

## **Fort Wayne Sewer Advisory Group Meeting June 6, 2007**

### **Attending**

David Kohli, NEAP – Chair  
Ellen Fox, NEAP  
Allen R. Lauer, Sr., NWAP  
Beulah Stoker, SWAP  
Mac McConnell, SEAP  
Joyce McConnell, Harvester Association  
Rod Vargo, Ludwig Park  
Jay Lamos, Aboite-Aspen Village Association  
Fred Orr, Aboite-Covington Dells  
Ron Smith, Chamber of Commerce  
City of Fort Wayne staff:  
Greg Meszaros, Director of Public Works and City Utilities  
Cecilia Case, Associate City Attorney  
Mike Kiester, Engineering Support Services  
Brandi Wallace, Planning and Design Services  
Jeff Morris, WPCM Superintendent  
Mary Jane Slaton, Water Resources

### **Stormwater Sub-Committee**

Brandi Wallace, the Water Quality Regulatory Compliance Specialist for Fort Wayne City Utilities reported that on April 10, 2007 City Council approved proposed changes to Chapter 53 of the Fort Wayne Municipal Code. Chapter 53 governs the Stormwater Utility. The changes enable City Utilities to implement programs to control erosion and runoff from construction sites, to seek out and eliminate illicit discharges to the storm sewer system and to manage the quality of stormwater being discharged from developed lands.

Brandi gave examples of two situations where Susan Beck, IDDE Program Manager, has used the new Notice of Violation to educate businesses about improper use of a storm sewer. In one situation, Susan received a complaint from a citizen about a carpet cleaning company dumping into a storm sewer. The other issue involved an anti-freeze spill.

Susan reported that the next step will be for Fort Wayne City Utilities to complete and adopt technical standards for construction site and post-construction runoff control.

The sub-committee viewed the documentary “A Watershed Mentality.” The 30-minute video about sediment pollution in the Maumee River was produced by PBS-39 with a grant from the Great Lakes Commission. The documentary will air on PBS-39 on Thursday, June 29 at 10:30 PM and on Friday, June 30 at 7:30 PM. It will also be made available to PBS stations around the country. 1,000 copies are available for distribution to schools, libraries, neighborhood groups, etc.

Following the video, David Kohli commented that with the increasing demand for ethanol, farmers will likely nearly triple the amount of corn they plant. This will cause a change in typical crop rotation patterns, and because corn is auto-toxic, farmers will have to plow their fields in order to plant corn in subsequent years. This could significantly decrease the number of acres of corn being grown with no-till practices. David also suggested that as many as 10 million acres of land now held in the Conservation Reserve Program (where farmers receive subsidies for keeping

land in filter strips or pasture) could go back into production. Filter strips for conservation would likely remain in place, but more pastureland could be farmed in the future.

### **Sewer Advisory Group**

Chairman David Kohli called the Sewer Advisory Group regular meeting to order at 6:10 PM. Minutes of the April 4, 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved on a motion by Ellen Fox and a second by Rod Vargo. Ellen and Rod thanked Mary Jane for the professional and informative minutes. The minutes will be posted on the City's web site.

### **Negotiations with EPA on Consent Decree**

Director of Public Works and City Utilities Director Greg Meszaros updated the group on status of negotiations on a CSO control strategy.

- The next meeting with IDEM and EPA is set for Monday, June 11 at EPA Region 5 Headquarters in Chicago. Greg stated that he hopes the meeting will really advance the discussion of a final level of service and time to complete a long term control plan. Fort Wayne has been pushing for a limit of 4 overflow days per year with 20 years to complete construction of the necessary projects. Greg feels this is a reasonable level of service. He thinks the final agreement will likely be either 3 of 4 overflow days and does not think the level will go to zero. Time for completion can also mean higher costs, so full implementation in 15 years would be more expensive than completion in 20 years.
- Greg pointed out that there is a risk of penalties if the City cannot meet the timeframe that it agrees to.

David asked what repercussions a consent decree will have for the City?

- Greg explained that both parties must agree to the terms of a consent decree. It is a legally binding document that will commit the City to do certain things in a certain amount of time under penalty of law. The CSO long term control plan will be part of the consent decree.
- While a consent decree is a serious document, it is nothing to be afraid of. But when we agree to terms, we must follow through.

David asked if neighborhood sewer capacity projects that the City has been doing are helpful in the negotiation?

- Greg feels they are part of the reason that the City has been able to negotiate for 5 years. The projects to reduce sewer backups by building capacity have demonstrated a good commitment to sewer improvements.

David pointed out that the direction from the Sewer Task Force in 1997 was to allow the City to meet regulatory requirements on its own terms, but that the Task Force really didn't think that we would have this much time.

- Greg explained that after the consent decree, the City hopes to be able to continue to do projects including sewer separation for benefits such as reduction in sewer backups and for water quality improvements as well.

### **Curdes Avenue Task Force**

Rod Vargo reported that the final "Recommendation" document has been completed and is being circulated to the neighborhood residents who received an invitation to the first public meeting in March 2006. He is pleased with the final document.

The Curdes Task Force will hold an open house at the Psi Ote Barn on Wednesday, June 27 from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. Task Force members will answer questions about the Recommendations and City Utilities staff will answer questions about the future of the neighborhood project. There will not be a formal presentation, just an opportunity for citizens to drop in.

On a side note, Rod told the group that he and his family were able to canoe on some of the St. Joe River. He observed that the boat launch at Johnny Appleseed Park is frequently obstructed by non-boaters who regularly compromise use of the ramp during evenings and weekends.

### **Construction Update**

Mike Kiestler reported on upcoming sewer construction projects:

- Contract A for storm sewer construction around McMillen Park has wrapped up. South Anthony will be closed the week of June 4, 2007 for the final portion of the work. Final restoration should be done during the week of June 11.
- The next phase of the south McMillen projects was bid on April 25. One bid was received and it was over the engineer's estimate. The Board of Works rejected the bid and re-advertised. Bids were received on May 23. The successful bid was from All Star construction and was \$250,000 under the engineer's estimate. The project should begin within 6 weeks or so.
- The annual sewer lining project is underway. 16,000 feet of sewer has been cleaned and 6,000 feet has been lined. The project is ahead of schedule.
- Construction of the Parkerdale septic elimination project is finished. Some electrical work on the pump station remains. Properties should be able to connect to the new sewers beginning in August.
- Lift station rehab is planned for two stations this summer.
- Rod asked about a start date for the second phase of storm sewer work in Ludwig Park. Mike reported that bids have been received and that a contract for the work should be introduced to City Council on June 12. Work could begin in 4 – 6 weeks.

### **WPCM/STM Report**

Jeff Morris reported that Water Pollution Control Maintenance is working on two major initiatives:

#### 1. Televising

- WPCM has purchased an additional combination jet/vacuum truck and a TV truck. They should be received in about 30 days and will bring the department to a total of three of each. Four employees have been promoted to fill the staff positions being created by the purchase of the new equipment. The existing TV trucks will be outfitted with new televising equipment. Sewer televising will no longer be contracted out, but will be performed completely in-house.
- The process of assigning work to the cleaning and TV personnel has been changed so that one person coordinates and assigns all clean/TV work, whether it is pro-active or reactive. A second person is responsible for making sure the work is done in a timely fashion and assists crews in the field. The completed televising is returned to the person who assigned it. That person downloads the data into a software program.
- The restructuring of the process has already resulted in an increase in productivity of 38% - even without the new equipment!

#### 2. Degreasing Program

- City Utilities has created an interdisciplinary grease task force to manage grease by keeping as much as possible out of the sewer system. WPCM is a vital part of the program. Degreasing was the first proactive program started by WPCM.
- When sewers are televised, the TV camera can see grease down to the tap. Because the current process involves cleaning before we TV, we may miss opportunities to identify sources of grease. So as part of looking at the grease program as a whole, WPCM may change procedures to do more to find sources.

- Currently WPCM regularly degreases 300 sites – five years ago it was only 50. We’ve identified 1,200 food service establishments that could be sources.
- Ellen Fox suggested talking to high school cooking classes about proper ways to handle grease and oil. Students need to be educated about grease. “We all learned to cook the way our mothers taught us. In many homes, people aren’t taught to keep grease out of the drain.”
- Joyce McConnell also suggested addressing culinary classes at IVY Tech and other universities.
- Rod suggested that garbage disposals may encourage people to think that they can put anything down the drain. He has lived in places (i.e. New York) where garbage disposals are discouraged. Perhaps the City could regulate or eliminate garbage disposals, especially in commercial settings.
- Jeff explained that the City currently has ordinance language in place that allows the City to fine food service establishments if they violate rules about grease. There is also a private company that will work with restaurants to be sure they are handling grease appropriately including cleaning grease traps and putting screens in drains.
- David observed that another potential effect of the demand for energy is that vegetable oil prices may go up, so waste grease could become more of a commodity.
- Jeff described the kind of grease that we commonly see in sewers and at the Plant now. It used to be hard grey chunks that were relatively easy to manage. The consistency of grease has changed, perhaps indicating that the kind of oil used in cooking is changing.

#### **Items from the Floor**

- Ellen reported that equipment from a construction site has been dragging mud onto the street between Coliseum Boulevard and Carew Street on Lake Avenue. Jeff will check it out.
- Alan Lauer asked about the cycle times for street sweeping. He reported chunks of asphalt in the gutter in front of 664 Florence. Greg will relay the report to Street Department. Alan suggested that the street sweepers need to slow down in order to pick up more debris. He also suggested that neighborhoods could be notified the day before street sweeping is to be done so that residents could remove their cars from the street.
  - Ellen stated that her neighborhood had asked to be notified when their streets are to be swept. She also pointed out that the street sweepers seem to miss the ledge along the flood control project along St. Joe Boulevard. Leaves pile up and get stuck. The ledge at St. Joe Boulevard and Tennessee needs to have the debris scraped away.
  - Alan observed that many people blow grass clippings and other debris into the street when they mow. Even some landscaping companies do this. Could the city do a utility bill stuffer explaining why clippings should not be put in the street?
  - Mary Jane suggested that SAG members put an article in their neighborhood association newsletter about how to handle grass clippings. She will write an article and send to members.
- Ellen stated that a woman from City Water Maintenance and Service had come to an apartment building in Northside Neighborhood to turn off water. The apartment had been vacant for a number of months. Ellen wondered who pays the water bill for apartments and why it takes so long for water to be turned off.
- Rod complimented Water Maintenance for a quick response time in adjusting a curb box for one of Rod’s neighbors. The neighbor called to have the fixture adjusted and WM&S responded the next day.

**Update on 2007 Goals**

One of the goals for 2007 is to assist City Utilities in finding opportunities to share information about upcoming CSO projects and costs.

Greg continues to speak at various locations. He will be speaking to a Lower St. Joe Watershed Management Plan stakeholders meeting on June 20 and at Downtown Rotary on July 23.

- Rod suggested that perhaps Greg would want to include information about the carbon footprint of bottled water in his discussion.

**The next meeting of the Sewer Advisory Group will be on August 1, 2007 with the Stormwater Sub-Committee meeting beginning at 5:30 PM.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM

Respectfully submitted:  
Mary Jane Slaton