



# CLEAN WATER COMMISSION

For the Department of Environmental Services

Meeting Summary  
**Wednesday, October 1, 2014**  
**6:30 PM – 8:30 PM**  
**Public Service Center, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Training Room**  
**1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver**

**Members Present:** David Meyer, Susan Rasmussen, Dick Rylander, Gary Schaeffer, Virginia van Breemen

**Members Absent:** Jim Carlson, Rob McKinney, Brian Peck, Melanie Wheeler

**Staff Present:** Earl Rowell, Bobbi Trusty, Ron Wierenga

**Partner Agency Staff Present:** None

**Public Present:** Thom McConathy, Friends of Vancouver Lake Lowlands

## **Announcement**

Mr. Schaeffer, Vice Chair, announced that Mr. Carlson has notified the county that he would like to step down from his role as the chair of the Clean Water Commission and asked if he should assume the roll until after elections. The commissioners in attendance agreed that Mr. Schaeffer should assume the chair responsibilities until after the regular election.

## **I ROLL CALL**

The September 3, 2014 meeting summary was approved as submitted

## **II PUBLIC COMMENT (6:28 Audio Recording Time)**

Mr. McConathy commented that there are procedures when commissioners are habitually not present. If they do not want to be on the commission, it should be opened up as other people might want to participate. He asked how many commissioners wrote to Department of Ecology upon his urging and no one actually did. He then asked to have someone from Legacy Lands Program come and share the nexus between Legacy Lands and Clean Water. Mr. Meyer asked him what the Legacy Lands program is and Mr. McConathy stated that it is a consortium that serves multiple uses. It is funded by a Conservation Futures Levy to preserve lands for parks, riparian areas, farmland preservation and trails. Mr. McConathy encouraged the commission to talk with Mr. Wierenga and his staff for more information about it as he barely scratched the surface on what an integral program it is.

Ms. Rasmussen asked Mr. McConathy if he was aware of the new requirements for buffers around streams and rivers and what he thought about it. He said that the new buffers are still inadequate, to offer the benefit of the thermal relief, the trees would have to be over 120 feet tall.

## **III. CLEAN WATER COMMISSION – COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC**

None



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#### IV PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION (20:23)

Mr. Meyer reviewed the Storm Water Fee Task Force Document (attached). He reported that the task force had met twice during the last month and found some potential data gaps and came up with a suggested method for review.

The commissioners discussed that some of the gaps are in solid waste debris. There is a wealth of water quality data available that shows stream and biological health trends throughout the county watersheds. They also discussed it would be nice to bring in other directors and agencies to create a comprehensive environmental plan. Changes cannot be made in a vacuum and other stakeholders need to be involved to provide clean water for future generations.

Mr. Wierenga commented that the Board of County Commissioners tasked the Department of Environmental Services to review the fee structure to see if there is a way to directly tie pollution in stormwater runoff to the people that cause it or to recover the cost to remove the pollution from the run off. Litter can be seen and is fairly easy to remove from stormwater, but you cannot see metals, pesticides, or organics. Dissolved metals are the most difficult and expensive pollutant to remove from stormwater.

Mr. Meyer said that if the county wants to advance the stormwater litter fee, there needs to be defensible data to back it up. The litter reports from other locations like the Caltrans study does not accurately represent what is happening here in Clark County and should be used as anecdotal information.

Ms. Rasmussen inquired what data might already be available from the maintenance cost of cleaning out a stormwater facility or what is sorted at the decant facility with regard to litter removal. Mr. Rylander questioned if in order to quantify if and where a fee should be levied, should the data be broken down by the cost to maintain (for flow) versus the cost for clean up (to make the water usable/meet standards).

The task force wants the county to discover *solid waste (litter) impacts, maintenance and recovery costs*. Mr. Schaeffer suggested that the information that the task force has developed be given to the county for review. The county can then let the task force know if more information is needed.

The commission recommended the county share its finding of the litter impacts and costs with the community to gather their input.

#### **Motion 2014-15 (1:05:42)**

Mr. Meyer made a motion that the commission advances the recommended strategy the task force developed with the minor modifications (which Mr. Meyer will make) that were discussed this evening to the county for consideration. Then request that if the county wants to meet with the task force to ask any clarifying questions, that we make ourselves available. It was seconded and approved. Motion passed.

#### **POTENTIAL PROJECTS (1:07:56)**

Mr. Rylander reviewed the Clean Water Commission Project List and discussed identifying up to three projects that the commission could initiate. There was discussion that some of the projects are interrelated and that no more than four commission members can be on any one committee.



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### **Motion 2014-16 (1:24:04)**

Mr. Rylander made a motion to adopt project items one, two and three as the focus of the 2015 calendar year and finalized at the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting with committee member assignments. It was seconded and approved. Motion passed.

### **V PUBLIC COMMENT (1:25:04)**

Mr. McConathy stated he is disappointed that the group didn't choose other projects that are more substantial to make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. He wishes they would have chosen septic tanks or plastic bags to come up with a new recommendation. The single greatest concentration of phosphorous is ground water for Vancouver Lake and it is so high due to septic tanks. Predominately failing septic tanks are on Salmon Creek and not a single one has been rectified in 30 years.

Mr. Meyer appreciated Mr. McConathy's comments, but asked how much influence the commission has when septic systems are managed by another department and or entity. Mr. Meyer asked Mr. Wierenga for guidance on this matter. Mr. Wierenga stated that a few years ago there was a presentation regarding septic system abatement programs at the commission meeting. The commission members asked to see those presentations and Mr. Rowell will send it out.

Mr. Rylander said that in life there are always tradeoffs, we all want clean water but at what cost. He has been told that a well maintained septic system works good. Mr. Wierenga said that on-site waste water management is a perfectly viable option, but to Mr. McConathy's point, there are known areas with chronic septic issues that are old and have been urbanized around. So Clark Regional Waste Water and the City of Vancouver go to pretty good lengths to prioritize the areas they are trying to bring sewer to, it's not everybody and that is where the cost come into play and who pays for that.

### **VII ADJOURN – 08:43 PM**

Summary provided by: Bobbi Trusty / 360-397-2121 x 5268