



Capitol Region Watershed District

595 Aldine Street
Saint Paul, MN 55104
(651) 644-8888 • capitolregionwd.org

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 5:30 P.M. – Held in-person

CAC Members Present:

Mary Lilly
Barbara Hall
Gwen Willems
Michelle Ulrich
Mike Trojan
Tori Philippi

Tom Elko (not excused)
Andrew Montain (excused)

Others Present:

Anna Eleria
Hawona Sullivan Janzen
Lindsay Schwantes
Maricella Xiong
Sarah Peters
Jessica Bromelkamp

CAC Members Absent:

Lauren Wheeler (excused)
Richard Weil (excused)

I. Welcome, Announcements, Updates, and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Ms. Lilly. There were no announcements or updates. Introductions were made. Ms. Hall volunteered to make motions and Mr. Trojan volunteered to second motions.

II. Public Comment for Issues Not on the Agenda

Ms. Lilly asked for comments or corrections to the agenda. There were none.

III. Approval of the Agenda

The motion was made and approved unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve minutes of March 12, 2025, was made and approved unanimously.

V. CAC Observer Update

A) March 19, 2025, Board Meeting (Ms. Lilly)

Ms. Lilly attended on behalf of the CAC and reported on the BOM meeting:
The meeting began with the approval of three permits:

- United Village Lot F1 Restaurant Pavilion by Allianz Field. Two buildings were approved. Even though there is more impervious surface, there will be more water generated that will be reused.
- Como-Western Lead Service Line Replacement. The city is replacing lead water lines.
- Shepard Road Duct Installation. Although less than 1 acre is involved in the project, it is located in a flood plain so CRWD is involved. There is no flood-risk exposure but CRWD has asked for a \$2,000 surety bond.

Mike McDonald – CAC service recognition for 19 years of service. Remarks were made by Board of Managers President Joe Collins, CRWD Administrator Anna Eleria, and CAC Representative Mary Lilly.

A variety of action items were approved:

- New computers to replace 2022 equipment.
- Hiring of Optima HR Solutions as the CRWD Human Resources Consultant.
- Cost share of 100% for Saint Paul Public Schools Rain Garden Maintenance. Four of the 15 raingardens that are part of a pooled BMP maintenance program are with the St. Paul Public Schools. They no longer have the funds to provide any of the maintenance. CRWD has decided to provide \$14,000 to fund the maintenance. Schools affected are Chelsea Heights Elementary, LEAP High School/Wilson building, Como Park Senior High, and EOS Building. In addition to funding maintenance, CRWD will work to educate the school community and find volunteers to take over some of the maintenance tasks.

Other issues:

- CRWD presented on 3 topics at the National Monitoring Conference in Green Bay, Wis.:
 1. BMP Monitoring techniques
 2. Native aquatic vegetation transplants
 3. Microplastics - Measuring, Monitoring, and Mitigating

Rick Sanders asked for CRWD to have a table at the Juneteenth event in Central Park in Roseville (he is co-chair of the event), which will be held Saturday, June 14.

B) April 2, 2025, Board Meeting (Weil)

Ms. Willems read the report from Mr. Weil, who attended the BOM meeting on behalf of the CAC:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. There were about a dozen guests present. Agenda items were revised to place a report by Eoghan O’Neill, CRWD Water Resource Technician, first. He gave very detailed information about the 2020-23 testing that was done at Como Lake and 5 other sites. These were conducted to measure microplastic particles in the aquatic environment. Defined as 5 mm or less, these particles, largely from tires and synthetic fabrics, were found to be very widespread in the buckets of water collected at these locations. Some particles were as small as 10 microns and invisible without the fluorescent dyes used to tag them.

There is no consensus about how dangerous they are, and outside of California there are no commonly accepted standards to test for their presence in drinking water. The best that can be done now is to remove plastic waste before it reaches the water. Meanwhile more tests on microplastics in the environment are being conducted around the world.

Following this presentation the minutes were approved and the report on 3 Trout Brook areas for flood mitigation was accepted. Twelve different options were examined with replacement of storm sewer pipes and underground storage facilities found to be the best choices, particularly given the need to plan for expected higher rainfall amounts. The designs will prepare for 10-year storms lasting 24 hours. Because these would be far larger projects than simply maintaining or improving water quality, coordinating them with street reconstruction is the best approach.

The 3 areas picked are on Maryland Avenue, Wheelock Grotto, and Jackson Street. The latter will have a new inlet and connection to Trout Brook, a project estimated to cost \$69 thousand.

Two staff members of the CRWD introduced themselves. Sarah Peters is the artist in residence and will work with Maricella Xiong on early career artist mentoring. Sarah is trained as a book maker, and Maricella has experience in paper making. They are planning to host an art and water workshop seed paper party on May 10 from 10 to 2.

Next was an update on work with St. Paul on a comprehensive approach to Allianz Field. Initial plans to irrigate the whole complex have been scaled back, but use of the pumps and storage tanks now in place is possible. New tanks will not be needed, saving considerable money. There was a report on the water stewardship grant programs, noting that over 300 people have been engaged and on average each year over 6 pounds of phosphorus and 2,300 of suspended solids have been captured. There was brief discussion of studying additional feasibility projects as well as those involving homeowners and the giving of maintenance grants.

A final report dealt with the Como Lake aquatic plant management work. This is in the planning stage with contracting to be done for year 2 of a 5-year program in curly leaf treatment as well as a new plan for controlling milfoil. After this discussion the meeting adjourned at 8.

Comments: There was a recent *New York Times* article about microplastics, saying that most of the microplastics that are in people's bodies—they are doing autopsies—are from the 60s and 70s.

The California microplastics standard is for 5mm and greater, so trash captured by 6 will not take up much.

VI. CAC Initiatives

A) Technical Knowledge Discussion

Mr. Trojan is continuing to work on a list of definitions. He said the idea behind creating the tool is so people don't have to ask someone but can just refer to the tool. For example, microplastics were discussed at the Board meeting and it would have been helpful to have knowledge in advance. The Board thought that microplastics were the result of the breakdown of plastics from litter. And Mr. Fossum clarified that they are not exactly sure. It is helpful to monitor microplastics that are coming as part of rainfall. Minnesota is considering the development of microplastics policy and monitoring standards.

With our learning curve and different backgrounds, what would be useful is an acronyms and abbreviations guide with basic information similar to what's on the website. It could include best management practices like raingardens.

B) CAC Subcommittees

- **Annual Calendar**

Ms. Philippi said the subcommittee is in the process of making a web-based calendar. She showed a draft format, which has all the dates highlighted, for example if it's a board managers meeting, it's in a certain color and if it's an annual event, it's in another color. Off to the side are more details about what the event is.

- **Orientation**

Ms. Lilly, Ms. Hall, and Mr. Trojan represented the subcommittee, which plans to meet again. They have a copy of the orientation packet and are working on recommendations for various places to add graphic images.

- **Outreach and Communications**

Ms. Ulrich and Ms. Willems reported that the Subcommittee Chair Richard Weil has drafted wording for a CAC flyer and subcommittee members edited that wording. They have also decided which 4 projects to highlight on the flyer.

C) CAC Officer Elections: Cochairs and Secretary

Ms. Lilly and Ms. Wheeler were nominated as cochairs by Ms. Hall and voted in. Ms. Philippi nominated herself for secretary and was voted in.

VII. District Initiatives for Review, Comment, and Recommendations

A) CAC Community Engagement Workshop (Schwantes and Xiong)

Ms. Schwantes and Ms. Xiong gave an overview of the CRWD, which has a 5-member Board of Managers, Community Advisory Committee, and about twenty-five full-time staff members. CRWD protects, manages, and improves local water bodies that drain to the Mississippi River.

Activities are coordinated through these divisions:

- Administration
- Regulatory / CRWD stormwater rules
- Monitoring / monitoring and assessment of CRWD lakes, wetlands and project performance
- Planning & Grants
- Engagement
- Communications and Engagement
- Facilities Management

The District covers 41 square miles, portions of five cities (Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood, Roseville, and St. Paul), 212,000 residents, 5 lakes, about 13 miles of the Mississippi River, 11 wetlands, 19 miles of shoreline, 500 miles of storm sewers, and about 50 percent hard surfaces.

Examples of educational tools in CRWD's toolbox are Enviroscape, Pollute or Protect, 3 mobile boxes, wildlife signs and stencils. Ms. Xiong handed out a Friendly Neighbor Script to practice and a list of events coming up in April through December. Volunteers can sign up electronically.

VIII. Project and Program Updates

A) Watershed Artist in Residence

Ms. Bromelkamp introduced Watershed Artist in Residence Sarah Peters. She:

- develops art and water community workshops,
- provides artistic consultation on CRWD projects and programs, and
- works on an early-career artist mentorship held by Ms. Xiong, who is folding that role into her existing role with CRWD.

Ms. Xiong makes plantable paper with embedded seeds and holds community workshops on seeded paper.

Ms. Peters enjoys nontraditional books, writing, and spending time on Minnesota waters, which she combined to run a project called the Floating Library. In the last many years she worked at the organization that ran the Northern Spark Festival, an all-night art festival in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Ms. Peters and Ms. Xiong are bringing their artistic talents together for a workshop on making plantable paper and learning about native plants, roots, and connections to clean water. The Art + Water Workshop: Seed Paper Party will be held May 10, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

IX) Discussion

A) New & Old Issues

Ms. Lilly asked if there were new or old issues. There were none.

B) BOM Observers and meeting minutes tracker

Trackers, which are outlines of the meeting agendas, will be shared with the volunteer minute takers to assist in their work.

C) CAC Observer for April 16, 2025, BOM Meeting

Staff members Ms. Eleria or Mr. Fossum will attend and report back to the CAC.

D) CAC Observer for May 7, 2025, BOM Meeting

Ms. Hall will attend and report back to the CAC.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 P.M.
Respectfully submitted, Gwen Willems