

MEETING SUMMARY

Advisory Committee Meeting Flood Control Zone District April 15, 2013 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Location

Commissioners' Hearing Room, Skagit County Administrative Building, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA.

Meeting Purpose

For the Flood Control Zone District (FCZD) Advisory Committee (AC) members to conduct normal business and:

1. Skagit River General Investigation (Skagit River GI) Update
 - a. Preliminary Modeling Results
 - b. Public Outreach
 - c. CFHMP
 - d. Funding
2. Farm, Fish, Flood Initiative
3. To determine next steps and assignments, if any, for Technical Committees (TC)

Acceptance of February 19, 2013 AC Meeting Summary

Larry Kunzler mentioned the minutes did not accurately reflect one of Lorna Ellestad's comments. The following is from the audio that is to be included in the summary. Ellestad asked if the County has plans to look at its roads, or if it has considered working in conjunction in order to demonstrate to the Congressionals that information is going to be realized as it is developed, and not wait for a federal project. She asked if it has been discussed to start building an annual maintenance schedule to identify and prioritize projects, and review where swales and flows paths can be incorporated.

Garnor Bensen made the motion to accept the meeting summary as amended. Stanley Nelson seconded. Motion passed (9/0/0).

Skagit River GI Update

Kara Symonds began by speaking about the alternative analyses NHC is performing. After several modeling runs, the system-wide levee setback alternative shows it is not effective in reducing spill at Sterling or south of Mount Vernon. In addition to setting them back, levees would have to be raised. Therefore, the alternative will morph into one that protects urban area. An alternative of this significance is not hydraulically effective, particularly between the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Division Street bridges. Potentially, it could be used in mitigation.

The Project Delivery Team is modeling the Joe Leary Slough alternative, which is being reviewed as three sub-alternatives; unconfined overland flow, narrow excavated channel, and wide excavated channel. This review is to be followed by modeling the Swinomish Bypass. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is very aware of the transfer of risk in all alternatives. In addition, non-structural alternatives are being considered in the upper system near Sterling, which causes concern. If the levee was raised or extended, it would most definitely raise water levels in the area.

Symonds spoke to the Baker system pursuant to Daryl Hamburg's request. The County's question to the USACE and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is to know the cost of additional storage. There is a preliminary cost from PSE, and a preliminary benefit from the USACE, but they still have to go through multiple layers of quality control before a definitive cost to benefit ratio is determined. Hard storage is in all three alternatives, and could be considered a "stand alone" project.

A Public Outreach plan has been drafted for meeting with stakeholders to select a community preferred alternative. Kunzler requested existing conditions be presented as a result of the work of Dike District 12, not the river. Symonds said rivers flood, and documenting the existing conditions of a 100-year flood is a huge part of understanding where the water goes; a great educational opportunity. Berentson added the community will know the pros and cons of all three alternatives. An alternative will need to be chosen by the end of the summer in order to stay on schedule.

Symonds added the sizing of outlet structures is being reviewed for the slough and bypass alternatives, which will be a very beneficial piece for the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. Kunzler asked if Memorial Highway can be raised to move the flood water out to the tide flats. Symonds said the USACE cannot raise roads as levees. In response, Kunzler suggested a levee be built next to the road. Dave Radabaugh added, though he is not a Washington State Department of Transportation official, he knows there is concern using state highways as levees.

Berentson stated the County paid another cash contribution of \$150,000 to the USACE. He expressed appreciation to all the partners for contributing. Congressman Larsen and Congresswoman DelBene requested \$300,000 from the USACE for fiscal year 2013. The Congressional Briefing, held in January, was very beneficial. Senator Murray's representative shared they are still very engaged in supporting the Skagit GI. Commissioners Dahlstedt and Wesen were able to meet with Tab Brown, USACE, to give him an update, as well. Support seems to be coming from all three levels of the USACE. Kunzler wanted to know where the County would be placed in line for a project when the study is complete. Status is unknown at this time. Berentson added there will also be dialogue regarding getting local match for the City of Mount Vernon's floodwall project. Kunzler's understanding is that the USACE does not give retroactive credit for a project.

Farm, Fish, Flood Initiative (3FI)

Symonds continued by reiterating the initiative focuses on protecting farm and fish, while reducing flooding. Symonds serves on the hydrodynamic modeling team, and Berentson and Hamburg serve on the oversight committee. She handed out a draft outline of the objectives used to assess whether a project is meeting the goals of the three groups.

Berentson added the Commissioners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, with several other entities, in support of the initiative. The initiative is primarily funded through a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology. Three committees have been formed thus far, including a hydrodynamics team, an agricultural industry team, and a farmland legacy team. A fourth group, an investment team, has yet to be formed. The committees meet monthly. Emphasis is downstream of the valley. Flaig expressed he hopes it works better than what has taken place with the drainage issues in the Clear Lake area. Berentson mentioned drainage districts meet annually and are required to write five-year maintenance plans. The County has co-signed interlocals to remove log jams in the area, but agrees the situation is

frustrating. Flaig was not sure what his district will do next when asked if it would start a drainage maintenance plan. Any comments on the objectives of the 3FI can be shared with Symonds, Berentson, or Hamburg.

Symonds briefly jumped back to the Skagit GI update to share that Dan Johnson, USACE, has accepted a job at the Howard Hansen Dam. Lynn Wetzler, USACE, will assume Johnson's position as Project Manager for the Skagit GI. She also serves as the GI program manager, meaning she oversees all the GIs.

As a side note, Berentson mentioned the Nearshore GI (for Puget Sound recovery) is making an effort to get into the 3x3x3 program, as well. Projects identified by the group include: Telegraph Slough, North Fork Skagit River Delta, Deepwater Slough, Milltown Island, and Dugualla Bay. Potentially, there could be projects funded as restoration ecosystem efforts through the Skagit GI.

To tie into dikes running along highways, Leonard Halverson suggested Berentson look into the dike that Dike District 12 has extended along Lafayette Road. He says the unpermitted work extends roughly two-hundred feet. When asked, John Shultz was unable to comment on the permit.

Public Comment

Carol Ehlers brought a handout that Mark Leander, former Skagit County Assessor, started in 1997. It shows base acreage in the County and who pays what types of taxes. Roughly 11% of the land is taxable, at full market rate, implying there are only so many taxes that can be placed on landowners to fund projects. Berentson expressed it is always a challenge to find funding. Ehlers feels it is important to protect the existence of the land; once land is gone, it cannot be taxed.

Bob Helton asked if West Mount Vernon is included in the Swinomish Bypass. Symonds stated the area is in a tough spot. If the combined bypass were chosen, West Mount Vernon would not need additional protection, because a left and right bank would take the flood waters out.

Kunzler reiterated the request that twenty minutes be devoted to discussing funding flood projects. Berentson suggested he and Symonds could put together, for the purpose of discussion, how the FCZD is used for funding. Program Note: Funding was listed as a sub-topic of the Skagit GI. This was the time period during which general funding could be discussed. It will now be its own topic.

Berentson stated a pros and cons list of each alternative will be available to the FCZD (and the community) by the next meeting. Kunzler is concerned the committee will not be asked for its opinions on the alternatives before they are shared with the community. Symonds stated the great thing about the FCZD is that the group has successfully shared its thoughts over the years, for which she is very thankful.

Suggested Next Steps and Meeting

1. Provide a Pros & Cons list of each alternative.
2. Provide time on agenda for funding.
3. The next meeting will take place on Monday, June 17.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

PRESENT AT FCZD ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING:

Name	Representing	Affiliation	Present	Absent	Proxy
Anderson, Mayor Mike	Cities and Towns	City of Sedro-Woolley		X	
Boudinot, Bob	ETC	Skagit Land Trust	X		
Boudreau, Mayor Jill	Cities and Towns	City of Mount Vernon			X Esco Bell
Carey, Bob	ETC	The Nature Conservancy		X	
Carlson, Todd	LUTC	WA Dept. of Transportation		X	
Easton, Jason	LUTC	LUTC		X	
Flaig, Dean	DDTC	Drainage District 21	X		
Halverson, Leonard	At-Large	Sterling Area	X		
Hamburg, Daryl	DDTC	Dike District 17	X		
Hughes, Robert	LUTC	Ag. Adv. Committee		X	
Kunzler, Larry	At-Large	Skagit River Flood Historian	X		
Nelson, Stanley	DDTC	Dike District 22	X		
Pflug, Dave	ETC	Seattle City Light		X	
Sexton, Mayor Steve	Cities and Towns	City of Burlington			X Garnor Bensen

STAFF	
Name	Affiliation
Berentson, Dan	Skagit County Public Works
MacMullen, Meghan	Skagit County Public Works
Symonds, Kara	Skagit County Public Works

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES	
Name	Affiliation
Cromley, Mayor Joan	Town of Hamilton
Dempsey, Brian	City of Burlington
Ehlers, Carol	Citizen
Helton, Bob	Citizen
Johnson, Kirk	SC Planning and Development Services
Morrison, Darrin	Dike District 3
Oppenheimer, Jory	Puget Sound Energy
Radabaugh, David	WA State Department of Ecology
Shultz, John	Attorney for DD1 and DD12