

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAWSAC)

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Committee Members Present:

Wendy Wulff (Chair), Annika Bankston, Jeff Berg, Sandeep Burman, Mark Daleiden, Mike Huang, Phil Klein, Brad Larson, Susan Morris, Catherine Neuschler, Michael Robinson, Patrick Shea, Jamie Schurbon, Lisa Vollbrecht, Kevin Watson, Tonja West-Hafner

Committee Members Absent:

Joe Richter (on behalf of John Gleason), Vanessa Demuth (on behalf of Valerie Grover)

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Wulff called the regular meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee to order at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 21, 2021.

READING OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER STATEMENT

NOTICE: Governor Walz has declared a peacetime emergency (Emergency Executive Order 20-01) in response to COVID-19 and the Metropolitan Council Chair has determined it is not practical or prudent to conduct an in-person meetings for reasons stated in the Governor's Emergency Executive Order. Accordingly, committee members will participate in this meeting via telephone or other electronic means and the meeting will be conducted under Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021 at the date and time stated above. We encourage you to monitor the meeting remotely. If you have comments, we encourage members of the public to email us at public.info@metc.state.mn.us. We will respond to your comments in a timely manner.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Without objection the agenda was approved. Without objection the minutes for the July 20, 2021 of the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) were approved.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

Staff and guests gave presentations on the following:

- a) Draft problem statement and recommended actions
- b) Regional information: Modeling climate change and infiltration, updating the Council's Priority Waters List Project, and research to understand groundwater-surface water connections and associated impacts for better planning and management
- c) Process and next steps to develop a statutorily-required 2022 report from MAWSAC to the Council and MN Legislature

As part of the presentation, Leslie Yetka, Committee member Phil Klein, and Tiffany Schaufler (from the cities of Minnetonka and Hugo and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District respectively) were invited to speak about their experiences related to the topic.

The Council must consider MAWSAC's work and recommendations as it prepares its regional development framework, and Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) role is to inform MAWSAC's work by providing scientific and engineering expertise (M.S. 473.1565).

Regional modeling is a tool that may help explore how projections of precipitation and temperature could change the amount of water available to recharge groundwater. The global climate data suggests that it is possible the infiltration amounts will decrease in the future.

Emily Resseger, Environmental Analyst - Water Resources, is currently updating the Metropolitan Council's Priority Waters List which is needed to help maintain and improve their water use for present and future generations. Although this list is for internal council resource/use, it will be documented and shared with partners for their use. There are 9 categories of water priority:

- Drinking water
- Scientific & education
- Healthy habitat
- Recreation & tourism
- Tranquil connection
- Equity
- Industrial & utility
- Cultural & historical value
- Provisioning

John Clark, Senior Environmental Scientist - Water Supply Planning, noted that groundwater pumping, recharge (primary interaction of surface and groundwater), and infrastructure to water tables impact the interaction of these waters. There is currently a multi-phase project to understand where these connections are most likely to occur and the impacts of these connections.

Local Perspectives:

Leslie Yetka, perspective from City of Minnetonka

Minnetonka is primarily built out and residential, with over 800 wetland areas, and over 900 lakes with only one lake having public access. She noted how high waters have traditionally impacted those on residential property; erosion, changes in vegetation, rotting trees, water encroachment toward homes, and similar issues have been typical. In the 2021 drought water levels have been much lower with ponds drying up; the fluctuation in water levels and the community's response has been of note even for waters which are not connected through surface flow (Shady Oak Lake is adjacent to Nine Mile Creek). The city had also begun to expend capital funds (\$980,000) for an automated control structure to address the high water, have been working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and downstream neighbors such as Bloomington.

Tiffany Schauffler, project & land manager from Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District works with a wide variety of partners, spanning from the City of Minneapolis to City of Victoria. Their team investigated the water concerns of the area near Lake Nokomis from 2014-2019 such as wet basements, backyards, saturated soils, sink holes, etc., due to high water. The costs associated with infrastructure damage and repair had increased during that time. The group brought together evaluated the hypothesis, noticing there wasn't any data regarding groundwater and its levels for this area. Once that data was acquired, coupled with surface water data, the multi-agency team found that 100 years ago the area was peat bogs and wetlands. A massive excavation placed soil over the area for development to occur (1920s – 1950s, which was during/ followed by driest period in history). The wettest decade on record was 2010-2019.

Committee Member Phil Klein, City of Hugo

Committee Member Phil Klein gave an overview of the structures the City of Hugo has been creating, making note of considerations for the construction their storm water ponds effort. He made a request for help from the DNR or Metropolitan Council for an intern to construct a manual on the construction, evaluation of data, and maintenance of storm water ponds.

Group exercise using Mural, digital workspace for visual collaboration (Staff Member Lanya Ross)

The committee members engaged in a process using Mural, a digital workspace for visual collaboration.

a) Considerations for improvement:

- Committee Member Schurbon:
 - Tone or grammar toward the intended audience
 - Need to be concise, plain language, etc.
- Chair Wulff: especially with last paragraph, she agreed with a shorter version

b) Additional comments:

- Guest Vanessa Demuth: noted the water quality concern; Department of Health (DOH) has been looking at pathogens from surface water to groundwater (contamination); this may be something to be concerned about/take into consideration
- Public perception needs to be taken into consideration
- Staff Member Lanya Ross asked: What would get us started now? What are examples of an existing model or local pilot programs we can look at or expand upon?

ACTION: Tessa Wegenke to create an appendix to minutes with all comments in mural board Lead the Way segment.

Drafting MAWSAC report (Staff Member Lanya Ross)

The purpose of the MAWSAC report is:

- To provide a set of recommendations and supporting information around high-priority water supply topics.
- Policymakers and influencers will be better informed to develop and implement policies that achieve multiple benefits and reduce unintended impacts to water supplies.
- Per Minnesota Statute 473.1565, the Council will consider MAWSAC's work and recommendations as it prepares its regional development framework.

The goal is to build upon the [2017 MAWSAC report](#). We are currently in the "Committee volunteers + staff draft report content" phase, with the next being the "Review by MAWSAC, TAC, member agencies, water supply work groups, and staff." The following proposed milestones were noted:

- Fall 2021: MAWSAC & TAC provide input at meetings, and committee volunteers work with staff to write and solicit review of draft report
- Winter 2021: Review comments incorporated into final report, guided by committee volunteers
- Jan. 18, 2022: Approval by MAWSAC
- Jan. 25, 2022: Present final report to Environment Committee
- Feb. 9, 2022: Present final report to Council
- Feb. 15, 2022: Submit final report to Legislature

Lanya Ross noted the proposed outline for content and asked the committee members for their feedback as to how to make this more impactful:

- Committee Member Jamie Schurbon: “What do you want me to/should I do?” We need to be clear of the action for and to our legislators.
- Committee Member Phil Klein: Agree; just give them the info they are looking for up front.
- Committee Member Mike Huang: It is missing next steps/actions to take for the Council and beyond them.
- Chair Wulff: It is in need of an Executive Summary. Plain language needs to be at the core of crafting the content.

ACTION: Metropolitan Council Environmental Services team member(s) to follow-up with those who noted they would be willing to volunteers for the MAWSAC report drafting.

Minnesota Drought Task Force update (Staff Member Ali Elhassan)

Ali Elhassan provided a brief update about the state of the drought and implications for water supply-land use considerations. He noted that the DNR is the state agency responsible for convening this group, and that it is reactionary for damage mitigation rather than long-term planning and discussion beyond the now. It was also noted that there is a 2022 well drilling wait time given the drought.

COMMITTEE PERSPECTIVES

Chair Wulff and the committee thanked the presenters. Chair Wulff then asked for any additional committee feedback at this time; only members who had feedback are listed below:

- Committee Member Catherine Neuschler: Appreciated Emily Resseger’s presentation – and connecting PCA group for coordination efforts – as well as Tiffany Schaufler’s presentation
- Guest Joe Richter: Concerned about the drought and its impacts
- Committee Member Phil Klein: Send any questions regarding stormwater ponds to him
- Committee Member Sandeep Burman: Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is looking at conjunctive delineation (another way of qualitative and quantitative surface and ground water interactions)
- Guest Vanessa Demuth: Asked if the use of splash pads has been discussed, noting most models are pump & dump, and do not recirculate or clean water. Staff Member Lanya Ross noted it has come up, but discussions and work have not been focused on it.

NEXT STEPS

1. Staff begin drafting MAWSAC report using committee members’ input (due early 2022)
2. MAWSAC members update agency leaders to expect a report with this information
3. Plan for 11/16/21 meeting (topic: infrastructure)

ADJOURNMENT

Business being completed, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Tessa Wegenke
Recording Secretary

APPENDIX: Mural Comments - Lead the Way

Example of existing effort / model

- Hugo stormwater reuse
- MPCA plans to work on water quality standards that incorporate this idea - more to come!

Good leader or critical partner in this area of work

- City Administrators and water system operators are crucial partners
- Local Watershed Management Boards
- MN DNR and USGS staff who prepare county geologic atlases
- Educators in high schools
- Wealthy landowners and business leaders. Political leaders need to support it too.
- Carrie Jennings, U of MN/Freshwater