

**CLARK COUNTY
CLEAN WATER COMMISSION**

Revised Meeting Notes

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

6:30 – 8:30 P.M.

Public Works Operations Conference Room B-1
4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver

Call to Order

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Present

Virginia van Breemen, Susan Rasmussen, Bob Even, Patty Page, Art Stubbs, Don Moe, David Morgan

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Absent

Bill Owen, Carl Keller

Clark County Staff

Cary Armstrong, Trista Kobluskie, Jeff Schnabel, Rod Swanson

Public

Thom McConathy; Greg Winters, Department of Ecology

Agenda and Materials Review

1. Agenda
2. September meeting notes
3. Revised August meeting notes
- 3a-g. Local press coverage of driveway car wash issue and proposed letter to The Columbian
4. Clean Water Program 2007 Summary
5. Stormwater Capital Improvement Program information
6. Clean Water Commission budget comments
7. Reporting water quality problems and basin planning updates
8. CWC schedule of activities

Mr. Stubbs moved to approve the September notes as submitted. Ms. Van Breemen seconded. All were in favor.

Communications with the Public

Mr. Armstrong invited the public to attend the October 16, 2008 meeting of the Planning Commission to discuss the stormwater ordinance update. The meeting will be at 5:30 PM in the Public Service Center, Room 679.

Mr. Armstrong reviewed the local press coverage of the driveway car wash issue, which began with The Columbian focusing on a detail in Department of Ecology's responses to Clark County's draft updated water quality ordinance. In the existing ordinance, soap is prohibited from being discharged into storm drains, however there is a special exemption for residential car and boat washing. The department of Ecology asked Clark County to remove the exemption from the draft water quality ordinance in order to meet NPDES permit requirements. The Columbian presented it as a ban on driveway car washing, even though the reporter interviewed several staff members who presented the facts.



For an alternate format, contact the Clark County ADA Compliance Office.
V (360) 397-2025; TTY (360) 397-2445; Email ADA@Clark.WA.GOV

Ms. Page was disappointed with The Columbian's coverage. She drafted a letter to the publisher and asked if other Clean Water Commissioners would like to discuss sending it. The group tabled the discussion until later in the meeting.

Mrs. Rasmussen thought the press coverage was beneficial because many people know nothing about the clean water issues.

Public Comment

Mr. McConathy stated that the income limitations for the new septic elimination assistance program are too low. Even people in economic distress do not qualify. He requested the CWC to ask Public Health and Clark Regional Wastewater District to change the income limitations to match the more generous guidelines used for the septic repair assistance program.

Mr. McConathy complimented Department of Ecology on its informative web site, which contains numerous useful databases. In particular, he recommended the blue-green algae database on Vancouver Lake, which has four years of species-level data. He asked Clark County link to it from the Clean Water Program web site.

Updates

Monitoring Update

Mr. Swanson updated the group on the result of the county's appeal of the monitoring requirements in section S8 of the NPDES permit. The Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB) denied the appeal, so the county must implement the S8 monitoring requirements.

Staff is planning how to meet the requirements, which will cost roughly ½ million a year more than current expenditures on monitoring.

S8 has three main requirements: 1) monitor stormwater discharges through the entire storm event, 2) monitor the effectiveness of a targeted activity, such as an outreach program, 3) monitor four treatment BMPs from the 2005 manual and one flow control strategy. The county has partnered with USGS Water Science Center in Portland to create the monitoring plan. The draft has been written; the final plan is due in February 2009. The program will be implemented by August 2009.

- 1) Monitor stormwater discharges through the entire storm event for 12 storms per year. Staff selected three sites for this: a high-density residential site in Felida, a low-density residential site near the fairgrounds, and a commercial site on Hwy 99 near Cougar Creek. Data will be submitted to Ecology, and the dataset will be used in aggregate and also to track changes over time.
- 2) Monitor the effectiveness of a targeted activity, such as an outreach program. The purpose is to determine if a specific activity changes people's behavior or has an environmental outcome. The county will monitor a residential outfall, then deliver a targeted education program to the residents, and then continue monitoring to see if water quality changes. In addition, residents will be surveyed for behavioral changes before and after the suite of education programs.
- 3) Monitor four treatment BMPs and one flow control strategy from the 2005 manual. Staff selected county road sites because they're the only stormwater facilities being built to the

standards in the 2005 manual. For the volume reduction BMP, staff selected the Vancouver Toyota site, which is under construction with pervious modular pavement.

Stormwater Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) Work Session

Mr. Armstrong reviewed the SCIP work session and Board of County Commissioner (BOCC) comments. Staff presented the final ranked list of stormwater facilities to the BOCC, and it was accepted.

The BOCC also discussed related topics. Commissioner Stuart opposed small stormwater facilities, calling them “mosquito traps.” Commissioner Morris was in favor of a sliding scale stormwater fee that charges more to people in neighborhoods with no treatment.

Mr. Stubbs was frustrated that Mr. Gray told the BOCC during the work session that the Clean Water Program has enough money to do its work. Mr. Stubbs sees a great shortfall in funding for capital projects, exemplified by the list of 35 projects of which only a few can be funded.

Ms. Page commended Watershed Stewards volunteers and staff on a recent tour of stormwater facilities and regional facilities.

Old Business

Education Subcommittee

Ms. Page reviewed the Education Subcommittee progress for this year. The subcommittee met with Mrs. Stienbarger to discuss the public survey and the implications of the new permit. Ms. Page stated that she struggles with the subcommittee’s role, since CWC are not empowered to direct staff.

Mr. Armstrong asked the CWC what it wants to do.

Mr. Stubbs wanted targeted education to a specific neighborhood coupled with monitoring. This will be achieved through the S8 monitoring requirements (see above). The group agreed that the CWC has been requesting a similar program of neighborhood monitoring and outreach for a long time.

Mr. Stubbs wanted to counteract the negative public opinion of stormwater activities and regulations. Ms. van Breemen recommended doing that through the schools.

Ms. van Breemen wanted to write to Commissioner Stuart to recommend putting bat houses near “mosquito trap” stormwater facilities.

Ms. Page said that the Education Subcommittee’s goals had been to explore ways to promote water quality education and to explore public relations opportunities to promote the Clean Water Program. She thought there had been progress on the water quality education front. The subcommittee’s idea of a grant program for organizations was rejected by BOCC. Also, it turned out that the grant program would be a considerable time commitment for the CWC.

Ms. Page suggested responding to skewed media coverage of stormwater and non-point-source pollution issues as one way to increase good PR for the Clean Water Program. Also, attending forums and workshops on related issues could be opportunities.

Mrs. Rasmussen thought the education program could be improved by involving other cohorts, such as Clark College. Mr. Morgan stated that engineering students need projects. Mr. McConathy stated that the BOCC need education on the stormwater and water quality.

Mrs. Rasmussen wished the education program could build educational natural habitats similar to those she found near Stanford, which involve the school and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Ms. Page said the CWC's role is not to make decisions for the program or to direct staff. Mrs. Rasmussen saw establishing policy as the main concern. Mr. Morgan saw advising the BOCC on clean water issues as the primary task, though the BOCC do not have to listen. Ms. Page asked how to effectively educate the BOCC when they only see the CWC once per year. Inviting them to CWC meetings does not work.

2009-2010 CWP Budget

Mr. Armstrong advised the CWC to read item 6 and contact Mr. Rowell with questions.

Reporting Water Quality Problems

Mr. Schnabel updated the group on reporting water quality problems. The essence is that the Ecology 24-hour hotline is the preferred method. Ms. Page: how do we let people know? Mr. Schnabel: changes to our web site are in the works. The Ecology line will be emphasized on the web. Qwest phone books listings will change a bit, too.

Stormwater Basin Planning

Mr. Swanson discussed stormwater basin planning. With an approved stormwater basin plan in place, stormwater regulations can be molded to the specific characteristics and conditions in a sub-watershed. The county will do two pilot stormwater basin plans.

Mill Creek and Cougar Creek have been chosen as the pilot sub-watersheds. In Mill Creek, the county has models, geo-morphological analyses, and fieldwork. For Cougar Creek, the county has a lot of data to calibrate models, and there is a great interest in redevelopment in that area.

He pointed out item 7c, a fact sheet on the process. He recommended reading Appendix 1 of the NPDES permit for language about stormwater basin planning. The county will work with Ecology to develop the plan, and it must include all municipalities within the basin. Once approved, the county could promote a capital program that might allow changes in the stormwater code for the basin. The technical assessments should be complete later in 2009.

Mr. McConathy asked if TMDLs must be considered. Mr. Swanson replied that everything must be considered, but the basin plans he has seen focus on flow control.

Mr. McConathy stated that the public would be reassured if the county would do basin planning throughout the county. He complained that the county has promised systematic basin planning since the 1980s and has never delivered. Mr. Swanson replied that the Stormwater Needs Assessment Program is a systematic assessment and will cover the entire county, but it does not result in changes to standards for development and redevelopment.

Status of Stormwater Utility Development

Mr. Armstrong noted that a lead worker has been assigned to the process of researching the formation of a stormwater utility.

The group discussed the definition of a stormwater utility, the various forms one may take and various funding mechanisms.

New Business

Open Forum for Commissioners

Ms. Page asked CWC members if they would like to send a letter to The Columbian, to whom, and with what content. Mrs. Rasmussen advocated for sending individual letters. Ms. van Breemen agreed.

Ms. Page clarified that she wants to send a letter to the publisher asking him to correct the skewed coverage of the car wash issue; she does not want to send a Letter to the Editor for publication.

Mr. Morgan said that the coverage sold papers. He liked the idea of taking the newspaper to task for the tone of its coverage, but he worried that a letter might have unintended consequences. Ms. van Breemen thought a letter would start a controversy. Mr. Stubbs liked the letter and thought it should be sent to the publisher. If it were published, so be it. Invite the publisher to send a reporter to a CWC meeting. He hoped it would continue to get coverage and educate people.

Ms. Page stated that the newspaper is doing education for us; do we like their education program, or not? Mrs. Rasmussen said that getting a conversation going is a good thing; some people only know about the Clean Water Program through this.

Mrs. Rasmussen will write a thank you letter to the publisher, too. She encouraged each member to write an individual letter in addition to a collective letter.

Mr. Moe preferred sending a joint letter to the publisher. He wanted to include appreciation for covering the topic. Mrs. Rasmussen wanted to include a thank you in the letter, too.

Motion 2008-10-01

Ms. Page moved to send the letter to the publisher of The Columbian publisher. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Mr. Armstrong said that the Clean Water Program is partially funding messages on the KOIN TV web site and PSAs on the broadcast channel.

Ms. Page invited all to attend Salmonpeople on October 11 or 12, which will benefit Salmon Creek Watershed Council.

Mrs. Rasmussen expressed frustration that the CWC always seems to be playing catch-up with its work. She suggested asking outside parties to help the CWC explore different topics in detail, such as the budget, restructuring the stormwater fee, or issues with regional facilities. Study the issues in subcommittee, and bring information back to the group.

Ms. Page thought the CWC could use help learning the skills to provide oversight in an advisory role. Mr. Armstrong recommended calling Jim Gladson, the PIO officer for Public Works, to see if he had recommendations on whom to call for help.

Mr. Stubbs complained that the low-impact development (LID) ball had been dropped. He wanted to find out what barriers are preventing builders from installing LID. Mr. Swanson

replied that in the future, after the PCHB ruling on LID is applied through an update to the NPDES permit, the code will actually require LID to be used to the extent feasible.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Trista Kobluskie

W:\PROJECT\011151, Clean Water Commission\OUTREACH AND ED\Advisory Group\Public Meetings\2008\Notes\cwc revised notes 20081001.doc