

Minutes of the MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Committee Members Present: Van Eyll, Kramer, Elkins, Wulff, Rummel, Schreiber, Chávez, Haigh, Munt, Reynoso, Melander, Cunningham, Duininck, Commers, Brimeyer, Smith, Đoàn

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Haigh called the regular meeting of the Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:06PM on Wednesday, June 19, 2013.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Rummel, seconded by Kramer to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Schreiber, seconded by Smith to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2013 meeting of the Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried.**

THRIVE MSP 2040

Overview of Key Themes on Water Supply from Thrive MSP 2040 Phase II Outreach and Engagement—
Denise Engen and Libby Starling

Libby and Denise provided an overview of some of the key themes that were heard in phase two of Thrive outreach and engagement. Since the water supply issue is one of the four questions that was used for dialogue in the roundtable discussions and at other venues, the responses from participants are important for informing the Council in their deliberation and decision making. During phase one of Thrive outreach and engagement it became apparent that water quality and water supply are increasingly important issues in the region. There were approximately 200 participants in the 8 outreach meetings (including the roundtable discussions and additional organization-hosted meetings) and about 250 comment cards regarding water issues were collected. A brief summary of the ideas, themes, quotes, observations, and unique/innovative suggested approaches was distributed. The transcription of the comment cards and a more detailed summary will be available for Council members to review. There was a lot of support for more data and analysis. There was concern expressed about what the Council's role is in regulation and decision making, and concern about adding another layer of bureaucracy in this area. There was cautious support across the region for the Council to have some type of role in water supply and water quality. There were a lot of questions about who pays for it and how water is priced, as well as how growth, livability, and sustainability are affected by water.

Overview of Water Policy Issues—Dan Marckel and Libby Starling

A discussion outline of Water Policy Issues was distributed. MCES has multiple roles related to water, including providing wastewater collection and treatment services to over 2.7 million people in 107 communities, overseeing water supply planning in 105 communities, and serving as the area-wide water quality planning agency under Section 208 of the federal Clean Water Act. Historically and currently, the Council's water policy views wastewater, water supply, and surface water management as three different areas. Current challenges require the management of these areas to be more integrated to ensure the availability of water resources in the future. The new approach is called sustainable water resources management. Three goals from the Water Resources Management Policy Plan (WRMPP) are: working collaboratively with regional partners to accommodate growth within the metropolitan area; maximizing the effectiveness and value of regional services, infrastructure investments and incentives; and preserving vital natural areas and resources for future generations. There are two policies in the 2030 Regional Development Framework that address the WRMPP: work with local communities to accommodate growth in a flexible, connected and efficient manner; and work with local and regional partners to reclaim, conserve, protect, and enhance the region's vital natural resources. The 2030 Regional Development Framework also has two environmental regional benchmarks that the Council uses to measure success: the water quality leaving the metro areas is as good as the water quality entering the metro area; and the metro area's water resources are adequate to supply future water demands without

adverse impacts. The Council has agreed that a business-as-usual approach to water will negatively impact the region.

Discussion: Direction for Water Policy for Thrive MSP 2040

The Council discussed the benefits and burdens of taking an integrated approach towards our water supply, surface and storm water, and wastewater planning and management. While integrating these areas and working with partners outside the Council may create more work for staff, a regional water sustainability approach would be beneficial. Communities have already been asking the Council to act as a convener around this issue. Meetings have been held in White Bear Lake and other southern suburbs (per the communities' request) where the Council and the DNR have been able to help the communities with water issues by providing data and additional technical information and assistance. The Council has also formed a partnership with Greater MSP in regard to marketing our region's water as an economic development tool. The group discussed the impact of development on water supply and whether we should allow growth and development, or to what extent, in areas that have aquifer challenges. The Council agreed that it is important to protect our water supply. The Council reviews Cities' MS4 permits specifically for surface water pollution prevention plans which are part of the permit. The Council also reviews the general permit that the MPCA drafts and the EPA approves; when it comes to pollution, the Cities are the regulated entity and the watersheds are the planning entity. Currently the Council does most water quality management on a watershed basis, but wastewater and water supply are on a local government basis.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:43PM.

Emily Getty, Recording Secretary