

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
Board of Managers
5-14-20

50 Olson: Aye
51 Maxwell: Aye
52 White: Aye

53

54 **CONSENT AGENDA**

55

56 *It was moved by Manager Miller, seconded by Manager Maxwell, to approve the Consent*
57 *Agenda consisting of approval of the April 23, 2020 Board minutes.*

58 *Upon roll call vote, the motion carried, 6-0 as follows:*

59

60 Hejmadi: Absent
61 Loftus: Aye
62 Rogness: Aye
63 Miller: Aye
64 Olson: Aye
65 Maxwell: Aye
66 White: Aye

67

68 **BOARD, COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS**

69

70 President's Report: President White noted that the Citizens Advisory Committee has had
71 one work group meeting focused on volunteer engagement, and will have
72 recommendations to the Board in the near future. A second work group will be meeting
73 later this month to work on climate adaptation issues.

74

75 Operations and Programs Committee Report: Manager Loftus reported that the
76 Committee received a presentation from Mr. Wisker on the analysis of staffing needs for
77 the District to inform the 2021 budget process.

78

79 Upcoming Meeting and Event Schedule: President White directed the managers to the
80 meetings listed on the agenda; all of the meetings to be noticed and held via WebEx.

81

82 **ACTION ITEMS**

83

84 Permit 20-030: Crown College Ball Fields, Laketown Township

85

86 Ms. Heidi Quinn appeared before the Board of Managers and reviewed the request for
87 board action. She presented an overview of the site and noted that the application is
88 before the Board of Managers because of the applicant's request for a variance from the
89 wetland buffer rule. She reviewed the stormwater management plan; based on the
90 amount of impervious increase proposed in light of the site history, the applicant is
91 required here to treat the increase in imperviousness. Two filtration basins will provide
92 for treatment. The wetland buffer requirement is triggered by the application of the
93 stormwater rule; wetlands A and B on the site are classified as Preserve wetlands and so

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94 require a 75 foot buffer. Ms. Quinn noted that the proposed project exceeds to the total
95 area of buffer required, but misses the minimum buffer in three locations, amounting to
96 about 3% of the total buffer.

97
98 Ms. Quinn reviewed the criteria for granting a variance. She noted that site conditions,
99 range of alternatives considered by the applicant, and the purposes of the buffer
100 requirement, to provide water quality treatment and habitat. Ms. Quinn noted that the
101 total area of proposed buffer exceeds the requirement, and the excess may be considered
102 to compensate for loss of habitat where the buffer minimum is missed. She explained
103 that the filtration basins are designed to provide treatment capacity in excess of the rule
104 requirement, and thereby may be considered to compensate for the loss of water quality
105 treatment. She stated that staff and the engineer have concluded that there is adequate
106 evidence in the record of the application to support the granting of the requested variance.

107
108 President White noted the presence of Mr. Roth and Ms. Woodruff in the audience, who
109 are representatives of the applicant Crown College. They stated that they had no
110 comments to offer.

111
112 ***It was moved by Manager Miller, seconded by Manager Olson, to grant the requested***
113 ***variance based on the findings that the criteria for a variance are met and supported by***
114 ***the staff analysis and record in the staff report.*** Upon a question from Manager Olson,
115 Ms. Quinn and Mr. Meehan explained that the two culverts in the causeway over the
116 drainage ditch are at different elevations by design to manage stormwater flow and that
117 the District's nearby carp barrier will not be impacted.

118
119 ***Upon roll call vote, the motion to adopt the variance carried, 7-0 as follows:***

120
121 Hejmadi: Aye
122 Loftus: Aye
123 Rogness: Aye
124 Miller: Aye
125 Olson: Aye
126 Maxwell: Aye
127 White: Aye

128
129 ***It was moved by Manager Miller, seconded by Manager Rogness to approve the permit***
130 ***application with the conditions recommended by staff in the staff permit report.*** Upon a
131 question from Manager Maxwell, Ms. Quinn confirmed that the applicant had performed soil
132 tests over the years with the various permit applications for work on the campus. ***Upon roll call***
133 ***vote, the motion to approve the permit application with the staff recommendations carried, 7-0***
134 ***as follows:***

135
136 Hejmadi: Aye
137 Loftus: Aye
138 Rogness: Aye

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139 Miller: Aye
140 Olson: Aye
141 Maxwell: Aye
142 White: Aye

143
144

145 **STAFF UPDATES**

146

147 Administrator's Report

148

149 Mr. Wisker reported on the following items:

150

151 1. Project updates:

152

153 a. Minnehaha Preserve Boardwalk: most recent repairs were completed on May 12,
154 involving replacement of about 150 deck and rail boards, with oversight by legal
155 counsel and District consulting engineer Wenck. There will be an update on legal
156 developments at the May 28 meeting.

157

158 b. 325 Blake Road Redevelopment: staff has received a draft outline of the
159 development process from Hopkins. Continued discussions seek further clarity
160 on the liaison role of council members and managers.

161

162 2. Water levels update: April and May precipitation to date has been below normal, but
163 groundwater levels remain high. Lake Minnetonka is currently at 929.24, below the
164 Ordinary High Water mark, and the flow at Grays Bay is 20 cfs. There are still concerns
165 about high water, including at Zumbra Lake, where property owners have recently
166 communicated concerns to agencies. Staff will be monitoring water levels with
167 upcoming rains in the forecast.

168

169 3. 2301 Brunswick, St. Louis Park: additional information from the Minnesota Pollution
170 Control Agency is under review and staff will provide an update at the May 28 or June 11
171 meeting.

172

173 4. Minnehaha Creek Parkway master plan process: the Minneapolis Park and Recreation
174 Board provided a draft for staff review. Ms. Tiffany Schaufler will present an update to
175 the Policy and Planning Committee in June.

176

177 5. Wasserman Lake Preserve: construction is underway with tree removal and mass grading
178 at the site.

179

180 6. Arden Park: final site work is being completed.

181

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- 182 7. The Citizens Advisory Committee is holding work group meetings as presented earlier in
183 President White's report. The CAC work group on climate adaptation is reviewing the
184 scan of best practices prepared for the Board Retreat last year
185
- 186 8. Cedar Lake water quality: staff members have been in communication with staff from
187 the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board concerning algae and bacteria at Cedar Lake
188 and will be learning results from water sampling.
189
- 190 9. COVID-19 related work management: pursuant to the Governor's orders and board
191 resolutions, the staff continue to work safely from home. There is no rush to re-open the
192 office, and there have been no concerns about accessibility to the District staff expressed
193 from the public. New field monitoring work will commence soon; construction projects
194 continue; land management programs continue. A plan for eventual re-opening of the
195 office is being prepared based on the template provided by the Minnesota Department of
196 Employment and Economic Development.
197

198 Manager Maxwell stated that he felt there should be no rush to re-open the office.
199 Manager Hejmadi agreed, stating that it is better to take a cautious approach. At the same
200 time, he said, the crisis provides both danger and opportunity. A dark winter may be
201 ahead, but we are also learning much from reducing our environmental footprint. Mr.
202 Wisker noted that there are many aspects of the crisis with long term strategic
203 implications. For example, the District's stakeholder engagement process has stressed a
204 focus on interpersonal, face-to-face relationships. The District will need to adapt with
205 expertise in a new approach using powerpoints and electronic communication. The
206 pandemic crisis is also having economic impacts, including the market considerations for
207 projects like the redevelopment of 325 Blake Road, or even opportunities for other
208 conservation land acquisition.
209

210 **Adjournment**

211
212 There being no further business, President White declared the meeting of the Board of Managers
213 adjourned at 7:52 p.m.
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215
216

217 Respectfully submitted,
218
219
220

221 Kurt Rogness, Secretary
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