

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, June 16, 2020**

Members Present

Balogh, Bushnell, Ciardelli, David, Flo, Girard, McGovern, Nyquist, Oltmans, Ordway, Rechelbacher, Rosenberg, Salditt

Managers Present

Manager Hejmadi

Others Present

MCWD Staff: James Wisker, Tiffany Schaufler, Kim LaBo

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

First virtual meeting of the 2020 Citizen Advisory Committee.

Meeting chaired by Rechelbacher and called to order at 6:35 p.m.

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

Rechelbacher noted an error in the description of a motion contained within the March 3, 2020 minutes. The chair cannot make a motion and this has been discussed with staff to ensure future accuracy. Oltmans motioned to approve the March 3, 2020 CAC meeting minutes, seconded by Bushnell, motion approved.

Salditt moved to approve the May 4, 2020 volunteer engagement work group minutes. Girard seconded. Motion approved.

Discussion Items:

Climate Adaptation - Schaufler

The purpose of the discussion was to ground CAC committee members on the status of climate change planning at the state, regional, and local levels. This grounding is intended to provide a common foundation for upcoming climate conversation discussions regarding the District's current and future work related to climate adaptation.

Background:

The climate conversation series was initiated at the March 3, 2020 CAC meeting with the purpose of building common understanding of:

- 1) How climate change is impacting MN's weather
- 2) The state of climate adaptation planning in MN
- 3) Identify areas of work the District is currently engaged in which is responsive to the issue of climate change

This foundational knowledge will inform subsequent discussions around how the watershed will adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The series was kicked off with a presentation from the state climatologist, Kenny Blumenfeld who outlined trends across the state.

Below is a summary of identified trends:

- a. The state is getting wetter and winter “night time” lows are warming (more freeze/thaw cycles)
- b. There is strong evidence that we are going to keep on this trajectory
- c. Summer temperatures will begin to increase in next 12-20 years
- d. Drought is as big an issue for the state as flooding

Blumenfeld also noted we are in uncharted territory, which raises unanswered questions about jurisdictional authority and responsibility. There is a need for leadership within the state and the District is currently well positioned to lead due to its understanding of the science and active planning around the issue.

State of Climate Adaptation in Minnesota

CAC members revisited the climate trends presentation and reviewed and discussed the District’s governance scan on the current state of climate adaptation planning.

Below are key insights from the discussion:

- Minnesota has seen the most change in precipitation across the nation and drought will likely become as big an issue for the state as flooding. We should consider both ends of the climate spectrum when considering adaptation.
- Overall, there are not any policies, regulations or other actions being taken by state, regional or local entities to adapt to impacts from climate change. The primary activities government entities are engaged in is implementing monitoring, modeling/forecasting, education and outreach and coordinating. A significant barrier to action on climate adaptation are the large associated financial costs and the lack of political will to expend tax money now to prevent negative impacts in the future.
- A clear roadmap on how to adapt to climate change doesn’t exist. The District will need to project what we think the roles of other levels of government should be so we do not replicate roles.
- The District will need to look outside the state to find examples of climate adaptation policies, regulations and practices. Coastal communities within the U.S. and a few European countries have shown leadership in this area.
- District staff should identify areas it makes sense for the District to focus climate adaptation efforts since they are the experts and also identify potential roles of the District. CAC members can then stress test staff’s proposals and the areas of focus can help guide future research needs.

Parking Lot Items

A parking lot for ideas generated during the discussion for revisiting at upcoming climate conversations are listed below:

- An existing District climate adaptation document could serve as a potential planning tool as MCWD moves forward planning with cities. The District could use the science to help cities with planning and development of water resources and land use.
- Are there constructive ways the District could educate and engage residents and community thought leaders to advance action at the local level? For example, could the District educate residents on future predicted flooding as a way to activate and engage them?
- Should a part of the climate adaptation scan contain an assessment of how watershed residents are reacting to climate change and what they are feeling?

- The District will need to understand how a changing climate will drive hydrology in the district and how to respond. The next version of precipitation modeling will identify areas at most threat and the District needs to carve out our role in a thoughtful manner. For example, the District could do scenario planning based on precipitation data and modeling to identify where cities could have future conflicts based on new water foot prints.
- Is large scale flood storage a tactic the District should employ to prevent flooding?
- Should all the District's projects have a carbon sequestration element?
- Groups to potentially research – U.S. Navy is very involved in climate adaptation and the University of Vermont and the state of Vermont are working with the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment on climate and sustainability issues.

Next Steps

Given CAC members felt well-grounded in the current state of climate adaptation planning within Minnesota, the next climate conversation will center on how the current work of the District is responsive to climate change. Staff will discuss with the CAC Executive Committee whether the next climate conversation will be ready for the July meeting or will need to begin in August.

In preparation for the next climate conversation:

- Staff will focus on collecting additional information on work being conducted by non-profits, other states, particularly coastal communities, and internationally. This work will take some additional time to collect before being brought back to the CAC.
- Leadership of the climate conversations will transition to the policy program staff.

Salditt motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Girard. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next Meeting is Tuesday, July 7th at 6:30 p.m.
Board of Managers Liaison Manager Loftus