

Minutes

Environment Committee



Meeting Date: August 08, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

- Chair, Peter Lindstrom D10
- Vice Chair, Wendy Wulff D16

- Tyrone Carter, District 3
- Anjuli Cameron, District 8
- Yassin Osman, District 7

- Diego Morales, District 9
- Gail Cederberg, District 11
- = present, E = excused

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Lindstrom called the regular meeting of the Environment Committee to order at 4:00 p.m.

Agenda Approved

Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. With consensus the agenda was approved. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by CM Morales, seconded by CM Wulff to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2023 regular meeting of the Environment Committee. **Motion carried.**

Consent Business

None at this time.

Non-Consent Business

2023-178: Ratification of Declaration of Emergency Repair for 1-MH-401B-Lilydale Siphon (Chris Remus, 651-602-4538)

It was moved by CM Wulff, seconded by CM Morales, that the Metropolitan Council ratify the Emergency Declaration for repairs to Interceptor 1-MH-401B Lilydale siphon in St. Paul in the amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.

Discussion

CM Lindstrom asked: Is that area usually dry or is that normally have standing water there. Is that spillage or some sort of mix.

Staff responded: We assume it's mostly spillage.

CM Lindstrom asked: How were notified about the leakage?

Staff responded: Minnesota Mosquito Control contacted the city of St. Paul who reached out to our dispatch.

CM Lindstrom asked: Do we have an estimate of how long was it spilling before we were notified?

Staff responded: The first date of our meter problem is what we calculate as our spill volume, early June.

CM Carter asked: What is the age of the siphon?

Staff responded: It was installed in 1968, approximately 55 years old.

CM Lindstrom: Is there any technology that is available now or in the near future that would help identify this quicker.

Staff responded: I've started the conversation about the process that will help us identify when meters are outside their normal range. This will hopefully help us catch it sooner.

Motioned carried.

Information

Water Policy Research Project Jennifer Kostrzewski 651-602-1078, Maureen Hoffman, 651-602-8026)

Staff from Water Resources presented an update on the Water Policy Research Project. This research project discusses water and climate as well as rural water concerns. Staff discussed the implications of rapid climate change in Minnesota and across the region. Heavy rain puts water quality at risk, challenges stormwater systems, overwhelms rivers & roads, and fosters climate inequalities. Primary drivers of rural water concerns due to climate change include flooding, droughts, invasive species and altered lengths of growing season. The Council's roles in water, climate and rural climate change includes:

- Regional Water Planning
- Regional Wastewater Collection & Treatment

The current water sustainability policies in place by the Council and our partnering stakeholder along with recommendations were discussed. The presentation concluded with feedback and input from the committee members.

Discussion

CM Lindstrom: You mentioned that there is already collaboration with the state and our stakeholders. Does this reflect in the recommendations already? Specifically, about the state's climate framework?

Staff responded: It is not explicitly stated in our policy, that is something we can add. Thank you.

CM Carter asked: We've had recorded heat this summer. What do the numbers look like compared to the averages or trends?

Staff responded: I'm not sure but will get that information to you.

This summer is hotter and drier than average. June 2023 was the 4th warmest June on record statewide.

The U. S. Drought Monitor map released on July 13 depicts 11% of the state in *Severe Drought* 52% of the state in *Moderate Drought* conditions and 36% of the state in *Abnormally Dry* conditions. One year ago at this time 90% of the state was free of any drought designation. The *U.S. Drought Monitor* index is a blend of science and subjectivity where drought categories (*Moderate, Severe, etc.*) are based on several indicators.

The 2023 summer has also set records for the worst air quality due to the smoke from the wildfires in Canada. This includes the highest daily average measure recorded since the Air Quality Index records began in 1980

For additional information, please see: HydroClim Update and [Drought Conditions Overview](#)

CM Wulff asked: When will we be able to read the final Research Paper?

Staff responded: Once approved by the legal department, it will be released for you to read.

CM Wulff asked: I'm not clear on where the equity component came in from, can you clarify?

Staff responded: We try to have an equity component in all of our Research Papers. We focused on the components of farmers of color who lost their lands due to legislation, as well as Hmong farm that is out in the metro on reclaimed lands.

Additional Rural Water Equity information:

Analysis of [Black Farm Ownership in the US](#)

[Hmong American Farmers Association website](#)

[Minnesota's Black farmers working to reconnect to land](#)

[Rural America's Drinking Water Crisis](#)

Environmental Services 2023 Intern Capstone Presentations (Suidi Hashi, 651-602-

Suidi Hashi, Associate Community Outreach Coordinator for the Workforce & Equity team, introduced the 2023 ES intern capstone presentations on behalf of senior manager Dr. Jenn Zuchowski. The Metropolitan Council's Internship Program offers an assortment of opportunities for interns to partner with Met Council employees from various departments and job sites. The program is designed to provide mentorship and professional development through on-the-job training.

Eleven interns shared brief presentations on their experiences:

- Cayla Bishop, Workforce Planning Intern, Workforce & Equity
- Ty Flanagan, Molecular Biology Intern, Process Engineering, A&D Air Quality
- Audra Hakanson, Sustainability Climate Mitigation & Energy Management Intern, Process Engineering
- Henry Holcomb, Climate and Water Equity Intern, Water Resources
- Idman Ibrahim, Urban Scholar, Equity & Equal Opportunity Intern, Workforce & Equity
- Julia Kloiber, Water Quality Database and Assessment Intern, Water Resources
- Sabrina Lor, Communications Intern, Administrations and Communications
- August PirkI, Operations Intern, Treatment Services
- Shujaa Tongrit-Green, PLC and HMI Configuration Intern Process Computer Group
- Laura Wagner, Climate Adaption Intern, Water Resources
- Mirae Guenther, Water Resources Monitoring Intern, Water Resources

Reports

General Manager of Environmental Services: Leisa Thompson, gave thanks to everyone for all the great work that has been done. She stated that, staff has done well in making Met Council internships very meaningful. Thompson updated the committee on an opportunity to attend the US Water Alliance's One Water Alliance Conference. This year it will take place in Tucson, Arizona from November 14 to November 16.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Environment Committee meeting of August 08, 2023.

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