

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 17, 2021**

Members Present

Balogh, Bushnell, Flo, Girard, McGovern, Nyquist, Ordway, Otlmans, Rechelbacher, Rosenberg, Salditt

Managers Present

Manager Olson

Others Present

MCWD Staff: James Wisker, Kim LaBo, Trevor Born

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Eighth virtual meeting of the 2021 Citizen Advisory Committee.

Meeting chaired by Rechelbacher and called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Bushnell motioned to approve the agenda, Nyquist seconded, motion approved.

Nyquist motioned to approve the December 09, 2020 CAC meeting minutes, seconded by Rosenberg, minutes approved.

Due to the January meeting being canceled, there were not any minutes from January to approve.

Discussion Items:

Executive Committee Election Results – Rechelbacher

Rechelbacher reviewed the CAC Executive Committee election process and results. All CAC members who ran for the four Executive Committee seats were elected. As outlined in email communications to CAC members, Executive Committee members decided internally who will hold the four officer positions. Salditt will now serve as the CAC chair, Rechelbacher is vice-chair and Bushnell and Girard are the at-large members.

Rechelbacher turned the meeting facilitation over to Salditt.

CAC Assessment: Phase 1 - LaBo/Born

Purpose:

In this second of three CAC discussions on defining the CAC's role in MCWD's work, staff reviewed the results of the first phase of the CAC assessment process: findings and insights drawn from discovery research and conversations with diverse stakeholders. Staff also sought the CAC's thoughts on the assessment's key insights and how these insights on the CAC's strengths help define the CAC's unique value to the District.

Background:

An overview of the purpose, goals and process for the CAC assessment was provided by staff and is summarized below.

In February 2017, the MCWD Board of Managers approved Resolution #17-007, setting a comprehensive strategic direction for the organization as outlined in the 2017 Strategic Alignment Report. Since then, MCWD has systematically evaluated and realigned each of its programs to best support the organization's goals laid out in the plan. The result of this wholesale shift in MCWD's work has been a more focused, aligned, and successful suite of programs working toward the vision outlined in MCWD's In Pursuit of a Balanced Urban Ecology policy.

The CAC is the only program within the organization that has not yet undergone this reassessment since 2016. As a result, the Executive Team has expressed a desire to clarify the role of the committee to ensure it is providing maximal value for the District and for its members. At the Q3 CAC Executive Team meeting, the committee noted that MCWD must define the strategic value of the CAC and adjust the structure, schedule, and meeting formats accordingly.

At the December 17, 2020 Board meeting the MCWD Board of Managers approved Resolution #20-094, authorizing District staff to assess the CAC with the same evaluative process used to assess all District programs.

Assessment Goals:

To ensure the strategic alignment and focus of the CAC in 2021 and beyond, the District is undertaking an assessment process with the following goals:

1. The CAC is focused on work which provides value to the organization and its value is proportional to its organizational cost. MCWD is currently at a strategic juncture where it is moving from planning various strategic and change management initiatives to implementing those initiatives. During this process, the CAC has played the role of strategic advisor by vetting ideas, providing insight and flagging considerations. This work has been supported by a District staff liaison, Board liaisons and additional staff as needed. Now that the focus of the District has changed, the focus and role of the CAC will need to change accordingly. As the District's focus for 2021 and beyond is clarified, it is important to clarify how the CAC supports the District's future work and the level of organizational supported needed to do so.
2. The committee's structure and operations are determined by the needs of the CAC's new scope of work. The committee's structure and operations have been determined by historic past practices rather than being driven by the needs of the committee's work. Future operational considerations such as agenda focus, meeting structure, frequency and other logistics, will need to flow from a clearly refined strategic picture.
3. The work of the CAC is satisfying to committee members. Advisory committees are most effective when they feel they are providing value to the organization they advise and the work is satisfying to its members. This dynamic increases member engagement in the work of the committee by drawing on the skills, experiences and knowledge of its members.

Process:

The process for evaluating the CAC follows the same approach used for other programs: (1) defining the issue or opportunity; (2) gathering data and information from which insights can be drawn; (3) framing and evaluating options for decision.

Small Group Discussion:

In facilitated group discussions CAC members reflected on the discovery process results, explored the inherent strengths of the CAC, and discussed how these strengths inform the CAC's value proposition to the District.

The CAC reflected on key insights from the discovery process which identified how resident advisors provide advice which is different and unique from other types of advisors.

Below are highlights from the discussion:

The committee's diversity of skill sets and experiences allows the committee to remain nimble.

In contrast to technical or expert committees who are best suited to provide advice on specific topics related to their fields of expertise, a resident advisory committee can cover a wider range of topics due to their generalist rather than specialist composition. This flexibility allows the committee to consider a diversity of initiatives which the District is undertaking.

The fresh perspectives provided by a committee comprised of people with diverse backgrounds and experiences can be leveraged to strengthen District initiatives.

Resident advisors can use the lenses of their various backgrounds, professions or experiences to vet District initiatives by targeting any blind spots, identifying gaps or connections staff may miss. As a committee comprised of residents from different communities within the watershed, committee members can also serve as a microcosm of the public by identifying community expectations and potential reactions to the District's work. This public perspective can strengthen the District's messaging to the broader public.

The CAC serves as an organic conduit of community information.

Committee members' community networks, whether informal neighborhood connections or more formal group memberships, serve as an additional linkage between the District and communities within the watershed. Through these relationships and memberships, committee members organically convey information about the District's work out to their networks and also relay information from these networks back to the District. This information flow can serve to update the District on the status and progress of other water related planning processes CAC members are involved in at the local level or flag community dynamics that could impact an initiative.

Committee members want clarity on how they can provide value to MCWD's work

Committee members repeatedly stressed the desire to have clear direction on how they can best serve the needs of MCWD's work and the public it serves – as this is the shared desire of the committee's volunteers.

There are pro's and con's to each of the preliminary options framed in the discussion

Some members liked the opportunity to engage with a particular long-range planning issue over a sustained period of time. Others were excited by the opportunity to respond to a variety of key initiatives in "one off" presentations. Another suggested fluidly changing the scale and scope of CAC engagement over time according to the dynamic needs of the organization.

Next Steps:

Staff reviewed the next steps in the CAC assessment process which are outlined below:

1. Based on the results of the discovery process and discussions with the OPC and CAC in February, staff will develop and evaluate a range of options for the strategic orientation of the CAC. Evaluation criteria and operational considerations will be used to assess the various options.
2. This assessment will be reviewed and discussed by District staff, OPC, and CAC throughout April.
3. After this phase of discussion, staff will develop a final report with recommendations and seek Board approval in May.

Updates:

CAC Member Update

- McGovern announced Hennepin County is seeking public comments until March 3rd on their climate action plan and encouraged members to submit comments.
- Flow reported the MN EQB has published draft recommendations on integrating climate change into the state's environmental review process and comments can be submitted until March 31st.
- Nyquist reported on a MWMO project which drains stormwater from Columbia Parkway and golf course into the river and making water quality improvements.

Staff Report

Wisker reported MCWD staff have been involved in Hennepin County climate action planning.

MCWD staff will send out the Climate Adaptation report for CAC feedback in advance of the March meeting.

At the March 3 CAC meeting, staff will provide an overview of the feedback received, and the next steps in the process. This meeting will also be used to provide the CAC with a deeper understanding of the first phase of work. The Research & Monitoring staff will discuss the District's current capabilities and preliminary plans for further developing capabilities to understand and predict the impacts of climate change.

A new MCWD Board member will be appointed at their March meeting in two weeks given Manager Rogness is not seeking reappointment.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next Meeting is Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Board of Managers Liaison: Manager Maxwell