



**Title:** July 2021 Board Retreat

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of the July 26, 2021 Board Retreat is to “retreat” from, and set aside, conducting the immediate business of the District. To allow the Board of Managers a chance to step back and evaluate how the organization is performing from a higher vantage. This year, the retreat has the added context of happening after over a year of remote work, which created distance between the Board and staff team. Therefore, this Retreat is an opportunity for the Board to reengage with the District’s strategic heading, and with each other. It will be an opportunity to discuss how far we have come in recent years, the opportunities in front of us, and what we hope to accomplish together in the near future.

**Retreat Plan:**

The retreat will be focused on supporting a rich conversation between the Board of Managers around:

1. What we have accomplished since the adoption of the strategic plan
2. Where we sit right now, in terms of progress towards our vision of strategic alignment
3. The near-term priorities and needs, that will ensure our ongoing success

President White will introduce and help ground the Retreat. Louis Smith will facilitate dialog between the Board, and staff will provide supporting presentations to stimulate the conversation.

Below is an outline of how we will plan to use our time together at the Retreat, which will be located at the [Westwood Nature Center](#), located at [8300 West Franklin Avenue in St. Louis Park](#).

5:00 pm – 5:30 pm	Independently explore and enjoy the Westwood Nature Center
5:30 pm – 6:00 pm	DINNER
6:00 pm – 6:45 pm	Board discussion #1 Where have we been, what have we accomplished/learned, where are we now
6:45 pm – 7:00 pm	Staff presentation #1 Where have we been, what have we accomplished/learned, where are we now
7:00 pm – 7:10 pm	Board reflections on #1
7:10 pm – 7:30 pm	BREAK
7:30 pm – 7:50 pm	Staff presentation #2 Near-term priorities and needs, to ensure our ongoing success
7:50 pm – 9:00 pm	Board discussion and reflection #2
9:00 pm	ADJOURN

### **Preparing for the Retreat:**

As outlined above, the Retreat will be broken into two sessions. Session 1 will focus on a Board conversation of where we have been, what we have accomplished/learned, and where are we now. This will set the stage for Session 2 where the Board will discuss near-term priorities and needs to ensure the ongoing success of the District.

Below are pointers to pre-read materials, and prompts to help prepare in advance for these two conversation threads.

#### Pre-Read Materials:

Board Members may wish to review the following materials in advance to prepare:

- Page 7-8. [2017 Approval of MCWD's Strategic Direction](#)
- [2017 Comprehensive Plan Preview](#)
- [Six Mile Halsted Bay](#)

#### Session 1 – Where have we been, what have we accomplished/learned, and where are we now?

Veteran Board Members are asked to come prepared to share their perspective on where we have been, what we have accomplished/learned and where we are now. Newer Board Members are asked to come prepared with questions about what has been accomplished, what issues were encountered, and what it has taken to be successful.

Questions and prompts to consider in advance might include:

- Accomplishments:
  - What are the three things you are most proud of?
  - What is your elevator speech on what we have accomplished?
- Challenges and Learnings:
  - What notable struggles have we encountered?
  - What might we have done differently?
  - What lessons have we learned?
- Board Information Exchange:
  - What is clear? What is confusing?
  - What burning questions do you have for veteran Board Members?
  - What essential information do you want to share with newer Board Members?
- Current Status:
  - How would you describe where MCWD currently sits, relative to direction/goals outline in the strategic plan?
  - What questions do you have about the status, or relevance, of strategic initiatives?
  - Pick five words to describe how you feel about MCWD right now. Put those words into a sentence to share.

#### Session 2- What are our near term priorities and needs, to ensure our ongoing success?

Session 2 will be primed with a presentation from staff. Board Members will be asked to come prepared to reflect on what they believe to be most important to MCWD's success in the near future.

Questions and prompts to consider in advance might include:

- What current strategic initiatives are most important to achieving the vision of strategic organizational alignment?
- What should the Board focus its attention on to ensure the organization continues to improve?
- What should the Board not focus its attention on?
- What is the Board's perspective on the staff team and what needs does it forecast?
- What will it look like to remain disciplined and focused?
- What should the District avoid doing in the near future?
- Are there new important issues/initiatives the Board sees needing to address in the coming 18-24 months

#### **Conclusion:**

I look forward to reconnecting with everyone to take stock of our situation, to share our perspectives, and to discuss what lies ahead.

If you have questions in advance of the Retreat, please contact James Wisker at [Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org)