

**MEETING NOTES OF THE
COMFORT LAKE-FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, January 17th, 2023**

Present: Randy Schumacher, Curt Sparks, Tom Furey, Geneva Kubal, Ted Hansen, Jerry Grundtner

Others: Mike Miron, Aidan Read, Jess Hall, Bobbie Law

Chair Tom Furey called the meeting to order, and the agenda was approved as written.

1. Watershed Update

Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist, provided an update on activities around the watershed district. This update included the status of several projects, and the activation of the aerators on Shields and Moody lakes. Mr. Read also provide a list of upcoming meetings and workshops. Jerry Grundtner sought clarification on two of the workshops, the perennial planting and water monitoring sessions. Mr. Read stated he would send the course listing for these events to the CAC following the meeting.

2. 2023 Goal Setting

The Committee began a discussion of priorities and goal settings for 2023, an item that was tabled at the December 2022 meeting. An immediate theme of discussion was membership, and several committee members suggested an effort be made to increase the number of people on the committee. After reviewing the state statute that governs the function of watershed CACs, District staff were asked to pursue recruitment of members from the Farmer-led Council, and to engage with the conservation district and county staff to gauge their interest in participating in meetings.

An additional goal of the Committee is to host a public event during the year. Several members shared they would be interested in this idea, and opportunities should be discussed in the future. One idea was that a topic of focus for the CAC should remain shoreline restoration, and their may be opportunities to hold a public event to promote the District's shoreline work.

Randy Schumacher proposed that the CAC engage more with the District's aquatic invasive species program. Mr. Read was directed to explore opportunities for the CAC to engage in the AIS program, as well as to explore the possibility of staff acquiring pesticide applicator licensure.

Lastly, several members of the Committee discussed holding another in person event for CAC members, similar to the visit to the North Shore Trail Nature Area in summer of 2022.

3. Chloride Program Discussion

Jess Hall, GreenCorps member, gave a presentation on chloride pollution sources and mitigation methods to address some previous questions of the committee. Ms. Hall followed the presentation with an overview of the Isaac Walton League's Salt Watch

program. Salt Watch is a citizen science program that provides chloride test strips to individuals to test waters several times a year. The information is then added to a database that is publicly accessible.

The Committee discussed this topic, including the suitability of expending District resources on an issue that is largely being addressed by other government partners (MNDOT, counties, municipalities that are applying road salt). The result of the discussion was that the Committee suggested the District explore the Salt Watch program as a way to increase citizen science engagement, and acquire a distributed network of chloride samples. Both Mr. Grundtner and Tom Furey discussed the importance of building a baseline level of data beyond what the District currently has.

4. High School Tree Program

Mr. Read introduced a potential collaboration between the District and the Forest Lake Area High School. Staff had been discussing options for working with the environmental club to promote reforestation of the watershed. Mr. Read presented options for a potential partnership, including providing bare root stock to students to raise as containerized trees before being distributed to residents, or specifically shoreline landowners.

The Committee was generally in favor of such a collaboration, but it was decided more details were needed to accurately weight the cost-benefit of a specific tree program. The item was tabled until District staff have discussed more details with the High School.

5. Closing and election of Chair

Several members gave notice that they will not be available for either the February or March meetings. It was decided to proceed with the February meeting as scheduled, and reassess members availability closer to the date of the meeting. Tom Furey was elected as Chair for the February meeting.

Next regular meeting of the Citizen's Advisory Committee will be Tuesday, February 14th at 5:00pm. The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom.