

Fort Wayne Sewer Advisory Group Meeting August 1, 2007

Attending

David Kohli, NEAP – Chair
Allen R. Lauer, Sr., NWAP
Billie Rykard, SEAP
Rod Vargo, Ludwig Park
Fred Orr, Aboite-Covington Dells
Ron Smith, Chamber of Commerce
City of Fort Wayne staff:

Cecilia Case, Associate City Attorney
Mike Kiestler, Engineering Support Services
Brandi Wallace, Planning and Design Services
Jeff Morris, WPCM Superintendent
Mary Jane Slaton, Water Resources

Beulah Stoker, Mac and Joyce McConnell, Ellen Fox, Dan Wire and Sandy Boruk had notified either City Utilities or David Kohli that they would be unable to attend the meeting.

Stormwater Sub-Committee

Brandi Wallace, the Water Quality Regulatory Compliance Specialist for Fort Wayne City Utilities, gave an update on implementation of the City's Stormwater NPDES program.

Brandi gave examples of two situations where Susan Beck, IDDE Program Manager, has used the Notice of Violation and other enforcement tools in the Stormwater ordinance to bring businesses into compliance with illicit discharge regulations. In one situation, Susan issued a Notice of Violation to a truck fueling plaza that has had frequent spills of diesel fuel. The business has been ordered to install best management practices to keep the diesel fuel contained on the site and to keep it from draining into a nearby ditch. In another situation, Susan issued a Notice of Violation and has required an owner to do preventive maintenance work on a private sewer lift station.

Brandi reported that Fort Wayne City Utilities is working with an engineering firm to write and adopt a technical standards manual for construction site and post-construction runoff control. The manual is expected to be adopted by the end of the year.

Allen Lauer asked about the landscaping on the hill on the Clinton Street side of Science Central where a concrete retaining wall was removed. Grass seed was planted but because of the dry weather it appears that it has not taken hold. An erosion problem is developing where the soil from the hill is washing onto the sidewalk. Allen wondered if the grass will be replanted and if there is anything that the City should do to ensure that possible future erosion is managed.

Mike Kiestler explained that for City projects, the contractor must post a maintenance bond and can be called on for a full year following construction to reseed if necessary. We are not sure if the contractor at Science Central was hired by the City and we don't know what might be in the Science Central contract. Mary Jane offered to touch base with Science Central to determine if the City can provide any kind of technical or other assistance with the grass.

Mary Jane Slaton reported that as part of the Great Lakes Commission grant, the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality is producing a 15-minute video about construction site erosion and sediment control. The target audience is private engineering firms that do site development

design, building contractors and site developers. The Partnership is working with the Allen County Building Contractor's Association to find ways to distribute the video.

Sewer Advisory Group

Chairman David Kohli called the Sewer Advisory Group regular meeting to order at 5:45 PM. Minutes of the June 6, 2007 meeting were reviewed. Rod Vargo offered several corrections. On a motion by Allen Lauer and a second by Rod, the minutes were approved as corrected. The minutes will be posted on the City's web site.

Construction Update – Mike Kiester, Engineering Support Services

Parkerdale -- Construction of the Parkerdale septic elimination project is wrapping up. The final public hearing on the property owner cost share will be held on August 15 and properties may connect to the system after that time. The project will serve about 100 homes.

- Rod asked what must be done with the existing septic tanks. They must be drained and either crushed in place or filled. Rod asked if it would be possible for properties to continue to direct downspout or foundation drains to the septic tank. It was the feeling of most of those present that using the septic tank in this way is not permitted, but the Board of Health would have jurisdiction and would determine if the septic tank could continue to be used.
- Fred Orr asked what other septic elimination projects the City will be working on. His neighborhood – Covington Dells – has been having difficulty getting AquaIndiana to initiate a sewer extension project for them. Fred wondered if the recent court ruling on the City's condemnation of AquaIndiana's north assets could set a precedent that would enable the City to take over AI's southwest system, too. Associate City Attorney Cici Case explained that the lawsuit and court ruling apply specifically to the north AI systems and that nothing definite is planned regarding the AI southwest system.
- Mike Kiester stated that the City is currently working on a sewer system design for Westlawn – a subdivision in the Aboite area close to Covington Dells.
- Mary Jane explained that the City is not able to provide sanitary sewers to Covington Dells at the current time because of the distance to the City's infrastructure. She also stated that Nancy Townsend is working on mapping and analyzing all of the septic areas within and near the City limits and City Utilities will be developing a five year plan to eliminate many septic systems. Nancy will be asked to speak to the October meeting of the Sewer Advisory Group to present the septic system map and plans for septic elimination.

Lift Station Upgrades – The Flaugh Ditch lift station in the 14/69 area will be renovated. The sewer going into the lift station will also be lined.

Sewer Lining – A contractor is working on a sewer lining package for the City. The package includes 170 sewer segments. To date, 104 have already been cleaned and 85 have been lined.

South McMillen -- The next phase of the south McMillen storm sewer projects was rebid on May 23. All Star Construction was the successful bidder. Street restoration work will also be done as part of this contract. In the past three years, All Star has been the low bidder on 12 projects with bids that totaled \$900,000 less than the engineer's estimates.

Ludwig Park Phase III – The third phase of the drainage project in Ludwig Park is underway. Rod commented that the work is going faster than he expected. Neighborhood reaction has been positive and the work is being done well. Given the discussion earlier about septic tanks, Rod wondered if he could put information into his neighborhood newsletter stating that residents can use their abandoned septic tanks for drainage. City staff suggested that he should check with the Board of Health first. Ron Smith believes that is no longer allowed.

Huestis-Maple Area Partial Sewer Separation – Mike reported that bids will be received for this project in October. The project will involve the installation of about 5,600 lineal feet of

storm sewer in the area bounded by Scott Avenue on the north, Broadway on the east, Park Avenue on the south and the St. Marys River on the west. The partial sewer separation will be coordinated with the flood control project for the Park-Thompson area. The City has acquired the ARC property and it will become green space for flood water storage. Congressman Mark Souder secured a \$300,000 federal grant to help fund this project. Total project cost is estimated at \$1.5 million.

WPCM/STM Report – Jeff Morris

Hansen – Jeff reported that the Maintenance Departments are using the new asset and data management system called Hansen. Jeff distributed a pie chart showing all of the service requests that WPCM has received thus far in 2007 divided into categories. The largest category has been “Backups/Slow Drains” at 31.9%, followed by “Cave-Ins” at 17.8%. David Kohli asked if the high number of cave-ins was typical. Jeff responded that the changes in weather early this year – warm and rainy in January followed by a hard freeze in February – contributed to the high number. When the March and April thaw came, there were 150 – 200 cave-ins in a period of a month and a half.

Televising – WPCM has received a new combo truck. It and the new TV truck should be on the street within a couple of weeks. Having this third set of trucks will allow City Utilities to do all proactive sewer televising in-house. Delivery of the third TV truck had been delayed because the vendor could not find a chassis for the vehicle. Jeff distributed graphs showing how much proactive and reactive televising work has been done in 2007 to date. With the new equipment, proactively televised footage should go up. The footage televised reactively depends on the number of backups and other problems that are reported to Maintenance.

Degreasing Program -- City Utilities has created an interdisciplinary grease task force to look for ways to manage grease. WPCM is a vital part of the program. Degreasing was the first proactive program started by WPCM. WPCM regularly degreases 300 sites – five years ago it was only 50. It is uncertain how much the capacity of the sewer system is reduced because of grease build-up on the walls of sewer pipes. The sewage treatment plant experiences huge slugs of semi-liquid grease after heavy rains. The grease team is trying to determine what causes these slugs so they can be better managed.

- Jeff explained that Jim Cornell from the Plant worked with a small group of restaurants as part of a Green Belt Six Sigma project to reduce the amount of grease coming from restaurants. Jim found that full-service restaurants put more grease into the sewer system than fast food establishments.
- WPCM sill uses drip bags that put enzymes into the sewers. The enzymes help to keep the grease soft.
- Billie Rykard asked if the enzymes break up the grease. Jeff explained that the enzymes do break up grease and may keep it from reforming.
- Ron Smith asked about sewer odors. He stated that the area around Rudisill and Broadway seems to have a particularly strong smell. He asked if the odor is related to dry weather. Jeff explained that it may be. During dry weather, traps in the catch basins that collect stormwater in the combined sewer system can get dry allowing sewer gas to escape. Maintenance can clean the trap and refill it with water. This can help to eliminate the odor. Jeff will have a crew investigate the odor at Rudisill and Broadway.
- Rod asked if people should be encouraged to call Sewer Maintenance (427-1255) to report odors from CSO outfalls? Jeff replied yes. If a CSO has an odor during dry weather it could be because of a dry weather overflow or other maintenance issues that should be investigated.

The Sewer Advisory Group commended Jeff and WPC Maintenance for their good work.

CSO Program Public Education and Outreach – Mary Jane Slaton

As the City gets closer to having a consent decree that will govern the City’s combined sewer overflow control program, we are also working on developing a strategic plan for how we will communicate about the consent decree and CSO long term control plan to the community. Mary Jane asked the group to spend a few minutes offering suggestions for elements that should be incorporated into a multi-faceted communication program. City Utilities is working with PBS 39 to produce a 30-minute documentary about combined sewers that will air on the public TV station. A 15-minute version will also be produced that can be shown at community meetings.

- David suggested creating a presentation that can be used in schools that would take an historical approach to explaining how the sewer system developed, why CSOs were designed and built and the changes that now require that they be reduced.
- The group discussed using a mascot – possibly a river otter. As area rivers improve, otters are more likely to live in our rivers. The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative has discussed co-sponsoring an otter release with the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Cici suggested finding out what other communities have done – specifically the city of Atlanta. She mentioned having communication plan roll-out party. And she suggested targeting the just-out-of-college age population – people who may be looking to purchase their first home.
- Ron pointed out that young adults pay more attention to electronic media than to more traditional forms of communication. He suggested using pod casts featuring animated graphics showing how sewers work.
- Rod suggested getting information to teachers and including materials that make the messages visual. He pointed out that young students especially like to have things to touch and something to take home such as foam animals that expand in water.
- David suggested teaming up with Greenways Manager Dawn Ritchie. Dawn speaks to many groups about greenways and trails and could perhaps incorporate CSO messages in her presentations.
- Cici stated she would be interested in learning more about how high school and college audiences have responded to Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth.”
- Rod pointed out that newspapers still seem to be very effective for reaching people 35 and over.
- David likes the idea of developing a series of newsletter articles that could be distributed to neighborhoods to be placed in neighborhood newsletters.
- Ron suggested working with schools to test messages and ways of presenting them with students of various ages.

Items from the Floor

- Rod asked if the City can place some sort of warning sign upstream of the Hosey Dam. With increased emphasis on the rivers, Rod and Dan Wire expect an increase in the number of novice boaters on the river who may not be aware of the dam’s location. Also, given the bend in the river, the dam is rather unexpected and the appearance is misleading. Mary Jane reported that the Filtration Plan has been looking into the possibility of placing a warning sign on the bridge upstream of the dam.
- Mike Kiester reported that the County has requested that the City lower river levels so that the County can inspect bridges. This would only be done in accordance with the protocol that has been developed for operating the Hosey Dam.
- Rod distributed notes from the final meetings and public hearings of the North River Task Force held during the week of July 23 – 27. Rod observed that there was a great deal of discussion of and support for increased access to the St. Mary’s River for recreational uses

including discussion of boat docking and other access features. This interest in the St. Marys River could provide increased support for the cost of mitigating combined sewer overflows but could also increase pressure for CSO relief on the St. Marys sooner than the long term control plan might outline.

- Rod explained that the North River group also discussed how a water feature could be incorporated. Rod has provided input to the group about the possible reuse of stormwater flows or gravity driven flow from the St. Joseph River. Rumors of a significant groundwater issue with Harrison Square led Rod to suggest that perhaps developers of a future North River project could investigate use of groundwater to feed a water feature.
- Mary Jane announced that Glenbrook Mall will be holding a Green Expo on August 24, 25 & 26. City Utilities and the City's Energy and Environment Program will have booths focusing on home energy savings, rain gardens and stormwater. The City will also be giving informational presentations during the event.

The next meeting of the Sewer Advisory Group will be on October 3, 2007 with the Stormwater Sub-Committee meeting beginning at 5:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted:
Mary Jane Slaton