

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, December 9, 2020**

**Members Present**

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

**Managers Present**

None due to illness

**Others Present**

MCWD Staff: James Wisker, Kim LaBo, Becky Christopher

**Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

Seventh virtual meeting of the 2020 Citizen Advisory Committee.  
Meeting chaired by Rechelbacher and called to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

Salditt motioned to approve the November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 CAC meeting minutes, seconded by Bushnell, minutes approved.

**Discussion Items:**

**CAC Assessment Process- Wisker**

Purpose:

Staff provided an overview of the planned CAC assessment process and anticipated timeline. The meeting was also utilized to start the assessment discovery process.

Background:

Since 2016, MCWD has systematically evaluated and realigned each of its programs to best support the organization's goals laid out in the 2016 Strategic 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 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.

During the first half of 2021, District staff will work with the CAC and Board to follow the same evaluative approach it has applied to its other programs in order to achieve this clarity and alignment.

Assessment Goals and Process:

At the December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting, staff discussed the assessment goals and process to ensure the strategic alignment and focus of the CAC in 2021 and beyond.

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, how the CAC supports the District's future work will need to be evaluated by the value it provides and the level of organizational supported needed.

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 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.

Staff also reviewed the six-step process the District will use to evaluate the CAC:

1. Set process with policy stakeholders
2. Discovery and insight generation
3. Frame and evaluate strategic options
4. Review progress with policy stakeholders
5. Set direction and identify operational and implementation considerations
6. Board decision

#### Small Group Discussion Findings:

As part of the discovery phase of the process, staff facilitated break-out group discussions in which CAC members were asked to reflect on their experiences as advisory committee members. Below is a summary of the key discussion findings.

1. *A common theme among committee members was an interest in increasing their knowledge about the watershed district and volunteering out of a sense of service.*

Members joined the committee to serve their communities by gaining an understanding of local water resources and the work the watershed district is engaged in to preserve and protect these resources. A number of committee members either have applied what they learned at the watershed district back in their communities or served as a source of information about the District to the broader community.

2. *Members bring a diversity of skill sets, experience and relationships to the committee and they are most engaged when they are using this background to contribute to the work of the District.*

In addition to being residents of the watershed with connections to various local groups and networks, CAC members also bring professional skills from current or former work or skills gained in other volunteer service, while others bring historical perspectives from many years of service on the CAC or as long term residents of their communities.

3. *Members are most engaged when their diverse skills, experiences and relationships are leveraged to advance the District's work.*

Understanding how the CAC's work contributed to District work products and seeing a scope of work through to completion are other motivating factors for members.

4. *Aspects of the advisory committee which set it apart from technical or expert committees are its community connections and resident perspectives.*

The committee has served as a sounding board by providing different perspectives on District plans and initiatives. Members have identified how an action might be perceived by the community or how well it may be understood. As a resident volunteer group, members have also served as links between the District and local communities by connecting residents to the District or communicating information from the community to the District. Examples include members serving on local advisory planning committees and being a connector between that local work and the District.

5. *A key consideration of the assessment process is how changes are evaluated and determined to be an improvement.*

Overall, the assessment process is viewed as a process organizations need to periodically conduct to remain effective. Members would benefit from hearing the District's perspective on how the CAC's work has or has not contributed to the work of the District and this could potentially be systematized as an annual analysis. Regarding the current process, there should be an understanding of how the changes have been evaluated and determined to be improvements.

#### Action Steps:

As a next step staff will review the assessment process with the Board at the December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting. Upon approval by the Board, staff will begin implementing the approved CAC assessment process.

Salditt served as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **Updates:**

##### **CAC Member Update**

Nyquist reported a state grant awarded to the Bryn Mawr community to fund a project to deal with stormwater runoff. This project is located in the Bassett Creek Watershed District.

Girard provided an update on upcoming CAC Executive Committee elections and encouraged all CAC members to consider applying and stated there are positions available.

Salditt and Flo notified members that Wenck, a consulting firm on contract with the District, was recently acquired by Stantech.

#### **Staff Report**

LaBo provided an update on the CAC Executive Committee member election process. Four positions on the Executive Committee are up for election and anyone who is interested in running should send her an email by December 20<sup>th</sup>. People will then vote for committee members via Survey Monkey and the results of the election will be announced at the January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 CAC meeting.

The Board will appointment members to the CAC at the December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting.

Wisker reported the District Board decided not to change the 2021 budget in response to the city of Greenwood's request and more detailed information can be found in the Board resolution passed at the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 meeting.

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

**Next Meeting is Wednesday, January 20th at 6:30 p.m.**

Board of Managers Liaison: Manager Loftus