

1 **DRAFT**

2 **MINUTES OF THE POLICY & PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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4
5 **September 8, 2016**

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7 **CALL TO ORDER**

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9 Manager Miller called the Committee to order at 4:35 p.m. at the District Offices,

10
11 15320 Minnetonka Blvd

12 Minnetonka, MN 55345

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14 **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

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16 Brian Shekleton and Dick Miller.

17
18 **NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

19
20 Bill Olson and Sherry Davis White.

21
22 **OTHERS PRESENT**

23
24 Anna Brown, Planner & Project Manager

25 Becky Christopher, Lead Planner & Project Manager

26 Brian Girard, CAC Liaison

27 Darren Lochner, Education Program Manager

28 Dave Mandt, Director of Operations & Support Services

29 James Wisker, Director of Planning & Projects

30 Kailey Cermak, Water Quality Technician

31 Katherine Sylvia, Permitting Program Lead

32 Lars Erdahl, District Administrator

33 Maddie Johnson, Technical Support Services Specialist

34 Matthew Cook, Planning Assistant

35 Renae Clark, Planner & Project Manager

36 Sarah Fellows, Education Coordinator

37 Telly Mamayek, Director of Education & Communications

38 Tiffany Schaufler, Project & Land Program Manager

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40 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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42 The agenda was approved without amendment.

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47 **MEETING SUMMARY**

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49 After reviewing strategic planning efforts to date, staff presented a more detailed explanation of
50 the next phase of the strategic planning process. Staff noted that in the first phase, the Board
51 adopted new vision, mission, goal, and guiding principle statements, and staff identified issues
52 for further analysis. In phase II, staff will be conducting analysis at four levels for each program:
53

- 54 1. Program purpose
- 55 2. Program coordination
- 56 3. Program operation
- 57 4. Program evaluation

58
59 Staff will be returning to the PPC with their analysis of the purpose of each program, with
60 special attention paid to programs identified as needing more clear direction. Staff underscored
61 that decisions affecting program direction, especially, must not be made in isolation from each
62 other; program purposes must align at the organization-wide level to form a complementary suite
63 of District initiatives.
64

65 Staff used a draft document to illustrate for the Committee what would be analyzed during each
66 of the four “steps.” As the draft document used had not yet been vetted by all staff groups, staff
67 stated that they would circulate the document amongst staff groups and distribute a revised
68 version to the full Board.
69

70 **COMMITTEE MEETING**

71
72 **Staff Updates**

73
74 Mr. Wisker provided a brief update on each of the following items:
75

- 76 • 325 Blake Road planning
- 77 • Minnehaha Creek Greenway, including Target-Knollwood and Meadowbrook Golf
78 Course
- 79 • The City of Victoria’s MOU with the District and the status of regional treatment
80 planning for Victoria’s downtown

81
82 **Strategic Planning Process: Phase II**

83
84 Mr. Wisker stated that the District has identified program issues, and is now beginning policy
85 analysis of program purpose. He handed out a memo to the Committee, and explained that he
86 would walk the Committee through the memo as he presented.
87

88 Mr. Wisker noted that the District has completed the first phase of the strategic planning process,
89 as defined in Board resolution 15-085 – the District has adopted revised vision, mission, goal,
90 and guiding principle statements and identified issues internally. Mr. Wisker stated that program
91 staff developed preliminary materials to represent current program strategies and operational

92 details. He explained that staff then opened up the materials developed to critique from other
93 District staff, in pursuit of identifying areas of focus for analysis in phase II. Mr. Wisker stated
94 that staff will present the findings of the program evaluation process to the Managers, beginning
95 with questions regarding future program direction and purpose.

96
97 Mr. Erdahl noted that the document handed out has not yet been vetted by all District staff
98 groups, and the information contained should thus not be considered final. He explained that as
99 District staff are creating the process as it is implemented, the process will require iterative
100 planning, revisiting, and reformatting.

101
102 Mr. Wisker referred to the presentation at the August 25, 2016 PPC meeting of issues identified
103 by staff for further analysis and asked if the Committee had any additional issues they would like
104 to see addressed through the process. Manager Miller noted that staff were leading a very
105 thorough process.

106
107 Mr. Wisker revisited important strategic planning decisions to date, highlighting the adoption of
108 the organizational strategic framework in October (2015) and recognition of the organizational
109 priority framework at the July and August PPC meetings (2016). He stated that, moving forward,
110 staff wanted to ensure that final decisions regarding program purpose and direction are made in
111 an organizational context. Mr. Wisker explained that program direction should not be set one
112 program at a time, in isolation from each other; rather, the direction of programs should be
113 determined in relation to one another, as a complementary suite of District initiatives.

114
115 Mr. Wisker stated that once program purpose is determined, decisions regarding operational
116 priorities and efficiencies can be made. He underscored that completing the program evaluation
117 process by identifying evaluative metrics is crucial to allow for continuous readjustment and
118 improvement.

119
120 Mr. Wisker reviewed a series of assumptions regarding organizational priorities as discussed at
121 the July and August PPC meetings:

- 122
- 123 • MCWD's mission focus is protecting and improving the landscape to produce
124 measurable benefit in water quality, water quantity, and ecological integrity, in ways that
125 support thriving communities.
 - 126
127 • Watershed protection and improvement is achieved by both direct MCWD action and
128 action by others that is influenced by the MCWD.
129
 - 130 ○ Direct action to promote and improve the landscape is achieved by MCWD
131 integrating land and water plans and policies, and by MCWD acquiring land and
132 developing capital projects.
 - 133
134 ○ Influencing others to act is achieved by MCWD educating and communicating
135 with target audiences, by regulating activities that threaten water quality, water

136 quantity and ecological integrity, and by providing financial or policy incentives
137 that support action by others to protect and improve the watershed.
138

- 139 • Therefore, programs and initiatives that produce direct action or influence others to
140 action most closely contribute to the MCWD mission, and are therefore organizational
141 priorities.
142
- 143 • Other organizational initiatives are necessary to provide support to programs that most
144 closely contribute to the MCWD mission. These include efforts to maintain capital
145 improvements, collect watershed data to diagnose issues, organizational operation, and
146 organizational planning.
147
- 148 • All District initiatives should work in concert to best support mission objectives.
149
- 150 • Support initiatives should prioritize and efficiently implement activities that most directly
151 assist and augment efforts of program most closely contributing to the MCWD mission.
152
- 153 • Through strategic planning the organization must define program purposes against the
154 MCWD mission, align programs to best work together to accomplish the MCWD
155 mission, and prioritize and allocate resources (money, staff, technology investment)
156 between direct MCWD action and MCWD influence (laterally); and mission priority
157 initiatives and supportive initiatives (vertically).
158

159 Mr. Wisker noted that programs identified by staff as needing clarification regarding program
160 purpose are not the only programs the Managers will review. He explained that a baseline level
161 of analysis will be provided across all programs, and the questions raised through the program
162 evaluation process will highlight and frame areas for closer attention and analysis.
163

164 Manager Miller asked if the staff volunteers helping to design and administer the program
165 evaluation process have received relevant training. Mr. Wisker stated that staff understand the
166 driving purpose behind the strategic planning process, and know not to let process drive
167 outcomes. Ms. Christopher added that she begins internal staff meetings by revisiting the
168 purpose of the process.
169

170 Manager White invited comments from the Facilitator Group members who were present.
171

172 Ms. Clark stated that the clarity of information shared by staff across programs is the best she has
173 seen at the District. She thanked Ms. Christopher for running a clear and inclusive process.
174 Manager Miller thanked Ms. Clark for her input.
175

176 Mr. Wisker concurred with Ms. Clark, underscoring that staff has never had more clarity on each
177 program than now. He noted that the process is inherently difficult, given the simultaneous
178 development and application of the process.
179

180 Mr. Erdahl noted that the process should continue to invite input from across programs to avoid
181 program isolation. He added that process and pace should not dictate outcomes.

182
183 Ms. Cermak stated that she has found the program evaluation process to be empowering. She
184 underscored that inviting staff input helps to realize the District's culture of promoting
185 "leadership at all levels."

186
187 Ms. Christopher stated that interdepartmental teams will be formed in the coming weeks. She
188 explained that these teams – made up of facilitators, program staff, and interested staff volunteers
189 – will use Bardach's Eightfold Path to analyze questions regarding program purpose.

190
191 Ms. Christopher stated that all programs will answer a set of baseline questions, including:

- 192
- 193 • What is the purpose of the program?
 - 194 • How does the program purpose fulfill the mission of the MCWD?
 - 195 • How does the program complement / support / require support from other programs?
- 196

197 Ms. Christopher noted that in addition to the baseline program questions, some programs will
198 analyze issues identified through the program evaluation process.

199
200 Ms. Christopher listed the problem statement and additional questions for the Cost Share
201 program, based on staff input.

202
203 Cost Share

- 204 • Problem statement: The program aims to do too much with limited resources
205 (community engagement, green infrastructure, homeowner projects), making
206 prioritization of grant dollars and staff time difficult. Clarity is needed around
207 program purpose and where resources should be focused.
 - 208 • Questions:
 - 209 ○ Where should the program be focused in order to best serve the mission and
210 complement other District programs?
 - 211 ○ What types of audiences and opportunities should the grants target?
 - 212 ○ Should grant opportunities be evaluated primarily on the basis of water
213 resource benefit or education / community engagement? Can it do both
214 effectively?
 - 215 ○ How should the program interact with the Education Department and its
216 Cynthia Krieg grant program? How should it interact with Planning and
217 Permitting? Is there a need to reallocate duties and / or resources across these
218 programs?
- 219

220 Manager Miller suggested that staff take into account how and why programs were founded. He
221 noted that other organizations perform functions similar to some District programs, explaining
222 that perhaps some District initiatives may prove duplicative through analysis.

223

224 Manager Olson noted that the Cynthia Krieg grant program was operated outside of the Cost
225 Share program. Mr. Wisker added that the AIS program administers its own grants. Mr. Erdahl
226 stated that the District should determine how much money it wants to devote to administering
227 grants.
228

229 Ms. Mamayek noted that grant funds are useful tools to incentivize action by engaged District
230 residents. Mr. Lochner added that Cost Share grant criteria give weight to creative project
231 proposals in an effort to encourage innovation.
232

233 Manager Miller thanked Mr. Lochner and other staff for offering their input and for being open
234 to Managers' inquiries.
235

236 Ms. Christopher presented the problem statements and additional questions for the remaining
237 programs as follows:
238

239 Research and Monitoring

- 240 • Problem statement: The program aims to do too much with limited resources. Clarity
241 is needed regarding program purpose and where resources should be focused.
- 242 • Questions:
 - 243 ○ Where should the program be focused in order to best serve the mission and
244 support other District programs?
 - 245 ○ What is the purpose of each of our various monitoring activities (e.g. issue
246 identification, diagnostics, education / communication, trend analysis,
247 effectiveness monitoring, etc.), and how should these be prioritized?
 - 248 ○ How can the program be optimized to inform implementation?
249

250 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

- 251 • Problem statement: There is a lack of clarity around the organization's role in AIS.
- 252 • Questions:
 - 253 ○ What is the appropriate role for the District in AIS (e.g. monitoring,
254 education, prevention, management, research, etc.)?
 - 255 ○ How does the program serve the mission?
 - 256 ○ How is our role complemented / supported by other organizations?
 - 257 ○ How should the program's activities be prioritized relative to other District
258 initiatives?
259

260 Education and Communications

- 261 • Problem statement: The program aims to do too much with limited resources. Clarity
262 is needed around target audiences and issues and where resources should be focused.
- 263 • Questions:
 - 264 ○ How does the program complement and support other District programming
265 to serve the mission?
 - 266 ○ What audiences and issues should the program focus on, and how should
267 these be prioritized?

- 268 ○ Where should the program focus its resources to reach its audiences about key
269 issues?
270 ○ How can the program most effectively implement its activities across the
271 knowledge-skills-action spectrum to reach the end goal of behavior change?
272

273 Planning

- 274 • Problem statement: Need to define the department's role in organizational planning
275 (e.g. budget, strategic planning, evaluation and reporting)
276 • Questions:
277 ○ Is there a value in having a person / group lead these organizational planning
278 efforts?
279 ○ Who is the appropriate person / group to lead these efforts (Planning,
280 Administrator, Operations, other)?
281 ○ How should staff be engaged in these processes?
282 ○ What is the decision-making framework?
283

284 Mr. Wisker stated that the list of questions is not exhaustive and that each program will ask and
285 answer more evaluative questions than the ones listed in the memo.
286

287 Ms. Christopher stated that, following analysis and decisions on program purpose, assessing
288 program coordination was the next step in the process. She explained that in addition to program-
289 specific questions regarding cross-departmental coordination, each program will answer the
290 following baseline analytical questions:
291

- 292 • How does the program complement / support / require support from other programs?
293 • Are there ways to improve the coordination of these efforts?
294 • Are there ways to improve communication across programs, relative to identified
295 linkages?
296

297 Mr. Erdahl noted that a plan to coordinate communications between existing staff teams should
298 also be developed during this part of the process.
299

300 Mr. Wisker stated that the third step is to evaluate program operation. He explained that in
301 addition to program-specific and organization-wide questions regarding operational efficiencies,
302 each program will answer the following baseline analytical question:
303

- 304 • Is the distribution of resources appropriate with respect to program / organizational
305 purpose and priorities?
306 • Are there non-essential activities that could be cut or scaled back?
307 • Are there high priority activities that are under-resourced in terms of staffing, funding, or
308 technology?
309 • Are there ways to improve program efficiency (e.g. changes to procedures, policy,
310 department / organizational structure, etc.)?
311

312 Manager Shekleton entered the meeting at this point.

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Mr. Wisker stated that the analysis of program operations falls into the four following areas:

- Procedural Efficiency
- Financial Planning
- Technology Planning
- Human Resources Planning

Mr. Wisker stated that the District needs to incorporate a long-term component to its financial planning to avoid levy spikes and future budget-levy gaps.

Mr. Wisker stated that a staff team is working with Mr. Mandt to identify and prioritize staff technology needs, equipment, and costs.

Manager Shekleton asked if the technology plan was merely a hardware replacement schedule or a means to identify and prioritize potential technological system upgrades. Mr. Wisker stated that technology planning should address both aspects – replacements and upgrades. He underscored that technology planning should be done on an organization-wide scale, to prevent programs from having to compete for separate replacements and upgrades.

Mr. Wisker stated that the District needed a staffing plan to ensure the District has the right staff filling the right positions. He noted that this staffing plan is part of a strategic human resources plan, which is being worked on by two Managers, a staff team, and a consultant. Mr. Wisker explained that by inventorying the different skillsets of staff, the District can conduct a “gaps analysis,” to identify needed skillsets in certain areas. He added that identified gaps in organizational capacity would be analyzed for the appropriate method of meeting capacity needs – internal role changes, training of current staff, hiring more staff, or outsourcing capacity to a consultant.

Mr. Wisker stated that the fourth step of the program evaluation process is to develop evaluative metrics.

Ms. Christopher explained that in previous documents, the fourth category was “new needs / initiatives,” but the items under the previous title were relocated to the third step of assessing operational needs and priorities. She stated that each program will have to develop metrics by which to measure the program’s output for use in future evaluations of program effectiveness.

Ms. Christopher stated that she is currently planning on the following timeline for completing the four remaining steps of the program evaluation process:

- Step 1 – “Program purpose” completed by the end of 2016
- Step 2 – “Program coordination” completed by the end of Q1 2017
- Step 3 – “Program operation” completed by the end of Q2 2017
- Step 4 – “Program evaluation” completed by the end of Q3 2017

358 Managers Miller and White thanked staff for the clarity of their presentation. Manager Miller
359 noted that the internally-led self-examination the District is undergoing would be unprecedented
360 for most organizations, and underscored that he is glad to be a part of the process.
361

362 Mr. Wisker stated that he would circulate the draft document used at the meeting amongst staff
363 for internal review and revision.
364

365 Mr. Wisker underscored that he wanted to ensure the Managers felt comfortable with staff's
366 work thus far, and that the Managers knew they could ask questions or give input at any point in
367 the process. Manager Miller stated that he was confident in staff carrying out the process.
368

369 The Committee meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.
370

371 Respectfully submitted,
372

373 Matthew Cook
374 Planning Assistant

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