



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Retreat Meeting Minutes 10/7/2020 (Session 1) & 10/9/2020 (Session 2)

### **Board Retreat Session 1:**

#### **1. Meeting Location and Time:**

Location: Held via Zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order by Director Preeg Riggsby at 6:04 PM on 10/7/20.

#### **2. Welcome & Why We Are Here / Introductions & Icebreaker**

The Board retreat's first session was to focus on the draft mission and vision. Participants were asked if they were comfortable with the meeting being recorded and were reminded that recordings are subject to public record. All present agreed they were comfortable and understood.

Directors Present: Hartline, Looney, Miller, Peterson, Preeg Riggsby, Sowder; Directors Absent (excused): Lightcap; Associate Director Present: Hamer; District Manager (DM): Cathcart; Staff: Logalbo, Magyar, Razalenti; Guest Facilitator: Cliff Jones

Participants introduced themselves and stated what they've appreciated so far about the Long Range Business Plan (LRBP) update process.

#### **3. Review Meeting Agreements, Agenda, Meeting Goals & Outcomes<sup>i, ii</sup>**

Facilitator Jones presented the group agreements, agenda, meeting goals and outcomes.

#### **4. Grounding**

Staff member Logalbo gave an overview of the process that has taken place so far for the LRBP update in terms of embedding equity and inclusion as a foundational value, as well as ensuring organizational health and financial sustainability of the District. Staff member Logalbo noted that the LRBP Conservation Advisory Committee meetings are also recorded and are public meetings should anyone want to join.

#### **5. Present & Discuss DRAFT Vision & Mission**

Staff member Logalbo presented this DRAFT Vision statement: We envision that all people in our district are informed and confidently engaged in the long-term caring of and giving to the land. Everyone has the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the land, especially those who have been historically displaced or deprived of land. People's engagement and connection to the land ensures clean water and air, healthy soil, and diverse habitats for thriving communities and wildlife.

DM Cathcart explained the intention of the Vision statement is aspirational outcomes of the District's work, whereas the mission describes what the District's work is. The Board reviewed and gave feedback on each sentence in the mission.

### First Sentence:

Director Looney noted that 'giving to the land' may be confusing for some and the general feedback from the group was that 'giving *back* to the land' may be clearer. Director Hartline noted that 'caring of the land' did not sound quite right. Facilitator Jones reminded the group to focus on concepts rather than wordsmithing, but it was noted to look at an alternative to the word 'of'. Director Miller noted that a readability app that OSU Extension Service uses will be helpful for checking the readability of statements, and that Director Miller will send the link to the app to staff members Logalbo and Magyar.

### Second sentence:

Staff member Logalbo noted that the word 'historically' had been flagged by the LRBP Conservation Advisory Committee due to this practice still being a current issue, and so she recommended its removal or when speaking in present tense adding "presently" to "historically." There was general consensus from the board to remove this word. Facilitator Jones noted to consider whether or not to use the words "of" vs. "from" in context of being displaced or deprived as this would have different meanings.

### Third sentence:

Director Preeg Riggsby noted for staff member Magyar to take a closer look at the readability of this sentence. Facilitator Jones suggested to experiment with a comma after "diverse habitats", to see if it strengthens everything that comes before 'for thriving communities and wildlife'. Facilitator Jones asked the group if this vision with the input that was heard represented the spirit of the district, and all were in agreement before moving on to the mission statement.

Staff member Logalbo introduced the DRAFT mission statement: We provide conservation education and outreach to all people, and help those caring for the land, to ensure benefits for communities, wildlife, and the environment.

Some Directors noted that it was a bit wordy with a lot of commas. The group discussed what is meant by outreach. Through a variety of discussion, staff member Logalbo asked the group how they felt about the following revision: to ensure benefits for all communities, wildlife and the environment through education, outreach and assistance. Directors Hartline, Sowder, Looney, Preeg Riggsby, and Peterson all confirmed that they liked this version. Director Miller noted that including "social and/or conservation benefits" could give the statement more "oomph". Staff member Logalbo gave the following revision, with a note that the social piece will need to be worked out in the rewording: We ensure conservation (and/or social) benefits for all communities, wildlife and the environment through education, outreach and assistance.

## **6. Public Comment Period**

No public comment.

## **7. Next steps & Closure**

Staff member Logalbo announced that input given at this meeting will be taken to send out revised drafts prior to the second session of the retreat on Friday. Once the group is able to finalize statements that they feel good about, the statements will be reviewed with an equity lens.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

## **Board Retreat Session 2**

### **1. Meeting Location and Time:**

Location: Held via Zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order by Director Preeg Riggsby at 3:08 PM on 10/9/20.

Directors Present: Hartline, Looney, Miller, Peterson, Preeg Riggsby; Directors Absent (excused): Lightcap, Sowder; Associate Director Present: Hamer; District Manager (DM): Cathcart; Staff: Logalbo, Magyar, Razalenti; Guest Facilitator: Cliff Jones

Staff member Logalbo noted that the meeting will be recorded, and it is subject to public record. Videos are retained for one year, and minutes are kept permanently.

### **2. Welcome**

Facilitator Jones welcomed all and reviewed the agenda and encouraged participants to focus on concepts presented rather than wordsmithing.

### **3. Review of revised vision and mission<sup>iii</sup>**

A revised DRAFT vision statement was presented to the board to react to:

Our vision is that all people in our district are informed and confidently engaged in the long-term caring for and giving back to the land. Everyone has the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the land, especially those who have been displaced from or deprived of land. People's engagement and connection to the land ensures clean water and air, healthy soil, and diverse habitats, for thriving communities and wildlife.

Directors noted the word 'and' was used too much throughout the DRAFT vision statement, and identified one area where this word could be removed in the last sentence between 'water and air' by adding 'clean' a second time to qualify air. All were comfortable with the concepts and moved on to the DRAFT mission statement.

Four options for the DRAFT mission statement were read aloud. It was explained that the four options exist because they provide different nuances; options A and B are a variation of each other and options C and D are variations of each other.

Director Miller preferred option B best because it's straightforward and simple. Associate Director Hamer liked C because it better described what the District does but noted to maybe add 'wildlife'.

Director Looney liked option B because it states what the District does in a concise way, as mission statements should do.

Director Preeg Riggsby noted that she liked options A and B, but worried that not everyone understands what a "conservation benefit" means. She noted it would be best to keep it from being as wordy as option C, and that wherever we land we should somehow describe what we mean by conservation.

Director Hartline liked option C because it defines the outcome of conservation, and noted that perhaps some combination of options C & D could work.

Various pieces of the sentences were discussed amongst the group. Staff member Logalbo noted that saying 'all people' spoke to inclusivity and diversity, but it was noted by Director Preeg Riggsby that the

District does not help all people, and that it's mostly helping people who live, work and recreate in the district that are helped, and she wasn't sure that including the word "all" would be correct or necessary.

The group used Zoom's chat box function to submit various rewordings. Facilitator Jones noted that the group started editing the approaches in options C and D and checked in with the Directors who mentioned their preference for other options. Those Directors who preferred the other options confirmed they were comfortable to move along with the options that were being worked on. After continued discussion and various versions surfacing in the chat box, facilitator Jones stopped everyone to take a look at the seven versions that were up in the chat box and react to them. With consensus of the board, they came to the final draft version of the mission statement: We provide resources and expertise to inspire people to actively improve air, water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat.

#### **4. Apply LRBP decision makers equity lens to the mission and vision**

Facilitator Jones provided the final draft mission and draft vision statements as well as the equity lens questions.

##### DRAFT VISION

Our vision is that all people in our district are informed and confidently engaged in the long-term caring for and giving back to the land. Everyone has the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the land, especially those who have been displaced from or deprived of land. People's engagement and connection to the land ensures clean water, clean air, healthy soil, and diverse habitats, for thriving communities and wildlife.

##### DRAFT MISSION

We provide resources and expertise to inspire people to actively improve air, water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat.

##### EQUITY LENS

1. What assumptions are we making about adopting a Vision and Mission for the Long Range Business Plan?
2. How will the projected outcomes from adopting a Vision and Mission (including unintended consequences) impact (increase or decrease) equity?
3. Does our adoption of a Vision and Mission engage and/or account for multiple perspectives?
4. What barriers to engaging multiple perspectives exist or may result from adopting the Vision and Mission?
5. Based on this application of the equity lens, are changes to the Vision and Mission needed to support more equitable outcomes?
6. If changes are needed, what are the next steps to incorporating needed changes to the Vision and Mission?

Question number one - the following assumptions were noted:

- We will ultimately educate all people.
- Inspiration is the main thing that we would provide to make folks take action [this assumption was flagged by Facilitator Jones to come back to in question number 5].
- We assume that we will get people engaged.
- We are assuming that this is a good vision and that it will be well received.

- We are assuming that the mission and vision statements that have been developed will hold up over time.

Question number two- the projected outcomes that may impact equity were noted:

- We've taken the time and resources to speak with underserved communities for feedback in this process, and this networking alone is hopefully increasing our profile in underserved communities. This is a better foundation for equity moving forward.
- We talk about connecting or reconnecting to the land for those who have been displaced or deprived. We are taking the time to acknowledge those who have been historically underserved and specifically stating that and reaching for that in our vision will increase equity.
- DM Cathcart noted that the LRBP Conservation Advisory Committee found a lot of words that were exclusive in prior versions such as terms like "empower" – these were heard and changed because of this, and after revisions the Committee saw themselves in the mission and vision.

Facilitator Jones noted that an equity lens was used on the process as it went along, and it's that work that achieves equity. The District has adjusted things so that people see themselves in the words and this is a significant accomplishment.

When reviewing question number three, it was noted that there were various steps in engaging various communities, as well as staff and board throughout the entire process.

Question number four- the following barriers were recognized:

- Once these are adopted, they are fairly locked in for the foreseeable future so if we encounter new perspectives after they have been adopted, they may not be included in this version.
- There are large commercial landowners in our District that we haven't worked with and they make a lot of impacts to the environment. We don't have the relationship and they don't seek our services despite efforts we've taken to reach out.
- Adopting the vision and mission the way that it's currently crafted may not bring these folks any closer to working with the District.
- The District is aspirational with these statements, but always have a lack of time as a barrier. Director Preeg Riggsby noted that each board member should be engaged in their own zones and not just rely on staff to make connections.

For question number five, facilitator Jones brought the group back to the point that was noted of concern in question number one that could potentially change the mission statement: "Inspiration is the main thing that we would provide to make folks take action". After discussion, the group decided to keep the word 'inspire' in the mission statement.

## **5. Final adjustments & adoption of mission and vision**

Final DRAFT Mission Statement:

We provide resources, education and expertise to inspire people to actively improve air, water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat.

Final DRAFT Vision Statement:

Our vision is that all people in our district are informed and confidently engaged in the long-term caring for and giving back to the land. Everyone has the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the land,

especially those who have been displaced from or deprived of land. People's engagement and connection to the land ensures clean water, clean air, healthy soil, and diverse habitats, for thriving communities and wildlife.

Director Looney moved to adopt the final version of the draft vision and draft mission statements. Director Peterson seconded the motion, and it passed with a vote of 5-0.

## **6. Present DRAFT goals & gather input**

This item will be deferred to October 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

## **7. Public comment**

No comment.

## **8. Next steps & closure**

Staff member Logalbo announced that there will be a formal resolution at the October 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting to adopt the new vision and mission statements as well as time to provide input on draft goals.

Meeting adjourned at 5:01pm.

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<sup>i</sup>WMSWCD Board Retreat Presentation

<sup>ii</sup>WMSWCD Board Retreat Packet

<sup>iii</sup>WMSWCD Revised DRAFT vision and mission statements