

**CLARK COUNTY  
CLEAN WATER COMMISSION  
Meeting Notes**

Wednesday, December 6, 2006  
6:30 – 9:00 P.M.

Clark County Public Works Operations Conference Room B-1  
4700 NE 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Vancouver

---

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Present

Tim Crawford, Robert Even, Don Moe, Bill Owen, Patty Page, Susan Rasmussen, Art Stubbs, Virginia van Breemen

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Absent

Ron Wilson

Clark County Staff

Trista Kobluskie, Earl Rowell, Jeff Schnabel

Public

Thom McConathy

A quorum was achieved.

**Call to Order**

*Introduction*

The members of the Clark County Clean Water Commission, the public, and Clark County staff introduced themselves. The meeting was then called to order.

*Agenda and material review*

The packet includes:

1. December 6, 2006 agenda
2. November 1, 2006 meeting notes
3. Work Session request to Board of County Commissioners re: Low Impact Development
4. 2005-06 Clean Water Program budget vs. expenditures as of Oct. 31
5. announcement from Ecology re: publish date of NPDES municipal stormwater permit
6. Clean Water Program Events Calendar
7. various news articles

*Approval*

The November 1, 2006 meeting notes were approved as written.

*Communications with the Public*

Mr. Rowell: spoke to Gordon Feighner of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services regarding stormwater credits and incentives. They have a pilot project funding by a grant from EPA. He stated that he will make a more thorough report to the CWC when he has more information.



Mr. Owen clarified that Portland has two programs: an incentive program in place since January 2006 and a pilot project under development to allow stormwater credit trading. He noted that the stormwater fee in Portland is about \$12.50/month (approximately \$150/year).

**Public Comments**

Mr. McConathy commended Mr. Owen, Ms. Page, and Mr. Stubbs for their good work.

Mr. McConathy asked the Commission to consider doing a comprehensive review of all county water bodies and segments on the 303(d) list (a state list of impaired waterways), saying that the Clean Water Program has never done so. He noted that Salmon Creek exceeds state water quality standards for many parameters, including temperature, pH, BOD, heavy metals, and others, yet temperature and pH are the only parameters for which Total Maximum Daily Load standards (TMDLs) have been set.

[Factual note: Water Resources maintains a binder listing all 303(d) listed water bodies (water bodies not meeting state water quality standards). Interested parties can also check the 303(d) status of any state water body on the Ecology website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/303d/2002/2002-index.html>.

Salmon Creek or its tributaries are 303(d) listed as described in the following table.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>303(d) Listings in Salmon Creek</b>
5	Polluted waters requiring a TMDL	<b>Salmon Creek:</b> dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature <b>Curtin Creek:</b> dissolved oxygen, pH
4	Polluted waters that do NOT require a TMDL 4a: water bodies that already have an approved TMDL	<b>Salmon Creek:</b> fecal coliform, turbidity <b>Woodin Creek:</b> fecal coliform, ammonia, dissolved oxygen <b>Cougar Creek:</b> fecal coliform <b>Curtin Creek:</b> fecal coliform
2	Waters of concern that should have continued testing	<b>Cougar Creek:</b> dissolved oxygen, pH

There are no listings for BOD or heavy metals in the Salmon Creek watershed. TMDLs have been completed by the state for several parameters.]

Mr. Schnabel replied that a TMDL is one logical extension of listing a water body on the 303(d) list, however TMDLs are written by Ecology at its discretion, not by local jurisdictions. The program does monitor Salmon Creek for parameters other than temperature and pH. Mr. McConathy stated that the program does not monitor for and directly attempt to correct all parameters that exceed state standards. Mr. Schnabel said that it monitors and attempts to correct most parameters.

[Factual note: The Clean Water Program routinely monitors (monthly) for all of the above-listed 303(d) parameters, plus several additional parameters, at eight locations within the S.C. watershed and at seven additional locations county-wide.]

Mr. Owen asked if it would be fair to characterize the program's work as primarily monitoring levels of all those parameters/pollutants, as opposed to correcting. Mr. Schnabel replied that the program does not have resources to monitor for them all. For instance, the program does little monitoring for heavy metals, but best available science demonstrates that street sweeping and catch basin cleaning help remove heavy metals. Therefore, the program is working to correct or lessen that problem by sweeping streets and cleaning catch basins.

Mr. McConathy stated that reviewing the 303(d) list would give an exact benchmark to see if the Clean Water Program is working.

[Comment: The 303(d) list provides helpful information on the condition of local water bodies. However, the factors contributing to water quality problems are diverse and the presence or absence of water quality problems cannot solely be attributed to the success or failure of the Clean Water Program. The 303(d) list also neglects water quantity and impacts to stream biological conditions as major stormwater-related issues. –Jeff Schnabel]

Mr. McConathy asked the Commission to comprehensively review existing TMDLs.

Mr. McConathy stated that the septic tank meetings were commendable. He requested the Commission to write and present a white paper to the BOCC, Public Health, and Clark Regional Wastewater District.

Mr. Stubbs suggested forming a coalition of groups to seek grant funding to subsidize sewer hookups.

Mr. McConathy suggested that the step-system technology could be employed in the county. It combines some of the benefit of sewer with some of the lower costs of septic. Mr. Owen noted that initial costs are lower than sewer, but ongoing maintenance via pumping adds additional cost.

Mr. Even noted that the city of Vancouver has a new program to subsidize sewer connections.

### **Update**

In 2007, all regular monthly Clean Water Commission meetings will be held at the Public Works Operations Conference Room B-1 at 4700 NE 78<sup>th</sup> Street, in Vancouver.

### **Old Business**

#### *Elect 2007 Officers*

**Motion 20061206-01:** Mr. Stubbs moved to elect Mr. Owen as Chair and Mr. Crawford as Vice-Chair for 2007. Ms. van Breemen seconded. The motion passed by all present.

#### *Debrief LID Presentations*

Mr. Stubbs thanked Mr. Rowell and staff for organizing the Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> Low Impact Development presentation and Bill Owen for providing information during the tour about Portland LID installations.

Mr. Moe attended the LID course for professionals, sponsored by the University of Washington. It contained more information on green roofs. Rain gardens seem to be very popular and useful in Portland, and may work in Clark County. It appears that maintenance costs for the city of Portland decreases over time and may result in cost savings. Mr. Moe offered to bring copies of the material.

Mr. Owen asked if some LID practices seem more applicable in Clark County. Mr. Moe noted that east county has high percolation rates, so rain gardens are not necessary for water quality filtration. However, in west county, where percolation rates are lower, rain gardens may provide a good water quality benefit.

Mr. Owen asked how pervious pavement could meet county code, which requires treatment before discharge. Mr. Moe: studies of pervious pavement show biological treatment occurring in pavement and soil before water discharges to groundwater. Nonetheless, LID will require changes to the transportation standards and the stormwater ordinance. He said that the city of Vancouver is being pretty flexible.

Mr. Moe said that one issue is building the practices correctly. Contractors must know specialized methods for installing LID practices such as pervious concrete.

Mr. McConathy stated that bioswales are already being used as “horticultural amenities” – fertilized, used as dog runs, etc. For years, Portland has been planting swales attractively with native plants to help filter pollutants. If Clark County did the same, it could accomplish high water quality benefit for little cost.

Mr. Moe replied that a biofiltration swale has a different purpose than a rain garden. In a swale, water passes through in approximately nine minutes, after pollutants are removed by the grasses, then exits and is detained elsewhere. A rain garden is intended to filter and infiltrate water in place. Mr. McConathy replied that many swales act the same way, and even many stormwater facilities built to code do not treat water adequately. He suggested planting swales with spiky plants to discourage human and animal use.

Mr. Owen said that, in his experience, many county staff are personally interested in LID, but institutional inertia has prevented any progress toward allowing it in Clark County. He suggested talking directly to the BOCC about providing resources and direction to staff to implement LID in the code. Mr. Moe stated that the new NPDES municipal stormwater permit, the new Western Washington Stormwater Manual and the LID Guidance Document should allow or compel staff to pursue this track.

Mr. Rowell stated that several county departments are pursuing a series of Sustainable Development pilot projects. The Clean Water Program’s involvement is to advocate for including Low Impact Development in the projects. In January, the group will present a request to the BOCC to approve a variance to current code to build Sustainable Development. In addition, the Clean Water Program is participating in building transitional housing near Clark College on the Veteran’s Administration site.

Mr. Stubbs asked what contractor will do this. Mr. Rowell replied that a contractor would be determined later. Mr. Moe stated that developers will probably become more interested under the new stormwater manual because detention pond sizes may be up to four times as large.

Mr. Owen asked if the Sustainable Development pilot projects have any financial resources. Mr. Rowell: so far, the parties have just been talking, but we hope to apply for federal dollars for the VA site. Also, we want to turn this into an educational opportunity, with lots of public outreach.

Mr. Rowell invited the Commission members to attend the January 24, 2007 work session with the BOCC on Low Impact Development. However, the group will need to meet in its own work session prior. Mr. Rowell will schedule the CWC work session with members via email.

#### *Septic Tank Work Session*

Mr. Owen asked if a work session with the BOCC on the topic of septic tanks would be scheduled for February. Mr. Rowell: that is the current idea, yes. Mr. Owen asked Mr. Crawford to lead the presentation to the BOCC at the work session.

Mr. Owen said that Public Health and Clark Regional Wastewater District should, then, be invited to the January or February meeting to discuss prior to the work session.

#### *Clean Water Fee*

Mr. Rowell noted the following factors:

- Annexation could eliminate up to \$1.5 million of Clean Water Program revenue
- The program will continue to contribute to the Vancouver Lake Partnership
- New NPDES permit requirements will cost roughly an additional \$1.2 million/year for 2007-08
- Washington Department of Transportation pays 30% of the base fee by state law, and monies must be used for stormwater mitigation from state highways. The next project may be at SR 503 & NE 76<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Inflation has cut the buying power of the fee; the program will run out of money in 2010

Ms. van Breemen said that she thinks the public expects the fee to increase with inflation. Mr. Stubbs said that the program has provided good service at the current fee level, but it won't be able to continue to do so unless the fee increases. He said that a fee increase will have to be significant enough to cover expected costs for the next several years. Ms. Page agreed, and said also that a substantial increase now should be followed by annual increases to match inflation.

Mrs. Rasmussen said that the BOCC warned the Commission several years ago not to raise the fee. Ms. van Breemen noted that the BOCC may have changed its tune. Mr. Stubbs said that a restructuring will likely need to include an incentive program; he envisioned the new fee to be at least \$50/year for single-family residential units.

Mr. Rowell noted that the new permit, which will be issued later this month by Washington Department of Ecology, will greatly influence how much money the program needs.

Mr. Owen asked if the Commission could start working on restructuring the fee in February. Mr. Rowell: probably.

Mr. Moe asked if Mr. Rowell made assumptions about revenue loss from annexation based on areas Vancouver has attempted to annex in the recent past. Mr. Rowell: yes.

#### **New Business**

##### *2007 Topics*

Mr. Owen requested each member to bring a list of topics for CWC consideration in 2007 to the next meeting. Mr. Owen requested an easel and sticker dots for the next meeting.

##### *Open Forum for Commissioners*

Mrs. Rasmussen asked if the program would be spending money on the Critical Areas ordinance update. Mr. Rowell: yes. Last year, we sent \$200,000 to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) program. Mr. McConathy asked if the ordinance passed. Mr. Rowell: contact the ESA program.

Mr. Owen asked why expenditures for 2005-06 are so much lower than budgeted. Mr. Rowell: the Curtin Creek project was stopped in its tracks by litigation, resulting in a significant reduction in expenditures. Mr. Owen noted that all areas have comparatively low expenditures, not just the capital program. Mr. Rowell replied that the program is efficient, and budgeting is an imprecise process.

Mr. Rowell stated that the capital program needs to be more productive. In 2007, a significant portion of the capital budget will be spent on the design, permitting, and right of way acquisition for projects from

the 2007-2012 Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Owen asked if the new process will be to fully design projects, so they're ready to go. Mr. Rowell: yes, the program will design 8-10 projects in 2007.

Mr. Rowell stated that he wants to institute an annual report for the Water Resources program.

Mr. Stubbs said the Green Cleaning workshop was well attended and well received.

Mr. Owen asked for an update on the Lacamas Creek watershed. Several agencies are doing various conservation work in the area; what is Clark County doing? Mr. Rowell: we are doing work in the Lacamas watershed, including a Stormwater Needs Assessment in the near future. We helped DID 7 upgrade drainage facilities to benefit water quality. The Department of Natural Resources wants to work with landowners to convert land to conservation areas.

Mr. Owen suggested that recent interest in developing the north shore of the lake, including reported interest by the Mayor of Camas, may present a political window of opportunity to work with city of Camas to implement water quality protections for the watershed.

Mr. Schnabel agreed, and said that the trick is to figure out how we can best contribute to the process. The program continues to monitor the lake, which is in OK condition.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Clean Water Commission will be held on Wednesday, January 3, 2006 from 6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. The location is Clark County Public Works Operations Conference Room B-1 at 4700 NE 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Vancouver.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Trista Kobluskie

W:\PROJECT\011151, Clean Water Commission\OUTREACH AND ED\Advisory Group\Public Meetings\2006\Notes\20061206 CWC Meeting Notes.doc