



Wednesday, January 17, 2024

## CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MCWD Office, Board Room

[www.minnehahacreek.org](http://www.minnehahacreek.org)

### Board of Managers:

Sherry White, President; William Olson, Vice President; Jessica Loftus, Treasurer; Eugene Maxwell, Secretary; Richard Miller, Manager; Arun Hejmadi, Manager; Steve Sando, Manager

*Board Liaison: Manager Maxwell*

### Citizens Advisory Committee Members Present:

Emily Balogh, Marcy Bean, Cara Donovan, Dan Flo, Robert Glisky, Laurie Goldsmith, John Iverson, Drew McGovern, Rich Nyquist, Janet Schaefer, Denise Tennen

### Citizens Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Lisa Fowler, Suzanne Jiwani, Sheri Wallace

### MCWD Staff Present:

Samantha Maul, Maia Irvin, James Wisker

6:35 pm

1. **Committee Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call**  
Introduction of new members – **Maul**  
Maul provided an overview of the 2024 CAC meeting calendar and introduced new CAC members.
2. **Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**  
2.1 November 15, 2023, agenda  
*Iverson, Balogh. All Approved.*
3. **Approval of Minutes (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**  
3.1 September 20, 2023, minutes  
*Flo, Glisky. All Approved.*
4. **Action Items**  
4.1 2024 Executive Committee Election  
Maul explained the role of the executive committee and provided an overview of each of the roles, including Chair, Vice-Chair, and two Executive Officers, which are also explained in the CAC's bylaws. 2023 CAC Executive Committee members shared why they enjoyed being on the committee and reflected on the benefits of helping plan and facilitate meetings.  
  
CAC members voted for the 2024 CAC Chair first. CAC members nominated Nyquist, who accepted the nomination. CAC members moved to close the nominations. Nyquist was elected CAC Chair.

CAC members voted for the 2024 CAC Vice-Chair next. CAC members nominated Flo, who accepted the nomination. CAC members moved to close the nominations. Flo was elected CAC Vice-Chair.

CAC members voted for the two 2024 Executive Officers next. Four CAC members were nominated, including Iverson, Goldsmith, Glisky, and Balogh, and all four accepted the nomination. CAC members moved to close the nominations. The four nominees briefly explained why they were interested in serving on the Executive Committee before voting started. Balogh and Glisky were elected as the 2024 CAC Executive Officers, based on majority votes.

7:15 pm

5. **Discussion Items**

5.1 MCWD “Look Ahead” – **Wisker**

Wisker thanked outgoing CAC members and welcomed new members before presenting on MCWD’s upcoming work, goals, and priorities for 2024. Wisker provided an overview of MCWD’s strategic framework and said capital projects and policies are the strategic pillars of MCWD’s work.

Wisker briefly discussed planned capital projects in four major areas of the watershed. These projects are focused on a regional approach to address water resource issues and impairments. The four areas are the Six Mile Creek-Halsted Bay (SMCHB) Subwatershed, the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed, the Painter Creek Subwatershed, and the Minnehaha Creek Subwatershed. MCWD’s work in 2024 will focus on advancing projects in these four subwatersheds.

MCWD chose each area based on opportunities to provide significant, regional water resource and community benefits, which is why three of the four focus areas are in the upper watershed. Making improvements upstream provide water resource benefits downstream.

Wisker explained that the SMCHB Subwatershed has regionally significant resources and existing impairments. There is also opportunity in this area for MCWD to work with land use developers in the community. Wisker shared that MCWD has taken a three-pronged strategy for work in this region, which includes the implementation of landscape improvements, carp management, and alum treatments. Projects over the past several years have built widespread support for MCWD’s continued work and partnership in the subwatershed. A CAC member asked for clarification on when work in this subwatershed started. Wisker said that focused work in this area started around 2009. He said that in 2024, MCWD will be moving work downstream in this subwatershed to the East Auburn Wetland, Turbid-Lundsten Corridor, Mud Lake, and Halsted Bay.

Wisker provided an overview of ongoing and planned work in the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed. In 2018, MCWD worked with the municipalities in this area and the Long Lake Waters Association to develop a data-driven project implementation Roadmap. The Roadmap outlined water resource issues, drivers, and strategies to achieve clean water goals in the subwatershed. The Roadmap strategy prioritizes significant, regional water management first, followed by internal load management. The first two projects identified in the Roadmap focus on regional stormwater management by improving the County Road 6 Stormwater Pond and the Holbrook Park Ponds. A CAC member asked what type of pond the County Road 6 Pond is, and Wisker clarified that it’s a large sediment retention basin that collects drainage from the two major tributaries in this subwatershed. He said a third project from the Roadmap is a wetland bank near Holy Name

Lake, the implementation of which is driven by an opportunity to partner with the city and private developers. Wisker said the next step is to present the Roadmap to city councils and receive resolutions of support.

Wisker said the Painter Creek Subwatershed is an area of focus because it is largely rural/agricultural/residential land, and everything drains through Painters Creek and into Jennings Bay. MCWD has not started work in this subwatershed yet, but staff will be starting data collection soon, to inform future project implementation.

Wisker also provided an overview of work that has happened and is planned to happen in the Minnehaha Creek Subwatershed, primarily within two key areas, which are the Minnehaha Creek Greenway and the Minnehaha Parkway. He explained that the Greenway has been an area of focus for MCWD over the last 10-15 years because it sits on the most degraded stretch of Minnehaha Creek. MCWD and its partners have worked in recent years to integrate nature and the built environment and create community assets like Cottageville Park. The capstone on this work will be the 325 Blake Road project, which will treat stormwater from the surrounding cities and integrate place-making community assets with water resource benefits.

On the Minnehaha Parkway, MCWD is working with the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to structure a program of partnership that will allow for long-term investment in water resources. The first phase of this partnership will be implementing three projects identified in MPRB's Minnehaha Parkway Master Plan. The partners are also creating a partnership implementation plan for long-range planning. Wisker noted that this is the first time since a historic partnership in the 1990s that all three agencies will be coming together to implement significant water resource improvements in the City.

One CAC member asked if the Minneapolis partnership is separate from MCWD's Land & Water Partnership (LWP) program. Wisker confirmed that it is separate. Wisker then transitioned to an overview of MCWD's planned policy work for 2024, which will include continuing work on climate action planning, advancing the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) framework, and launching the LWP program.

He explained that the region is getting warmer and wetter due to climate change and that weather extremes like flooding and drought are becoming more extreme. Staff developed a data-driven strategy through MCWD's Climate Action Framework to more fully understand how a changing climate will impact water resources now and in the future. He said staff are planning to convene the watershed's communities to create a cohesive climate action and resilience strategy for the 2027 Watershed Management Plan.

Wisker noted that staff have identified actionable steps around DEI both internally and externally. Work going forward will focus on how to integrate equity considerations into capital planning and climate work. He said this work will also focus on understanding the watershed's communities and how to best engage residents.

Wisker then discussed MCWD's new LWP program, which was adopted by MCWD's Board of Managers in 2023. Staff designed the program with feedback from the CAC and the Land & Water Partnership Initiative Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Staff will be marketing the program to potential partners in

2024. The program is intended to ensure MCWD remains responsive to the needs of all of the watershed's communities even if they are not located in the main areas of focus for capital projects. The program allows MCWD to support partnered projects that provide significant, regional water resource benefits.

Wisker asked the group for feedback, reflections, and questions. Several CAC members thanked Wisker for his presentation and said they appreciated all of the information he provided.

One CAC member asked who would be monitoring the communities around Lake Minnetonka, since MCWD's 2024 plans are focused on areas outside of the lake. Wisker said the strategy for the lake now is to make improvements to the lake that its communities cannot do, which is implementing work upstream on the land that drains into the lake, which has the greatest impact on the lake's water quality. He said the LWP program can help support communities around the lake as they implement their own projects.

A CAC member asked for clarification on the history of resident concerns about Lake Nokomis flooding issues, which was one of the reasons MCWD decided to begin creating a structured partnership program in Minneapolis. Wisker provided background about localized flooding experienced by residents living near Lake Nokomis. Residents became concerned with the impacts of flooding and looked to their government officials to do something. MCWD partnered with the City of Minneapolis and MPRB, among many other organizations to provide accurate information and helpful solutions. This partnership sparked a commitment from each agency to re-engage in a water resource partnership.

8:20 pm

## 6. Informational Items + Updates

### 6.1 CAC Member Updates

- Nyquist asked CAC members to provide any updates from their communities. No updates were provided.
- Maul read resolutions of recognition for departing CAC members Oltmans and Ordway, which were adopted by the Board of Managers in December 2023.

### 6.2 Board Liaison Updates

- Manager Maxwell announced that the Board approved the authorization of a request for proposals for MCWD's 2-D Watershed Model Build to advance its climate action planning efforts.
- Maxwell announced that the Board adopted the LWP program in 2023.
- Maxwell said the Board recently held a public hearing for MCWD's Permitting Rule Revisions. The Public Comment period for rule revisions is ongoing and will end February 1, 2024. CAC members and other residents can find more information on the revisions and submit public comments on MCWD's website.

### 6.3 Staff Updates

- Maul announced that MCWD's Director of Project Planning, Michael Hayman, was chosen as the 2023 Outstanding Watershed District Employee of the Year by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.
- Maul provided an update on water levels and dam operations. The watershed's drought classification remains "abnormally dry" according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Gray's Bay Dam was winterized and will remain so until ice-out.
- Maul provided a brief overview of 2023 local election outcomes as well as upcoming engagement with policymakers in 2024.

- Maul provided an update on maintenance dredging of the Amelia and the Twin Lakes Park Stormwater Ponds. Construction started on Jan. 17 and will unfold over the next 3-4 weeks, provided weather conditions remain suitable. The ponds will naturally refill in the spring, and MCWD's vegetation management contractor will restore the surrounding vegetation. Residents can learn more on MCWD's website and can join MCWD's email list to receive regular updates.
- Maul provided a brief overview of the 2023 American Geophysical Union Conference, which several MCWD staff attended in December. Major themes of the conference revolved around climate change science and outreach.

**8:40 pm**

**7. Adjournment**

*Goldsmith. Bean. All approved.*

**Upcoming Meeting**

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting (Manager Olson, Board Liaison)