



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers

From: James Wisker

Date: June 17, 2019

Re: MCWD 2019 Board Retreat

Purpose:

The purpose of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District’s 2019 Board Retreat is to spend time reflecting on where the District has been, assess where it is right now, and discuss how it might need to be positioned in the future to best respond to issues and opportunities emerging on the horizon.

Background:

2017 Strategic Plan:

After more than a year of organizational strategic planning, in 2017 the MCWD Board of Managers adopted a Strategic Alignment Plan (Plan). The purpose of that Plan was to outline directions that would begin to shift the work of each of MCWD’s programs, bringing them into alignment around the District’s focus on:

1. Implementing high impact capital improvements, meaningfully integrated into the urban landscape, through collaboration with the public and private land use community.
2. Shaping local, regional, and state policy to improve the integration of land use and water planning.

Since the adoption of the Strategic Alignment Plan, specific initiatives are being advanced across the organization to move the District’s programming and operations in the direction the Plan outlined. These initiatives are intended to create a new and aligned workflow, to enhance organizational effectiveness, and lay a solid foundation for the District to move successfully into the future.

Ongoing Role of the Board in MCWD’s Strategy:

Beginning in earnest in 2016 the MCWD Board established its central role in co-creating and agreeing on the District’s strategy. Through that process, the Board of Managers emphasized the importance of remaining forward looking, and the value in establishing clear long term objectives to guide short term priorities and investments.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

As the District's team of staff work to execute initiatives under the umbrella of the 2017 Strategic Plan, to help advance and align the organization, the Board's meetings (committee and action meetings) are necessarily focused on making decisions on the business immediately at hand.

To remain highly effective the Board has established a goal of remaining forward looking by continuously cultivating and adjusting the District's strategy in response to a constantly changing external environment.

The Board Retreats provide the venue for this important work.

June 20, 2019 Retreat:

To assess the organization's position and continue thinking forward, the June 20, 2019 Board Retreat will be divided into:

1. Assessing the District's current strategic position
 - Where has the organization been?
 - Where is it now?
 - What it is working to accomplish?
 - Why?

2. Discussing watershed issues and opportunities emerging on the horizon
 - What will the future have in store for MCWD?
 - How is the external environment shifting around the organization?
 - What steps might MCWD need to take to prepare for the future?

The information gathered through the Retreat will be used to focus and guide future discussions by the Board of Managers, to ensure adequate time is dedicated towards remaining a forward thinking organization.

Session 1:

Given the importance of maintaining a shared understanding of organizational priorities, and the recent appointment of new Managers, Session 1 is intended to help ground and synchronize the Board and Administrator on the work currently being pursued under the 2017 Strategic Plan.

As part of this conversation at the June 20 Retreat, the Board will be asked to review the strategic initiatives underway and to identify and discuss specific areas where there are concerns, questions, potential issues, or ambiguity. Board Members have been asked in advance to provide areas they would like to focus on at the Retreat. This information will be used to facilitate an effective discussion.

The discussion by the Board will inform next steps that might need to be taken by staff to clarify the focus of strategic initiatives, adjust the process through which they will be advanced, and avoid potential issues identified by the Managers.

Attachment 1 provides a summary of strategic initiatives for Board review in advance of the Retreat.

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Session 2:

The purpose of Session 2 is to dedicate time to scanning and discussing the horizon and ever-changing environment around the MCWD, to ensure the District is best positioned to proactively address the issues and opportunities it will face in the future.

Board Members have been asked in advance to identify issues and opportunities for discussion at the Retreat.

One area of discussion that will be facilitated at the June 20 Retreat, as part of Session 2, is the District's potential role in addressing climate adaptation in partnership with local communities. Specifically, what might be the role of MCWD in addressing shifts in watershed hydrology due to climate change?

To facilitate this discussion, Attachment 2 provides a coarse-grain scan of the environment around MCWD, in terms of climate adaptation planning and implementation occurring at:

- A state agency level
- Regional level (counties and watershed districts)
- A local level (entities within MCWD)

At the Retreat, staff will provide a brief overview of this information and outline the issues and opportunities that a changing climate and watershed hydrology will present the MCWD as we plan for the future.

Next Steps:

The purpose of the Retreat is to identify issues on the horizon that MCWD may need to be prepared to address in the future. This information will be used to focus and guide future Board Retreats as needed to advance the conversation, and ensure the District remains strategically well positioned.

Please send any thoughts you have to James Wisker at Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org, or call at 952.641.4509.

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