



Capitol Region Watershed District

595 Aldine Street • Saint Paul, MN 55104

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Community Advisory Committee Meeting Wednesday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.

CAC Members Present:

Nicole Soderholm, remote
Bob Simonet, remote
David Arbeit, remote
Mary Lilly, remote
Mike MacDonald, remote
Richard Weil, remote
Cheryl Braun, remote
Steve Duerre, remote
Gwen Willems, remote

Others Present:

Mark Doneux, CRWD
Hawona Sullivan Janzen, CRWD, remote
Jessica Bromelkamp, CRWD, remote
Rachel Funke, remote

CAC Members Absent:

Pat Cavanaugh, excused
Tom Elko, excused
Michelle Ulrich, excused

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Updates

Ms. Soderholm opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. by videoconference. Ms. Soderholm asked for any announcements or updates. There were none.

II. Public Comment for Issues Not on the Agenda

Ms. Soderholm asked for comments not on the agenda. There were none.

III. Approval of Agenda

CAC 21-001 Motion: *To approve the CAC January 13, 2021 agenda*

MacDonald/Duerre
Unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. December 9, 2020 CAC Meeting Minutes

CAC 21-002 Motion: *To approve the December 9, 2020 CAC Meeting Minutes.*

Duerre/Arbeit
Unanimously approved.

V. District Initiatives for Review, Comment and Recommendations

A) 2020 BMP Inspection and maintenance Summary (Funke)

Ms. Funke presented the 2020 BMP Inspection and Maintenance Summary. Ms. Funke provided an introduction of the CRWD Grant Programs. Staff complete inspections of completed grant projects to ensure their function and to offer maintenance advice to grantees. From June through August, CRWD staff and Minnesota Water Stewards completed inspections of clean water projects completed through the Saint Paul Streets (SPS) program and the Stewardship Grant program. In total, 333 projects were inspected in 2020.

CRWD staff and Minnesota Water Stewards completed inspections of all SPS boulevard curb-cut rain gardens, resulting in 250 inspections. CRWD staff also completed inspections of Stewardship Grant projects completed in the past five years, totaling 83 inspections. Stewardship Grant project types included rain gardens, permeable pavers, and shoreline buffer plantings.

In total, 92% of the 333 clean water projects inspected received an A or B grade, meaning that the projects needed no or only light maintenance. The most common maintenance needs included weeding, clearing rain garden inlets, and replacing plants.

Although most projects were in good condition, staff identified some common issues that emerged as barriers to successful maintenance. With this information in mind, CRWD plans to expand its support available to grantees in multiple ways.

Although the responsibility of the property owner, CRWD decided to implement several improvements to existing grant-funded projects. These improvements included renovation of five rain gardens that were part of a 2012 Special Grant project along Burns Avenue and the removal of tall grasses at multiple 2008 SPS boulevard rain gardens. Improvements are also planned for the 2014 Montreal Avenue SPS rain gardens in Spring 2021. CRWD staff plan to continue inspections and maintenance programming to ensure the water quality benefit of the District's BMPs and to provide meaningful support to grantees.

Ms. Lilly asked about feedback. Ms. Funke replied that the District has received questions about plant replacement. In addition, the District received feedback from residents regarding erosion issues.

Mr. Duerre asked about homeowners' compliance. Ms. Funke replied that the maintenance responsibilities were not clearly defined, however, after defining the responsibilities several homeowners have agreed to provide the necessary maintenance.

Ms. Willems congratulated the District on the high grades and the effort to train residents.

Ms. Soderholm asked about the method of mailing postcards. Ms. Funke replied that mailers have worked best.

The CAC thanked Ms. Funke for her presentation.

VI. CAC Initiatives

A. 2020 Watershed Stewards Awards (Bromelkamp)

Ms. Bromelkamp presented the 2020 Watershed Steward Awards winners. CRWD has transitioned most of its in-person meetings and events to a virtual platform to adhere to the Minnesota Department of Health's guidance to reduce risks associated with Covid-19. At the December CAC meeting, staff proposed hosting a smaller, virtual 2020 Awards Ceremony with the board, CAC, staff and this year's winners in attendance. CRWD will recognize three awards categories for 2020 including the Watershed Citizen, Watershed Partner and Watershed Outreach Program of the Year. Staff will provide recommendations for all three categories with review and approval by the Awards Committee in lieu of a District-wide nomination process. A shorter program will be also planned to highlight CRWD's major accomplishments in 2020 as well as board, staff, and CAC anniversaries. The virtual Awards Ceremony will be held in February 2021. Winners will receive their awards and a gift basket with local treats in advance of the ceremony. Each winner will be asked to provide photos or a video of their work and to say a few words about our work together as part of the ceremony. Highlights will be shared on CRWD's website, blog, and social media accounts.

Ms. Bromelkamp followed up with the Awards Committee comprised of CAC members, Mary Lilly and Mike MacDonald; Board Managers, Shawn Murphy and Hawona Sullivan Janzen and CRWD staff, Mark Doneux and Jessica Bromelkamp. The Awards Committee recommends the following 2020 Watershed Steward Award winners for the CAC's approval. The Board will be updated about the CAC's decision at the January 20, 2021 meeting. The virtual Awards Ceremony will be held in February 2021, date and time to be determined. Watershed Citizen Award recommendation is Chris Kunz for her participation with the Stewardship Grant Program. The Watershed Outreach Program Award recommendation is Saint Paul Parks and Recreation's BIPOC Outdoors initiative. The Watershed Partner Award recommendation is the City of Lauderdale and work on improving the Seminary Pond.

Mr. Arbeit thanked the Committee for their recommendations, and he asked about what volunteers need to know. Ms. Bromelkamp will be reaching out to the volunteers with more details.

CAC 21-003 Motion: *Approve 2020 Watershed Steward Awards winners and plans for a virtual Awards Ceremony.*

Simonet/Duerre
Unanimously Approved

B. Bylaws Update (Doneux)

Per State Statute 103D.331, the Board of Managers “must annually appoint an advisory committee to advise and assist the managers on all matters affecting the interests of the watershed district and make recommendations to the managers on all contemplated projects and improvements in the watershed district.” Most watershed districts have named their advisory committees as their “Citizen Advisory Committee.” The name for Capitol Region Watershed District’s advisory committee was also set as Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) in the original bylaws in 1999.

The topic of changing the name of the Citizen Advisory Committee was discussed at the November 10, 2020 CAC meeting. While there was general support at the November meeting for a name change, the committee felt that it should be brought back as an agenda item before a vote to change the name would be taken. While no specific name change was agreed to, the name Community Advisory Committee resonated with the committee. The CAC voted at its December 9, 2020 meeting to change its name to Community Advisory Committee. The Committee also asked that the current Bylaws be distributed to the group to get any other minor changes included before adopting the revised Bylaws at the January 13, 2021 meeting. Comments were received from Nicole Soderholm and Richard Weil and are reflected in the final draft Bylaws.

Ms. Willems offered two additional edits to the Bylaws. Mr. Doneux and Mr. Arbeit agreed.

CAC 21-004 Motion: *To Adopt the Revised CAC Bylaws.*

Simonet/MacDonald
Unanimously Approved

C. CAC Recruitment (Willems)

Ms. Willems provided an update on the CAC recruitment initiative. Ms. Willems met with CRWD’s Diversity Coordinator Ms. Belinda Gardner and together they brainstormed a strategy for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goal of outlining and implementing recruitment efforts for the CAC in communities of color. Ms. Gardner will work with Staff and the Diversity Committee on creating a list of recommended individuals and organizations. After people are identified, an email will be sent with an updated CAC brochure, followed up by phone call from the CAC Co-Chairs.

Ms. Willems asked the CAC for their input. Mr. Arbeit and Ms. Soderholm agreed that the strategy is proactive.

The CAC thanked Ms. Willems for her update.

VII. Project and Program Updates

A) Bonding 101 and CRWD use of Bonds for Capital Improvement Projects (Doneux)

Administrator Doneux provided a presentation on Bonding and CRWD's use of Bonds for Capital Improvement Projects.

Mr. MacDonald asked about plans for another Bond Issuance. Administrator Doneux replied that the District does not have plans for another Bond Issuance.

Mr. Arbeit asked about an interest rate for 595 Aldine. Administrator Doneux will look up the correct interest rate.

Ms. Lilly asked about financing to pay off Bonds. Administrator Doneux replied that the Finance Committee will look at several projects including the Thomas Building and take an overall a look at estimated fund balance to potentially pay off the bonds.

The CAC thanked Administrator Doneux for his presentation.

VIII. CAC Observer Update

CAC Observer for December 16, 2020.

Mr. Simonet provided an update on the December 20, 2020 Board of Managers Meeting.

IX. Discussion

A. New & Old Issues

None

B. CAC Observer January 20th and February 3rd Board of Managers Meetings.

Bob Simonet volunteered to attend the February 3rd Board Meeting.

X. Adjourn

CAC 21-005 Motion: *To adjourn the January 13, 2021 CAC Meeting.*

Willems/Lilly
Unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Belinda Gardner