

**MEETING NOTES OF THE
COMFORT LAKE-FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, July 6th, 2021**

Present: Tom Furey, Curt Sparks, Doug Toavs, Randy Schumacher

Others: Jessica Lindemyer, Aidan Read, Bobbie Law (CLFLWD Staff); Angie Hong (EMWREP)

1. Watershed Activities Update

a) Administrator's Report Highlight

Operations & Outreach Specialist, Jessica Lindemyer, provided the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) with various updates regarding District activities over the last several months. These updates included an overview of recent new hires, Watercraft Inspector position openings, and lake monitoring initiatives.

b) Other

Ms. Lindemyer provided the Committee with a summary of upcoming board meetings, highlighting the Board's budget workshop scheduled for the following day, July 7th.

Ms. Lindemyer informed the Committee that Manager Spence's last day with the District will be July 7th and Manager Oknich's last day will be September 23rd. Current CAC member, Doug Toavs, has been appointed by Chisago County to replace Manager Spence. Mr. Toavs will be taking his oath of office, July 8th. Forest Lake resident, Chris Loth, has applied to Washington County to fill the current opening on the Board left by Jim Dibble who departed in the fall of 2020. Assuming Mr. Loth is appointed to the Board of Managers, another position on the Board for a manager from Washinton County will be open in September upon Manager Oknich's departure.

2. EMWREP Update

Angie Hong, an educator with the East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP), provided the CAC with an update on recently completed and upcoming educational programming in the Forest Lake area. Ms. Hong discussed the various efforts made over the past year and a half to make the most of virtual communications through the use of social media platforms and online webinars. Branching out from Facebook and Instagram to include TikTok has allowed EMWREP to reach a younger and more diverse audience.

Ms. Hong highlighted an upcoming in-person event scheduled for July 27th at Forest Lake's Arts in the Park where she will be hosting another Watershed Mystery Game. More information on that event is available online: <https://fb.me/e/1tFCCoSl6>

There was general discussion about how to know if the District is reaching the right people through its efforts and how social networks can be leveraged to boost District communications.

Ms. Lindemyer informed the Committee that the District is scheduled to host a booth at Arts in the Park on both July 13th and August 10th in addition to the Watershed Mystery Game on July 27th. She encouraged any Committee members who are interested in helping staff the District booth to contact her.

Ms. Lindemyer updated the Committee on the status of the wetland dumping educational efforts. Staff worked with a student from Macalester college last year to map both known dumping sites and potential dumping sites. Temporary educational signage was placed along designated routes in the areas of known dumping activity earlier this spring. Staff are now working with the City of Forest Lake to develop permanent signage that would be placed in the right of way.

3. 2022 Draft Budget

Ms. Lindemyer introduced the topic of the draft budget and reiterated that the Board of Managers would be holding a budget workshop the following day. The current draft budget for 2022 includes a proposed expense budget of just over \$3.8 million which is an increase of 16.8% over the 2021 expense budget. Current board discussion suggests a likely levy increase of 5% with remaining funds made up in grant dollars. The 2022 budget process is still in its early stages and changes are expected to be made prior to the public hearing scheduled for August 26, 2021.

There was general discussion about the difference between the current draft budget for 2022 and the 2022 budget included in the draft Watershed Management Plan (WMP). The WMP budget for 2022 is just over \$5.6 million, a 70% increase from the 2021 budget. Ms. Lindemyer informed the Committee that this item is on the agenda for Board discussion at tomorrow's workshop. She invited any interested members to attend the meeting.

Committee member, Randy Schumacher, inquired about the levy increase, cautioning that many residents will be feeling the pinch of the pandemic and may be critical of increases to the levy. Ms. Lindemyer stated that the Board seems to be leaning toward a 5% levy increase as it would be in line with the increase of taxable market values in the area.

Committee member, Curt Sparks, suggested that given the preliminary nature of the budget, members should take some time to review the current budget and any additional updates received from staff over the next couple of weeks and come prepared to discuss any formal feedback the CAC may wish to give at the August 3rd meeting. The committee members present were in agreement with this plan.

4. Committee Updates

Mr. Schumacher commented that opportunities to collect water samples for the Citizen Assisted Tributary (CAT) monitoring program have been limited due to dry conditions. Committee member, Tom Furey, agreed, stating that his CAT monitoring efforts had been similarly limited.

Mr. Sparks provided an update on the success of the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation that he is involved in. Mr. Sparks also asked staff to confirm if Lake Keewahntin has a volunteer for the Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP) this year.

Mr. Toavs shared his observations of Moddy Lake's improving water quality. Stating that, based on his CAMP data, the water clarity is the best he has ever seen it. He also noted that his family is seeing more and more wildlife out on the lake.

5. Election of Chairperson

Over the past two years the CAC has chosen to defer the election of a Chairperson until such time that a member is interested in the position. Ms. Lindemyer reminded the group of the suggestion that the position be a rotation. Mr. Schumacher asked that the topic be added to the agenda with a few proposed options for the Committee to discuss.

The item will be brought forward again at the August meeting.