressed.

169
170 Anna Brown provided an update to the committee on the development of the Six Mile
171 implementation plan. The Six Mile planning process will mirror the process for the
172 Comprehensive Plan, convening both a technical and policy advisory committee and serving as a
173 subchapter of that plan. The objective of the Six Mile process will be to improve how the District
174 coordinates with its partner agencies in that geography by identifying their goals and missions,
175 regulations and authorities, and plans for development and growth. The output should not only
176 reflect the District’s goals, but also the existing plans of its partners and a framework for how

177 these will work together. The lessons learned from this process will serve as the implementation
178 model for focal geographies in the comprehensive plan.

179
180 Ms. Christopher informed the group that they would be receiving an online survey to help inform
181 the District's self-assessment and strategic planning process.

182
183 The Committee generally agreed that December 15th, at 10:00 AM, would be a good time for its
184 next meeting.

185
186 Ms. Christopher noted that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had decided to send a
187 liaison to the Policy Advisory Committee meetings and asked the group if there was any interest
188 in doing the same. There being no volunteers, the Committee generally agreed that the TAC
189 representative could help act as a liaison both to and from their committee.

190
191 The Committee Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.

192
193 Respectfully submitted,

194
195 Becky Christopher
196 MCWD Lead Planner and Project Manager