

Lake Ballinger/McAleeer Creek Watershed Forum
Edmonds City Hall
3rd Floor Brackett Room
Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2011

Members Present

Mayor Jerry Smith, Chair (Mountlake Terrace), Councilmember Don Fiene, Vice Chair (Lake Forest Park), Councilmember D.J. Wilson (Edmonds)

Staff Present

Phil Williams (Edmonds Public Works Director), Jerry Shuster (Edmonds Stormwater Engineering Program Manager), Aaron Halverson (Lake Forest Park Environmental Programs Manager), Curt Brees (Mountlake Terrace Public Works Director), Mike Shaw (Mountlake Terrace Stormwater Program Manager)

Others Present

Mayor Dave Hutchinson (Lake Forest Park), Councilmember Dave Gossett (Snohomish County), Ralph Svrjcek & Tricia Shoblom (Department of Ecology), Jon Parrott (Ballinger residents), Ken Peirce (Lake Ballinger Community Association), Jake Johnston (The Johnston Group), Roy Gorud

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Jerry Smith called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. at Edmonds City Hall. The agenda for the January 18 meeting and minutes for the December 21, 2010 meeting were approved.

II. Federal Legislative Agenda

a. Status of Interlocal Agreement Amendment

Curt Brees reported that adoption of the ILA is on the Mountlake Terrace City Council agenda for this evening. Vice Chair Don Fiene reported that Lake Forest Park City Council approved the ILA last week subject to a completed draft scope of work for the consultant. Councilmember DJ Wilson reported that the ILA is on Edmonds City Council agenda for this evening.

b. Discussion of Fiscal Agent

After a brief discussion, it was decided that Mountlake Terrace would act as the fiscal agent.

III. Hypolimnetic System – Ralph Svrjcek – Department of Ecology

Ralph Svrjcek, Department of Ecology (DOE), gave an overview of key points concerning the Lake Ballinger Hypolimnetic System and clarifying DOE's role. He explained that to turn the system back on, the water going into McAleeer Creek must meet the State standards for dissolved oxygen, which is .2.

Mr. Svrjcek stated that this cannot occur naturally because, due to its size, McAleeer Creek cannot accommodate a mixing zone. He added that basic mixing zone rules do not allow use of more than a quarter of the streambed because it creates an impassible zone for fish.

There was a discussion about phosphorus causing the depleted oxygen problem and a need to minimize the phosphorus coming into Lake Ballinger, mostly from Hall Creek. Mr. Svrjcek explained that depleted oxygen causes the phosphorus to become soluble and increase in volume.

Mr. Svrjcek stated that DOE does not actually design anything and in this situation, someone would need to design something and provide it to DOE for review. He gave an analogy of a wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Svrjcek said whatever is designed has to meet AKART or “all known available reasonable treatment.” He added that DOE has never seen a hypolimnetic system before and, as far as he knows, this system is unique. Mr. Svrjcek said a monitoring plan that measures oxygen would be needed to ensure the system is working.

Mr. Svrjcek distributed a graph showing the phosphorus levels measured in 2005 and 2006. He explained that lots of phosphorus is coming into Lake Ballinger, much of it from Hall Creek. The solution is to figure out how to minimize phosphorus coming into the lake. Chair Smith asked what neutralizes phosphorus. Mr. Svrjcek responded that alum treatments stabilize phosphorus levels but are very expensive. Vice Chair Fiene said that the Forum should focus on land use and behavior change and limit phosphates and phosphorus going into the lake. Councilmember Dave Gossett asked if local governments could control use of phosphorus. Mr. Svrjcek stated that local governments might be able to ban the sale of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus and encourage low impact development.

IV. Review of Existing Modeling Tools – City of Edmonds

Jerry Shuster reported that Edmonds hired NW Hydraulics to review the existing modeling tools. He noted that the tools need some minor changes to make the projects technically defensible. Mr. Shuster stated that this could be done in a few months with a modest amount of money. He added that it would include taking stream flow measurements in Hall and McAleer Creeks to calibrate the modeling tools. Mr. Shuster explained that this would help staff evaluate scenarios for modifying the weir and downstream culverts to help reduce structure flooding around the lake.

Councilmember Wilson explained that Edmonds decided to hire NW Hydraulics and found that the problem is not the weir but the three culverts on the Nile property. Curt Brees stated that the priorities would stay the same, because the way the projects are defined addresses both the weir and culverts. He added that the language covers all of the items the Forum is interested in, except for the culvert under I-5, which sets the flow going downstream. Mr. Brees stated that the NW Hydraulics study should correct some of the uncertainties.

Vice Chair Don Fiene asked if the I-5 culvert is the controlling culvert. He added that Lake Forest Park’s planning is based on the amount of water coming out of the I-5 culvert, so if there is any increase in the future, it could destroy their model and cause problems downstream.

Jake Johnston reported that the January 28 timeline for federal requests is no longer effective. He added that once the appropriations committee agrees on a plan, things would move quickly. Mr. Johnston recommended that the best strategy for the Forum is to act collectively, agree on priorities, how to proceed and stay with the combined projects. Vice Chair Fiene stated that staff needs to refine the scope of the projects.

Mayor Dave Hutchinson asked Mr. Wilson to clarify the quantity of water allowed to come from the I-5 culvert. Mr. Wilson stated 124 cubic feet per second of flow is the maximum.

Mr. Brees explained that it would take at least a 2-year cycle and most likely 3 years to begin the larger projects in the CIP. Mr. Wilson suggested that the three culverts could be designed, precast and dropped in sooner, if they could come up with local funds. He added that Edmonds had \$100,000 and, with additional funds, could begin the design and permit process in 2011.

Curt Brees stated that Mountlake Terrace is preparing to remove the culvert at the golf course on Hall Creek and 230th about a half mile north of the lake. He added that it would not change input into the lake, but the timing might change.

Chair Smith recommended that it would help to see the culverts at the Nile. A field trip to view the weir and culverts at the Nile Golf Course was scheduled for 4 p.m. Friday, January 21 and people were instructed to meet at the gravel parking lot near the caretaker's residence.

Vice Chair Fiene reviewed the next steps: finalize the scope of work for the legislative request, Edmonds and Mountlake Terrace will discuss pre-design of the lake outlet, and the staff committee will review land use regulations and how to eliminate phosphorus from the watershed.

Jake Johnston noted a meeting for the Forum to brief federal delegation district staff was set for Monday, January 24 at 1:30 p.m. at the Edmonds Public Works Building, 7110 210th St SW.

V. Public Comments

Ken Peirce, Lake Ballinger Community Association (LBCA), said that he was glad to hear that the culverts are bad. He added that he would like to see the water out of the lake early under 228th. He added that he still thinks the current weir is a problem.

Jon Parrott stated that it was disturbing that it may take two more years to fix the problem.

Jerry Shuster explained that work could only be done certain times of the year and due to all of the permits required from different agencies it takes time.

Chair Smith stated that due to scheduling conflicts, he would like the Forum meetings to go back the fourth Tuesday of the month.

VI. Adjournment

Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 3:26 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 2011 at Lake Forest Park City Hall.

Lake Ballinger/Hall Creek Phosphorus Levels

