



Capitol Region Watershed District

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

June 12, 2024
CAC Meeting
APPROVED

Community Advisory Committee Meeting **Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

CAC Members Present:

Mike MacDonald
Richard Weil
Lauren Wheeler
Steve Duerre
Gwen Willems
Michelle Ulrich
Barbara Hall
Bob Simonet

Others Present:

Hawona Sullivan Janzen, CRWD Board
Mark Doneux, CRWD Staff
Belinda Armstead, CRWD Staff

CAC Members Absent:

Andrew Montain
Tom Elko
Mike Trojan
Barbara Hall
Mary Lilly

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Updates

Ms. Willems opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and asked for any announcements or updates. Belinda let us know the CRWD is offering snacks at the CAC meetings moving forward.

II. Public Comment for Issues Not on the Agenda (3 minutes per person)

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

III. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Willems asked for comments or corrections to the agenda. She requested a motion to move IX) A) to after IX) C).

CAC Motion 24-013: *To Approve the CAC May 8, 2024, Agenda.*

Simonet/Hall
Unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A) Approval of the *April 10, 2024*, CAC Meeting Minutes

CAC Motion 24-014: *Approve the April 10, 2024, CAC Meeting Minutes* (Duerre)

Simonet/McDonald
Unanimously approved.

V. District Initiatives for Review, Comment, and Recommendations

None

VI. CAC Initiatives

- A) CAC Reinvigoration Project Update (Armstead)
- a. Belinda presented survey results for the CAC invigoration project. 24 people took the survey, including CAC members, critical staff, and board members. Some opportunities for improvement include:
 - i. Defining the CAC purpose, goals, and roles for members
 - ii. Increase participation at events and community outreach
 - iii. Increase diversity of members
 - iv. Improve work planning, participation rate, and meeting format.
 - b. Specific ideas included developing an onboarding process, internal networking between CAC and CRWD staff/board members, planning informal networking events, tracking meeting attendance/requiring a minimum attendance, developing a 2-year CAC plan, changing the meeting time to earlier in the day, changing meetings in the winter to virtual, finding ways to get CAC input sooner during projects, and volunteer at community events.
 - c. Mike mentioned that, as someone who is introverted, it would be ideal to pick and choose how to volunteer to maximize his talents and interest (ex. technical review instead of community engagement). The CAC generally agreed with this sentiment, with Michelle adding that she would be interested in the community engagement portion over other opportunities, solidifying the need to home in on CAC member's abilities and interests in helping the watershed. Gwen thought informal happy hours would help build CAC culture and connection with the CRWD staff and board, as well as partner organizations. Lauren mentioned that reviewing grant applications with the CRWD staff was meaningful work for her.

- d. Bob had a lot of ideas, which can be synthesized in to defining CAC goals, coming up with ways each CAC member wants to contribute and what they would find most meaningful to help the district with, and prioritizing ways in which we can help so we are focused in efforts. He also wondered if there were ways the CAC could maximize CRWD efforts/projects with small adjustments by supplementing the watershed's work through additional efforts. Example: CRWD installs a rain garden. CAC members could develop an outreach workflow to let people know the purpose of the rain garden. CAC members could also find ways to ensure additional environmental actions are taken, like researching and offering information on native plant care, operation and maintenance, additional ecosystem installations like butterfly or bee houses, how to harvest seeds from flowers in the rain garden, etc.
- e. Mike mentioned that upcoming projects and the specific technical review that may be associated with them would be a good subcommittee for CAC members interested in technical review or with a technical background. Mike also reflected that the watershed does great work but has limited resources, so finding a way for the CAC to be more useful would be ideal.
- f. Lauren asked to clarify how formal meetings need to be. They are governed by bylaws and those should always be referenced and followed for the meeting structure.
- g. Per diem/stipends for CAC members was discussed. While the CAC was not unanimous in agreeing the per diem should move forward, Lauren suggested that it could be on a case by case basis for requesting assistance to cover certain costs that would make attending CAC meetings a barrier. Hawona also reflected that, as the CAC tries to attract diverse members, it's important to consider that losing money for volunteering may be a barrier for joining the CAC. Per diem/stipend spending needs to be tracked by the CRWD to ensure that the funds are being used appropriately.
- h. Meeting time was also revisited; no conclusion for changing the meeting time was made, however, Gwen suggested that this be something the CAC discusses again after reorganizing and acquiring new members (late 2024?). Hawona mentioned that winter darkness makes the late evening meetings hard to attend, but that doing them virtually was better. Lauren suggested moving meeting times up to midday. Belinda and Mark suggested moving meetings up earlier in the evening to help bridge the gap between the workday and CAC meetings for CRWD staff. In general, it sounds like CAC members are interested in moving the meeting and trying out a new schedule. Belinda also brought up the idea that if someone on the CAC can't attend a meeting, finding a work flow to ensure they are caught up for the next meeting.
- i. Gwen wants to see more informal gatherings of the CAC members; Hawona presented the idea of stormwater games and a neighborhood game night.
- j. CAC Subcommittees were something all CAC staff want to develop. Ideas for subcommittees and/or CAC roles included: Outreach and Events, Grants, Technical Review.

B) Elect CAC Officers (Doneux)

CAC Motion 24-015: *To Elect Mary Lilly as Co-Chair*

Wheeler/Weil

Unanimously approved.

CAC Motion 24-016: To Elect Lauren Wheeler as Co-Chair

Duerre/Ulrich

Unanimously approved.

CAC Motion 24-017: To Elect Steve Duerre as Secretary

?/?

Unanimously approved, with the comment that Steve ensures notes are taken and he does not need to take the notes at each meeting.

C) CAC Tour Update (Doneux)

The CAC members chose the Past-Present-Future tour theme for the June 12 tour.

VII. Project and Program Updates

- A) Gwen kindly volunteered for the WaterFest.
- B) Hawona kindly volunteered for the Peace Celebration.

For informational purposes only. No motion was requested.

VIII. CAC Observer Update

Bob reflected on the CRWD's 96 projects, specifically, the rain gardens CRWD installs. Bob wants to find ways to maximize the installation of a rain garden through additional environmental work.

For informational purposes only. No motion was requested

IX. Discussion

- A) CAC Observer for May 15, 2024, Board of Managers Meeting
Mike will observe this meeting and report back to the CAC.
- B) CAC Observer for June 5, 2024. Board of Managers Meeting
Bob will observe this meeting and report back to the CAC.
- C) New & Old Issues (MOVED)
Congratulations to Mark on retiring

X. Adjourn

CAC Motion 24-018: *To adjourn the May 8, 2024, CAC Meeting.*

Simonet/MacDonald
Unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Wheeler