



King County

Water & Land Resources Division
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MEETING NOTES

CEDAR RIVER COUNCIL October 23rd, 2018 – 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Maplewood Greens Golf Course 4050 Maple Valley Hwy., Renton, WA 98058

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

Public Comment Period

- **Mike Grijalva** said he floated the Cedar River a few weeks ago, and saw fewer fish than he has ever seen.
- **Manny Mankowski** encouraged the CRC to do whatever possible to resolve any environmental issues arising from the proposed Lakeside Industries asphalt plant if its permit is approved. He voiced concern about a lack of fire protection in the area around the plant. He also endorsed Corinne Young as a potential member of the CRC. Another citizen reported he spoke to DPER about the asphalt plant, saying they're waiting for further information and expect to make a decision later this month.
- **Eric Harper and Kathy Miller (???)**, via email to Nathan Brown, voiced concern about no mention on tonight's meeting agenda of criminal impacts along the Cedar. The two are owners of a 1939 cabin near Taylor Reach, where they say criminal activity is rampant, and King County enforcement is constantly obscured. They asked why the County has not taken steps to create a parking area for the public, believing public presence will deter criminal activity. They also asked about the possibility of a large number of substance abusers in the area affecting groundwater quality. They said the County, while buying many properties in the area, has allowed the criminal activity to continue through its neglect.

Max Prinsen said the CRC should find out who the complainants have been in touch with, and determine an appropriate response. Mr. Brown suggested bringing County project managers to the CRC to discuss this. Jeff Neuner said the area around Cedar Rapids has seen similar criminal activity, and voiced hope that the County's ownership of the Riverbend site will result in a 60-acre recreational area for the community. Tom Allyn said he is familiar with the cabin's location and is willing to take a look at the area.

Introduction: Dana Parnello, Deputy Mayor of Maple Valley

Deputy Mayor Parnello introduced himself as the City of Maple Valley's representative to the CRC, having been asked to attend by Charles Ruthford. He spoke of his background in the area, saying he was excited to have representation on the CRC as well as the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council. He said he wants to understand more about the CRC's duties, which he believes have a lot of overlap with Maple Valley's work. He noted that he recently received a message from a citizen inquiring about an environmental stewardship committee for the city, and how encouraging it is to hear this sentiment from the public.

Riverbend Project Update – Jon Hansen, DNRP

Mr. Hansen, interim managing supervisor for the capital projects team at King County DNRP, presented a brief video overview of the Riverbend project done by two project team members. He said the planning process is at close to 60% completion, almost to permit stage.

Mr. Ruthford asked if there have been any planning challenges. Mr. Hansen replied the biggest challenge is finding a balance between letting the river do what natural process it can, and ensuring public safety in that same area. He said there is also a lot of conflict between urban and rural areas around the site, including crime, such as Washington Conservation Corps' tools being stolen from the Riverbend club house and other work sites on a regular basis.

Mr. Hansen's video reviewed the location of the Riverbend site and efforts to improve habitat there for young salmon, particularly in Cavanaugh Pond. He said construction is expected to begin by summer 2020, and no major changes were made to the project since his last presentation to the CRC. The floor was then opened for questions.

A citizen asked about removal of the former RV park's septic systems. Mr. Hansen said these were all removed, thus



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eliminating many pollutants that would've filtered into the river. Mr. Allyn asked if this has resulted in any change in nitrogen levels in Cavanaugh Pond; Mr. Hansen answered he had no prior data to serve as a baseline to compare.

Mr. Ruthford asked about the timing of the 2020 construction, if it would be done before salmon are in the river. Mr. Hansen replied this is the intent and what has been promised to state and federal governments. Mr. Ruthford then asked if there would be anything for naturalists, such as Cedar River Salmon Journey, to see in the river at that time. Mr. Hansen said the site will look very different, and wasn't sure how much of the planting would be done at that time. In terms of whether salmon would be visible, he offered to follow up with Mr. Ruthford.

Several questions addressed ownership of the project site and how to improve stewardship to deter crime in the area. Mr. Hansen explained that Cavanaugh Pond Natural Area is owned by King County Parks, while the mobile home park site is co-managed between WLRD and Parks. The hope is to eventually have the entire area under management of Parks as a natural land, though the County's Rivers section and Flood Control District would hold some aspects. Mr. Allyn suggested, as this is a heavily-used recreational area, Parks should put up signage there to encourage public reporting of suspicious behavior. Mr. Hansen replied that Parks oversees signage and site maintenance for their sites, and knows how to set up public access points in ways that shouldn't create trouble. Mr. Allyn added that in some areas, large numbers of recreational users appear to drive crime out; he said this, in addition to signage, might make things better for everyone. Mr. Neuner asked if there are any examples of Parks-stewarded areas on the Cedar so the CRC can see what they are doing. Mr. Allyn listed several, including Belmondo, Taylor Reach, and Dorre Don.

Mr. Hansen concluded with an update on the fate of the former Riverbend RV park club house. The structure, now vacant, has been subject to crime, vandalism, and squatters. The County has been unsuccessful in soliciting interest from any entity to take responsibility for the structure, nor has any other beneficial use been determined. The County will make a decision on the fate of the club house soon.

King County Executive's Proposal to Council (SWM Fee) Update – Josh Baldi, DNRP

Mr. Baldi, director for KC DNRP's Water and Land Resources Division, updated the CRC on the County Executive's proposed increase to the Surface Water Management (SWM) fee for the 2019-2020 budget biennium. He said there are aspects of this that will affect unincorporated areas of King County.

Mr. Baldi overviewed the concept of stormwater/surface water management: increased impervious surfaces such as roads in urban areas increase water runoff which, if unmanaged, can lead to flooding and public safety issues. Stormwater is also a means by which pollution enters bodies of water: creeks, lakes, Puget Sound. Stormwater is a leading water quality problem for the Puget Sound region.

The Executive has proposed an increase in the SWM rate from \$244.40 to \$289 yearly per single parcel. There are three primary goals for the proposed revenue increase:

- 1) Repairing and replacing all failing and at-risk County stormwater infrastructure, a total of about 303 facilities, in the next decade. The funding increase would provide \$2.3 million in additional funding for this.
- 2) Expanded funding to the Roads division, including continuing funding to address deteriorating regional drainage facilities. About \$500K would go towards a deep cleanout of their entire catch-basin system.
- 3) Removing fish-passage barriers. A recent state Supreme Court ruling determined state culverts are a violation of tribal treaty fishing rights; the Executive expects counties to soon be held to the same standard. There are about 3,000 barriers in King County; an analysis will identify and prioritize the most critical ones to address first. Mr. Baldi said, while reasonable, this will pose a very difficult task. About \$4.75 million in new funds, in addition to \$7.8 million in existing funds, would be allocated to design and build fish-passage projects.

Other key elements to be addressed by the proposed rate increase would include: implementation of a 50% discount to eligible low-income households; \$1.1 million for the Agriculture Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP) largely in the Snoqualmie Valley; and \$1.7 million to support more habitat restoration projects. On the latter of these, Mr. Baldi noted that County basin stewards and fish staff are good at leveraging grant and SWM funds; this \$1.7 million could result in up to \$20 million leveraged for restoration projects.

Mr. Baldi reviewed the budget timeline: the Executive transmitted the budget to King County Council (KCC) on September 24th; the KCC's final decision on the budget is expected in November; and by January 2019, the new SWM fee will go into effect. He added that the County's stormwater program has a two-year budget supported by this fee.



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Mr. Baldi answered a number of questions from public and CRC members. Mr. Prinsen asked about stormwater retention ponds managed by neighborhoods, and the possibility of communicating to these neighborhoods the need to keep these ponds instead of converting them to other uses. Mr. Baldi replied that, while the County is taking back management of many of these ponds, it is difficult to communicate with some neighborhoods.

Several questions addressed specifics of the SWM rate itself. Mr. Baldi explained the rate is a flat annual fee per parcel, only imposed in unincorporated areas. He clarified the County does not impose a SWM fee in incorporated areas because state statute does not allow this, and many such areas already have their own stormwater program. He also said a SWM fee can be leveraged in incorporated areas to co-mingle with those from unincorporated areas for restoration and mitigation projects; however, while flexible, County SWM fees are largely spent in unincorporated areas. Mr. Neuner stated he did not believe it equitable for homes in low-income areas to have the same flat rate as a millionaire's mansion. Mr. Baldi conceded this was a fair point, saying if the fee structure were being designed today, it would probably be based on the amount of impervious surface cover.

Mr. Allyn asked what would happen if the proposed SWM rate does not pass KCC. Mr. Baldi replied that, in terms of infrastructure, the County will end up paying for it now or later. Mr. Prinsen observed many people do not realize a planned repair is more cost-effective than unplanned/emergency repairs. Mr. Baldi said the Roads division is in a difficult position because their revenue is shrinking, and there is concern this may happen with the stormwater program eventually as well. He said there is sentiment among some KCC members to seek changes to the tax codes to allow more money to go to unincorporated areas, as there is very little new tax base there to explore these services.

Mike Grijalva asked for clarification on an earlier statement from Mr. Baldi, that urban streams are poor habitats for fish. Mr. Baldi explained that urban streams are harder places to create the function needed for salmon, due to there being fewer biotics/bugs in these streams to feed the fish. He said a solution to this is still being sought.

Mr. Brown asked about a County position on a comment by GOP Senatorial candidate Susan Hutcheson, alleging the Growth Management Act (GMA) is out-of-date and needs review. Mr. Baldi answered that at the County level, there is still commitment to the GMA. He said while some would say things aren't necessarily what was envisioned at first, far more would likely have been lost without it. Deputy Mayor Parnello added there is a broad and deep review of the GMA going on now, for possible revision. He said people need to be aware of open space, and he does not believe we should encroach beyond our borders onto protected open space. This GMA review is part of an initiative called "Roadmap to Washington's Future," the link to which Mr. Baldi suggested Mr. Brown send out to CRC members.

Updates and Announcements

- **Membership:**

- **Corinne Young** presented her case for joining the CRC. She detailed her interest and background with observing many species of plant/animal life in the area, and desire to preserve nature for future generations and help improve her community. Frank Urabeck noted he was impressed with Ms. Young's information and asked if she, as a member of the CRC, would be willing to respectfully challenge authority if need be. She replied she would not have a problem asking tough questions.

Tom Allyn motioned to accept Ms. Young to fill the position of Resident Citizen-at-Large Representative on the CRC. Jeff Neuner seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- **Celia Parker**, daughter of CRC member Martha Parker, introduced herself and said she was serving in her mother's place tonight, but noted no decision has been made on if she will officially replace Martha on the CRC.
- **WRIA 8:** Deputy Mayor Parnello reported that the last SRC meeting covered two main issues – the water temperature problem in the Lake Washington ship canal, and a request submitted to Governor Inslee's office for extensive funding. He said he would email the full details for CRC distribution.
- **Fish Counts:**
 - Mr. Urabeck reported this year was "dismal" for salmon counts in Lake Washington. Official counts at the Ballard Locks from the Muckleshoot tribe indicate that chinook are at 64% of their 10-year average. Chinook broodstock are being taken from Soos Creek to sustain the Issaquah hatchery. Mr. Ruthford said the Cedar was doing slightly better than last year, that a sizable number of chinook and coho are now being seen above Landsburg Dam; sockeye generally remain below the dam. Mr. Urabeck continued that installing fish ladders in the dams appears to be paying off for chinook. Coho



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are running at about 69% of their 10-year average, with a relatively poor showing in Lake Washington again. Sockeye are at 39% of their 10-year average, the lowest ever; Mr. Urabeck said ongoing disease and parasite problems are killing them in and out of the lake.

Mr. Urabeck, Mr. Prinsen, and Larry Phillips have been in talks with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to spur a collaboration between state/local/tribal entities to help the sockeye hatcheries. Mr. Urabeck is working with the state to encourage someone to step up as co-managers on the hatchery issue, but no one wants to be a sole manager. He said the only thing keeping the sockeye run going is the hatchery program. Mr. Allyn asked about the idea of raising fry to smolt age before releasing them from the hatchery; Mr. Urabeck says this is harder than it seems, and the CRC needs a presentation from the city or state to get at those issues.

- Larry Fisher reported a “three-stage host” parasite, transmitted via fish, snail, and seagull, is currently killing all production in Soos Creek, with no wild smolt making it out of the creek. He advised thinking before sending letters critical of hatchery production.
- **River Conditions:** It was briefly discussed that the CRC still needs a replacement representative from SPU, as they are a key player in monitoring/impacting river conditions as well as the hatcheries. A replacement has been sought with no success.

Public Comment Period II

- Mr. Brown advised that the next CRC meeting is November 27th, barring a weather cancellation, and solicited topics for the agenda. Suggestions included a DPER update on the proposed asphalt plant, and a hatchery outlook update, possibly from WDFW fish biologist Aaron Bosworth.
- Phil Kitzes asked if the CRC has direct input/impact on how to direct mitigation money from wetland land banking to more local Cedar River projects. Mr. Fisher and Mr. Brown suggested bringing staff from the County’s In-Lieu Fee Mitigation program to present to the CRC on this topic.

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Next Meeting

November 27th, 2018, 7 – 9 pm, Maplewood Greens Golf Course, Renton.
