

**DRAFT**  
**Second Generation Plan CAG Meeting Minutes**  
**Bassett Creek Water Management Commission**  
**August 27, 2001**

**Attendance:** John O'Toole (chair), Al Lundstrom, Alan Kuentz, Helen LaFave, Lynn Schwartz, Ron Struss (BWSR), David Stack, Karen Cheseborough, Rita Nystrom, David Fellman

**Preliminaries**

Chair O'Toole called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. The meeting minutes from 6/25/01 were presented with no comments. Chair O'Toole reviewed the agenda. He repeated the purpose for the CAG, which is to develop an education program that involves citizens in the activities to inform the public of the goals, programs, and activities of the Commission. The CAG will also review and comment on the Technical Advisory Group's methods to measure the progress and success of the Commission.

**Review Draft Public Information Plan**

Lynn Schwartz, Helen LaFave, and Margie Vigoren developed a draft public information plan. The plan is an organizational structure that incorporates ideas heard from previous CAG meetings. A Communications Plan should include goals, messages and what audience will know, target audiences, communication tools, and evaluation. Ms. Schwartz is looking to the CAG for consensus on the three main goals and what the outcomes from those goals would be (key messages, what the audience knows).

The first goal is Focus A: Bassett Creek Water Management Commission, raising awareness of the watershed's existence and what the role of the BCWMC is in protecting water quality and preserving the watershed's health and aesthetics. Although identifying the role of the Commission is a small element of the overall communications plan, it is important to what the Commission wants to communicate about the watershed. This information will be repeated on all communications.

The second goal (Focus B) is the public involvement process. This goal is to enable target audiences to have confidence in the Commission's expertise and participate in a meaningful way in the planning process and ongoing projects conducted by the BCWMC.

The third goal (Focus A) is changing behaviors. This goal is raising awareness of the impact of individual behavior on water quality and motivate the target audience to change personal behavior that has a negative impact on water quality and the watershed.

The draft plan includes a list of communication strategies and guiding principles to keep in mind when communicating a key message. The following is a discussion by the CAG of the draft communication plan. Mr. O'Toole informed the group that the draft plan is a general overview of what to include in more specific public communications and asked the CAG to limit its comments to the draft plan presented today.

A question was raised concerning implementation of the plan when projects are established. Is it appropriate for the CAG to include a recommendation along with the communications plan to the Steering Committee to investigate funding so that action is taken as a result of this work product? Mr. O'Toole said it will be up to the Steering Committee to determine implementation issues. This plan is a matrix for the Steering Committee to decide where to put the resources.

[Al Lundstrom] Implementation may be a meeting in itself. The draft communications plan is a baseline that leads to implementation. How the Commission is funded and what the costs are per individual would be helpful information for the audience to know in Focus A and Focus B.

The group agreed that Focus A and B include how the Commission is funded.

Mr. Struss was pleased with the draft communications plan because it focuses on what the Commission wants to achieve. He agrees with the group's concerns about implementation. From his own experience, structured plans fail because it becomes no one's responsibility. Mr. Struss suggested the following additions:

- ?? Include architects, civil engineers, developers, contractors, yard management groups, etc. to the target audience list.
- ?? Note that a metro-wide campaign on fertilizers is taking place.
- ?? Include how to propose a new idea in Focus B, The Audience Will Know section.

[David Stack] It would be helpful to include a fact sheet listing who to contact and report potential problems (failing erosion control, spills, etc.). [Response] It will be added under "Communications Tools."

Mr. Fellman expressed concerned about the goal in Focus B. He would like to see the Commission actively involved and state that they will aggressively protect the assets of the watershed. Mr. Fellman cited the example where Minnehaha Creek Watershed District got involved in protecting the springs at Coldwater Spring.

Mr. Fellman would also like to see the Commission take on more of an enforcement role. If that is not practical, it would be helpful if the Commission communicated where to report enforcement issues. Mr. Fellman also stated that if the Commission cannot respond, then the Commission may not be as useful to the public as it could be.

[Chair O'Toole] The Commission is not an administrative agency of the government. It is not like an EPA that has statutory grant of authority and that statutory grant empowers that agency to act and enforce certain laws. The Commission is regulated by a joint powers agreement between nine cities.

[Rita Nystrom] The question that may be in the back of all of our minds is will we be involved when this planning effort is completed and will something happen as a result of this effort? [Chair O'Toole] That is an excellent question. I don't know that there is a conscious plan for a continuing existence of the CAG once the planning process is complete, but there can be an ongoing role for concerned citizens. I will pass the question along to the Steering Committee.

[Al Lundstrom] To address Dave Fellman's question from a hands-on perspective, the Commission's staff performs project inspections. Copies of the inspection reports are submitted to the member cities to support their erosion control inspections that are sent to developers, etc. There is some enforcement by the Commission, but its role is more supportive to the communities.

[Dave Fellman] Referring to Focus A where it says the Watershed Commission is a regional government unit that works to alleviate flooding and protect lakes, streams and wetlands from pollution within its nine member cities. The message implies that the Commission is an active agency that is going to get something done.

When a citizen contacts the Commission, they are directed to contact the city staff in the city where they live. It may be helpful to add a clarifying statement explaining the Commission's support for the nine member cities and citizens with specific concerns will be directed to their city.

Mr. Fellman emphasized the importance for the Commission to decide what they see their role to be and communicate that to the public. Citizens will become frustrated if the message is not clear. Mr. Fellman gave the example of a complaint he made concerning a large asbestos contamination involving 365,000 cubic yards in Golden Valley. After numerous contacts with the Commission, the City of Golden Valley, and finally the MPCA, he had to petition the MPCA to investigate the matter. Generally, people will fall back on the old saying, "you can't fight city hall" after making three or four phone calls.

Mr. O'Toole commented that the Commission might need to express more clearly what they are and what they are not. The Commission will have some projects and permitting responsibilities, but it not an enforcing, regulatory agency.

Do we want to add a key message that says the Commission is more of a coordinating body (projects, etc.) and not an enforcement body? It should be a positive statement clarifying the Commission is not a regulatory agency, but an organization that works with regulatory agencies. Mr. Lundstrom suggested the following language: The Bassett Creek Water Management Commission will provide informational resources for expediting water pollution issues.

Another question of Mr. Fellman's was what would the BCWMC have done if placed in a similar situation as the Minnehaha Creek WD concerning an issue like Coldwater Spring?

Mr. Struss added that differences exist between watershed districts (like the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District) and joint powers agreement organizations (like the Commission). Minnehaha Creek WD is the local unit of government with regulatory authority and has separate taxing authority, whereas Bassett Creek is a joint powers agreement organization and does not have authority to tax.

Mr. O'Toole said one of the issues the Technical Advisory Group is looking at is the basic structure of the Commission. Should it be collaborative commission or should it be a district authority. In order to become a watershed district, the county would step in and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources would select the first board for a one-year term.

Next steps were to incorporate the comments in a revised draft. Since the revisions are relatively minor, although important, there was a consensus that a full meeting was not necessary to discuss. Rather, the revised plan was to be prepared and distributed by Lynn Schwartz, hopefully before the next meeting of the Steering Committee. After the Steering Committee reviews the revised plan, the next steps will be to respond, to the extent necessary, to any comments of the Steering Committee.

The CAG decided it was not necessary to meet in September because the draft education plan is fairly well developed. Lynn Schwartz will add the comments addressed today. The CAG is awaiting further work from the Technical Advisory Group and may meet in October should the TAG submit something for the group to review.

### **Next Meeting and Agenda**

?? October 22 (tentative date based on whether the TAG has something ready for the CAG to review)

The meeting was adjourned about 5:45 p.m.