



Wednesday, March 18, 2026

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MCWD Boardroom

www.minnehahacreek.org

Board of Managers:

Sherry White, President; William Olson, Vice President; Eugene Maxwell, Treasurer; Arun Hejmadi, Secretary; Ricardo Bonner, Manager; Steve Sando, Manager; Janet Schaefer, Manager

Board Liaison: Manager Olson

Citizens Advisory Committee Members Present:

Cait Caswell, Joshua Foschi, Robert Glisky, Laurie Goldsmith, Steve Hage, John Iverson, Suzanne Jiwani, Drew McGovern, Rich Nyquist, Sheri Wallace

Citizens Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Will Mulhern

MCWD Staff Present: Becky Christopher, Kate Moran, Samantha Hoppe, James O'Brien

6:30 pm

- 1. Committee Meeting Call to Order**
Chair Glisky called the meeting to order.
- 2. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**
2.1 March 18, 2026 agenda
Iverson, Wallace, all approved.
- 3. Approval of Minutes (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)**
3.1 January 14, 2026 minutes
Iverson, Foschi, all approved.
- 4. Action Items**
4.1 Executive Committee Election
Hoppe provided some context for the transition of two CAC members to the MCWD Board, which created two vacancies on the CAC's Executive Committee. Chair Glisky opened the floor for nominations for the election of two Executive Officers. CAC members nominated Nyquist and Wallace for the open positions. Nyquist and Wallace were elected to fill the open positions.

7:00 pm

- 5. Discussion Items**
5.1 2027 Plan: Evaluation Framework Approach – **Moran**
Moran framed the purpose of the discussion as an opportunity to solicit the CAC for input on the proposed structure of the Evaluation Framework (Framework), as well as guidance on how a key component of the Framework, the 10-year objectives, should be designed.

Moran explained that the Framework is one of four work areas for the 2027 Watershed Management Plan (Plan), aimed at improving how MCWD monitors, tracks, and reports its progress across its four strategic goals: Water Quality, Water Quantity, Ecological Integrity, and Thriving Communities. Moran explained MCWD's current evaluation approach, based on its 2017 Plan, which established MCWD's four strategic goals, implementation model, and framed long-range targets to support progress tracking. She framed the 2027 Plan provides a unique opportunity to improve MCWD's understanding and evaluation of implementation activities and their impact on watershed conditions. MCWD has also heard from Plan review agencies that have expressed interest in more defined, specific 10-year progress indicators.

To inform MCWD's approach for the 2027 Plan, MCWD reviewed evaluation approaches from other watersheds, as well as planning research and literature. Across this analysis, MCWD found that many watersheds and other organizations often include broad, long-term goals, but lack a clear connection to changing conditions over time. From this research, MCWD pulled out key insights to inform an effective evaluation system:

- Connect actions to outcomes
- Track multiples level of change
- Pair indicators with context and explanation
- Support learning and decision making over time

Moran explained that these insights helped inform MCWD's proposed Framework approach, which is designed to work across different scales, recognizing both short-term project or program outcomes, as well as longer-term trends that indicate progress toward MCWD's four strategic goals.

The proposed structure includes 5 key components:

1. Strategic Goals – set stable and consistent direction for the organization
 - a. Intent: What are we working toward?
2. 10-Year Objectives – define changes projected under the 10-year plan cycle
 - a. Intent: What progress should occur within the 10-year period?
3. Core Indicators – track longer-term watershed condition trends
 - a. Intent: How are conditions changing over time?
4. Supporting Metrics – project or program level assessment of outcomes
 - a. Intent: What actions occurred?
5. Integrated Context –connect metrics to changing conditions with narrative context
 - a. Intent: Why are trends changing?

Moran noted that this structure helps connect actions to outcomes, clarifies progress within a Plan cycle, tracks long-term watershed trends, and improves the communication of impact. To illustrate the structure at work, Moran walked through an example of how the components could be completed for MCWD's strategic goal of water quality. Moran also explained how the Framework would be integrated into MCWD's 2027 Plan within the evaluation section, where MCWD would describe the overall structure, including goals, objectives, and the core indicators that track watershed trends.

A CAC member asked about the scale of the Framework and recognized the importance of articulating the trajectory of local, regionally specific metrics to members of the public, and tying those trends to watershed-wide progress. Moran reinforced that the goal is to bridge several levels of progress and

geography within the framework, with regional priorities and targets included for each focal geography.

CAC members asked about the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR)'s interests and needs for evaluation within the Plan. Moran noted that BWSR, the state agency that administers watershed organizations, felt that long-range targets, as included in the 2017 Plan, were not specific enough to drive accountability and requested more specificity in the 2027 Plan.

Another CAC member commented on the challenge of breaking down the watershed into manageable pieces, noting that comparing progress across different geographies may not be a one-size-fits-all. CAC members also recognized the importance of striving for measurable indicators. Members reflected that outside factors should be acknowledged for their impact on progress toward goals, such as unprecedented weather patterns. A CAC member also commented on the precedent to do a five-year reflection, mid-Plan cycle, to provide an opportunity for adjustment and recalibration.

CAC members were asked to weigh in on several questions through an online Mentimeter exercise. CAC members noted that the Evaluation Framework helps reinforce clear priorities, defines benchmarks for success, and helps both the public and partners build trust in MCWD's ability to deliver measurable results for the watershed. They noted that evaluation is also very helpful for grant applications to build credibility and enforce accountability with lenders. CAC members also commented that the Framework is fairly clear, but will be easier to grasp with subwatershed-based examples. CAC members noted the importance of recognizing the audience for the Framework, to ensure the language, level of specificity, and metrics are accessible to members of the public, council members, and laypeople.

CAC members were also asked to compare this approach with any other evaluation tools they had come across. CAC members mentioned the Met Council's Imagine 2050 Plan has a strong measurement program and noted appreciation for organizations that regularly solicit feedback to inform evaluation. They also noted that MCWD's proposed approach is unique, suited to a watershed, and goes further than many evaluation tools they had seen. CAC members also reflected on frustrations with setting seemingly arbitrary, estimated targets without the resources to meet them in their own professional experiences.

CAC members advised on considerations for the implementation of this framework, as proposed. Responses included taking the time to develop quality visual resources to improve communication on relevant goals and metrics, setting indicators for progress at the subwatershed level to reinforce local impact, avoiding unnecessary jargon and complex industry language to avoid barriers to understanding progress and outcomes, and being clear about certain outcomes and measures that are beyond MCWD's control.

Moran provided a short presentation to frame how MCWD is currently thinking about setting 10-year objectives, including what options and tradeoffs the organization must consider. Moran framed four options that the CAC was invited to weigh in on, ranging from broad, directional objectives to specific, measurable targets that are waterbody-specific, or a combination of approaches.

CAC members discussed options for 10-year objectives in small groups. Some noted that measurable targets should be tied to the impact they'd have, noting that too specific objectives may be challenging to implement or create conflict when numerical targets cannot be achieved. CAC members also recognized the importance of flexibility and potential public opinion implications when targets are unmet. The majority of CAC members agreed that a hybrid option that seeks to balance numeric target specificity with measurable trends is a strong approach. CAC members also recognized that qualitative measures like quotes, statements, testimonials, and case studies are also important to include when evaluating progress across all scales of impact.

8:10 pm

6. Informational Items + Updates

6.1 CAC Member Updates

- Nyquist and Jiwani shared that they will be moving out of the watershed later this year. Staff noted that the two members will finish their terms in 2026, and their positions will be filled in the CAC recruitment process this Fall.

6.2 Board Liaison Updates

- Manager Olson shared that the Board of Managers recognized former Minneapolis City Council Member Emily Koski for her leadership and service to the watershed and her involvement in building a new partnership for water resource planning and project implementation with the City, MCWD, and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB).
- Manager Olson noted that the Board recently authorized a Minor Plan Amendment to facilitate the implementation and acquisition of grant funding for internal load reduction projects in Cedar Lake and Lake Nokomis, in coordination with MPRB, and the City of Minneapolis.
- Manager Olson also noted that MCWD is finishing up the 2D model to support the 2027 Watershed Management Plan, and recently appointed Policy and Technical Advisory Committee members for the Plan.

6.3 Staff Updates

- O'Brien noted that new members Caswell and Mulhern have completed their onboarding. Staff are working to plan the next CAC Field Trip, likely in June.
- O'Brien noted he would be convening the Task Force to steward MCWD's DEI approach and inclusive recruitment in April to kick off their work.
- O'Brien shared construction updates on the County Road 6 and East Auburn Wetland projects, which have reached substantial completion. The Painter Creek Road property is scheduled for demolition and a prescribed burn to support future project implementation. Construction is just around the corner for both the Gateway to the Greenway and Greenway-Cedar Trail Connection projects in Hopkins and St. Louis Park, respectively.
- O'Brien shared a few updates on MCWD hiring efforts. MCWD recently welcomed a new Office Coordinator and is currently interviewing for numerous positions, including a Policy-Planning Coordinator, PMLM Technician, and Research and Monitoring Seasonal Field Assistant.

8:30 pm

7. Adjournment

Jiwani, Wallace. All approved.

Upcoming Meeting

Wednesday, May 20, 2026, Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting