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Whatcom County Council
Special Surface Water Work Session

November 13, 2007

Council Member Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Whatcom County Civic Center Annex, Second Floor Meeting Room, 322 N. Commercial, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

Barbara Brenner
Dan McShane
Seth Fleetwood
Laurie Caskey-Schreiber
L. Ward Nelson

Absent:

Carl Weimer

SURFACE WATER WORK SESSION (AB2007-025)

**1. LAKE WHATCOM COMPREHENSIVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN-
PRESENTED BY CH2M HILL AND PUBLIC WORKS STORMWATER**

Chip Anderson, Senior Planner Stormwater, introduced himself, described his background, and described the work done on this project so far.

Bill Derry, CH2MHill, stated they started this project early in the year. They now have a final draft to the Council. He talked to the Council last January and April. There have been two public workshops, and he recently briefed the County Executive. A third public workshop is tonight. He read from a power point presentation (*on file*). When the habitat disappears, they lose the insects, which are the food source of the fish, and then they lose the fish. With development, there are higher peak flows, lower base flows, and more water in total is running down through the channels, which causes stream erosion. Channel erosion, independent of other human sources, can be a major source of phosphorus into the lake.

Amy Carlson, CH2MHill, continued to read from the presentation on problems identified. The predominate issue is phosphorus. Phosphorus is ubiquitous throughout the watershed. A lot of the problems come down to the infrastructure of roads and vehicles, including ditches and land clearing.

Caskey-Schreiber asked whether a ditch should be lined with canary reed grass or something else. Carlson said it's hard to say. She showed photos of different stream reaches. The result of the sediment and erosion is alluvial fan delta in the lake. Other problems include garbage dumping, land clearing, exposed soils, and standing water, and lack of forested conditions. Seasonal clearing restrictions in lake Whatcom have helped. There is always room for improvement.

Specific problems were identified in the draft final plan. She indicated the problem areas on a map. A lot of the problems are where the development is located. There are a lot of problems. Most are in the more developed, northwestern area of the lake.

1 She read the presentation on solutions. If they keep the phosphorous out to begin
2 with, they don't have to worry about removing it later. The key to source control is
3 changing actions and activities to keep phosphorous out of the lake. The plan recommends
4 changes to County regulations. Enhance current monitoring. The final draft prioritizes
5 capital projects and includes a fact sheet on each project.
6

7 Derry continued the presentation on funding recommendations. He recommends
8 creating a flood subzone and using the countywide flood control zone district funds.
9

10 Brenner asked if they've spoken to the City of Bellingham about this. Don't put all
11 this on the backs of the people just in the unincorporated areas. They've talked about
12 something like this for all the watershed and all the people who benefit from the water.
13 Derry stated the city residents pay into the stormwater utility. Their utility tax funds
14 acquisition in the watershed. They also pay into the countywide flood control zone district.
15 This must be discussed further. Now, city and county residents are paying the same flood
16 control zone district rate. The city residents also pay a drinking water fee and a stormwater
17 fee. The people who benefit the most are those who live near the lake. Have a local
18 element to the fee. Because it's a regional resource, some of the funding should come from
19 out of the watershed.
20

21 Fleetwood stated the funding aspect of this work program would look at the wide
22 range of potential funding mechanisms and give the Council advice on the device that is
23 most fair and equitable. He asked the analysis they did on the alternatives and reasons for
24 this recommendation. Derry stated chapter 8 includes information on the funding choices
25 they looked at. Grant and loan funds are temporary. There are certain small and
26 significant differences among the funding sources. There isn't a major difference between a
27 stormwater utility and a flood control subzone district, for this purpose. The choice between
28 those two came down to the fact that the County already has a flood control zone district.
29 The administration processes and costs of setting up a new one would be fairly minimal.
30 Also, the people understand it, as opposed to introducing a new concept. Also, there are
31 administrative costs of setting up a new billing system for a different system. Everyone in
32 the watershed could pay a stormwater fee comparable to what the city residents are paying.
33 That would be fair and equitable. However, they decided on the side of the simplicity of the
34 existing structure of the flood control subzone district. A lake restoration district is typically
35 for limited terms to do a certain project, not ongoing programmatic support.
36

37 Fleetwood asked if the statute is written that way. Derry stated it is written for a
38 specified time, such as five years. That statute was written to fund some kind of treatment
39 facility or other short-term project. There may be a way around that.
40

41 Brenner asked the effects of individual properties on the 12 capital projects. Have
42 people do their own retrofits and then see where they're at. They keep adding fees and
43 removing people from their own responsibility. Education alone doesn't do it. Give people
44 the ability to have information after they're told that their stormwater can't leave their
45 property. Then the people can have the choice of doing their own retrofit or paying into a
46 public facility, which should be out of the general fund. Of the 12 capital projects, she
47 would like to know how many of those projects could be done if the individual property
48 owners did their own fixes. Provide a carrot and stick for those owners to fix the pollution
49 they're causing off-site. Create a County fund for low interest loans for those who can't
50 afford to fix their problems. Derry stated he likes the idea of making people responsible.
51 However, roughly 30 percent of the impervious area is roads. There is limited opportunity
52 to infiltrate a road. There is a lot of runoff that comes from the road surface. That runoff
53 tends to be polluted from vehicles and the pavement. Then a ditch next to the road shoots

1 the polluted water directly to the creek. It directly transfers those pollutants to the stream
2 system. It also causes erosion. Ditch erosion and stream channel erosion is a major source
3 of pollutants and sediment into the lake.
4

5 Brenner stated she agrees. A significant percentage would be reduced if they did
6 make homeowners responsible for their own stormwater.
7

8 Caskey-Schreiber asked if they can buy forest lands with real estate excise tax
9 (REET) money. Derry stated he's used it to buy wetlands, but it was packaged in a way to
10 call it a facility. They also used conservation futures funds. The conservation futures fund
11 is also an excise tax.
12

13 Crawford stated the County has a conservation futures fund that is a property tax.
14 It's different. Derry stated he will clarify that.
15

16 McShane stated the debate is different funding approaches. He asked if they
17 discussed splitting the countywide flood district into two separate districts. Derry stated
18 they didn't discuss it.
19

20 Caskey-Schreiber stated have one district for the lake and one district for flood
21 issues.
22

23 McShane stated that's allowed.
24

25 Crawford stated he is very interested in that. He is concerned about sacrificing flood
26 control projects on the Nooksack River for lake projects.
27

28 Fleetwood asked when they will formally discuss the funding further. Derry stated
29 they can discuss it today. A major part of the discussion will occur as the Council considers
30 what to do with this plan. Today, and when the plan is done, he is not asking the Council to
31 adopt the plan. They are saying what they believe is necessary to address and responsibly
32 manage stormwater in the watershed, with potential funding sources. Actual funding for
33 the elements in the plan should be put in the countywide priorities and ranked in that
34 context. Once they know that, they'll have a better picture of overall funding needs. They'll
35 know better what funding mechanisms make sense. That will happen during the adoption
36 process or later. It may not be necessary to adopt this plan. The recommendations will be
37 evaluated through the countywide prioritization process.
38

39 Brenner asked if they intend to add more specific recommendations on the options
40 for individual lot owners to eliminate or reduce stormwater runoff. Derry stated that at this
41 point, they don't intend to add that element. They just did something like that for the City
42 of Bellevue. It wouldn't be that tough to do. It's not part of the current expectation.
43

44 Brenner asked for a copy of the Bellevue recommendation.
45

46 McShane stated they could establish a sliding fee or charge at the time they establish
47 the flood subzone.
48

49 Derry stated they met with the City, Sudden Valley, and Lake Whatcom Water and
50 Sewer District.
51

52 Fleetwood asked if Councilmember McShane is set on splitting the countywide district
53 in two, or just wants to consider it further.

1
2 McShane stated it's an equity issue. A tremendous amount of money has gone into
3 the countywide flood control district from a portion of the county. It has also funded a lot of
4 work on the river, which is an area where the Council has concerns and has a direct benefit.
5 That money is not being used. The Council must consider the issues as the Board of
6 Supervisors. Councilmembers Nelson and Weimer have done a good job pushing the issue
7 of setting priorities. He's not sure that two districts is what the Board of Supervisors should
8 do, but they should consider it. People in the community are interested in splitting the
9 district in two through a petition, not through the Board of Supervisors. Consider how the
10 money is used when they consider distributing a significant fee on the community. Many
11 people resent paying that cost.
12

13 Nelson stated he doesn't mind considering that option. However, they need to
14 explore the legalities, including whether the formation of the district would have to go to a
15 vote of the public. Also, the City already has two senior taxing measures.
16

17 Derry continued to read the presentation on the public involvement.
18

19 Nelson stated emphasize the point that public participation has been extremely
20 limited. Make sure the public understands the issues and is involved from the very
21 beginning.
22

23 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A)*
24

25 Derry stated that his contract goes to this point. The Council's decision must be
26 made in a broader context. The current scope of this contract doesn't include a hearing and
27 the process to set up funding.
28

29 McShane stated he has a question about an earlier discussion, regarding erosion and
30 creek incision. They alter the hydrology, and the creeks begin to incise. He asked how
31 much additional incision could occur. He asked if things will stabilize when the creek
32 establishes a different hydrology. Derry stated they didn't do any technical analysis of that.
33 Other people have in other areas. It totally depends on the local geology. Erosion will
34 continue indefinitely unless there is a geological barrier.
35

36 Nelson stated he understood that as urban development fills in, there is a scouring
37 effect that will eventually reach equilibrium within ten to 20 years, as long as they don't
38 change any other factors, such as additional impervious surfaces. Derry stated it depends
39 highly on the soil and local geology. Any amount of water will continually erode sand.
40 Typically in urban areas, it will reach some kind of dynamic equilibrium.
41

42 Brenner asked if they should figure out the geology of some of those 12 projects to
43 see if they have reached equilibrium before they commit to those projects. Derry stated
44 they are still actively down-cutting.
45

46 Carlson stated many of those projects are in creek systems that aren't fully
47 developed. It's likely there will be more impervious surfaces, and the problems will get
48 worse.
49

50 Brenner stated a recommendation is about requiring any future roads to be made
51 pervious. She asked if that includes reconstructing roads, so all the roads will eventually be
52 pervious. Derry stated that would be ideal. Switch to pervious pavement.
53

1 Crawford asked about the problem areas indicated on the map. He asked how they
2 learned about those problems. He asked if there should be manmade fixes to natural input
3 of phosphorus. Derry stated one assumption is that there have been a lot of studies of the
4 lake and they should use existing information as much as possible. They spent some time
5 looking at the watershed areas. Most of the information came from existing documents.
6 The information on specific problems came from active participants and residents who are
7 familiar with the areas. This is a stormwater plan, not a lake restoration plan. They were
8 looking at stormwater, which implies human created runoff. They did not look at all the
9 sources of phosphorus and pollutants into the lake. They acknowledge the recreational
10 sources and major landslides, but didn't analyze them or make recommendations. They are
11 beyond the scope of this study.
12

13 Anderson stated there will be a 30-day comment period. Staff and the consultants
14 will sit down with each councilmember who wants to provide information and comments.
15

16 Nelson stated he has information on the basin in which he lives. He doesn't know of
17 any mineral resource lands designated. They have a statement of one percent of the land
18 area is mineral resource land. They took that out of the Comprehensive Plan to allow
19 mineral resource lands in the watershed. There were mineral resource lands in the
20 watershed previously. He asked if they looked at or evaluate phosphate binding compounds
21 in stormwater treatment. Derry stated they did, within a filter. There are other filter media
22 to target specific pollutants. Those did not come out high on the priority list. They address
23 the direct runoff, but not channel erosion. Channel erosion is where most of the water and
24 phosphorus come from. It's hard to filter out peak events.
25

26 Nelson stated he read that phosphate binders aren't used as a filter system. They're
27 used within and binds with the water resource itself. Derry stated the State Department of
28 Ecology (DOE) equates that as lakes on drugs. It is essentially admitting defeat, and
29 treating the water once it's in the lake.
30

31 Nelson stated they should consider it as an alternative. Derry stated this is a
32 stormwater plan, not lake restoration plan. Regarding stormwater, it's not appropriate to
33 look at the lake as a treatment facility for stormwater.
34

35 Nelson stated that regarding Agate Bay, target 12, he's never seen silt as a result of
36 runoff. However, he has seen a tremendous volume of water come through. He asked why
37 they would put a creek into a ditch along the road. He asked if they could reroute the
38 creeks away from the roads and get them into proper channels with habitat protection.
39 Every spring, the Public Works Department now scours out the ditches, which also serve as
40 creeks. Carlson stated they didn't discuss that in terms of the plan.
41

42 Brenner asked how the councilmembers should comment. Derry stated it would be
43 useful to receive something in writing.
44

45 Caskey-Schreiber stated she liked the idea of hiring a lake keeper position. Many of
46 the big concerns related to phosphorus and water quantity hydrology involve violations of
47 erosion controls on construction sites, yard waste, and pet waste. She asked if they've
48 worked with the Planning Department staff to get at some of these individual problems.
49 Derry stated they worked with the Planning staff. They didn't have a specific discussion of
50 individual targeted educational materials. They talked about the plan in a larger context,
51 but not that specifically.
52

1 Caskey-Schreiber asked if they worked with Planning Department staff to do
2 enforcement. Carlson stated many comments weren't about witnessing violations as much
3 as County staff saying they don't have resources for enforcement.
4

5 Brenner stated she's not crazy about the label of watershed keeper. Residents in
6 every watershed will want their own keeper. Dedicate staff to the task.
7

8 Anderson stated they will have a 30-day comment period, and then create a final
9 draft. The Council will proceed early in the new year. They tried to get the public involved.
10 He attended the Sudden Valley Board meeting and Water District meetings to encourage
11 attendance and a full mailing. The Council should be ready to move on further
12 recommendations at the beginning of the year.
13

14 Kirk Christensen, Public Works Department, stated he will bring forward a final draft
15 to Council approval in January.
16

17 Nelson asked if the funding mechanism will be in the final recommendation or a
18 separate process. Christensen stated the funding mechanism will be a separate process.
19

20 McShane stated the development regulations avoid a lot of the problem. He
21 referenced page 7-10 and section six. The Council didn't support any action regarding
22 grandfathering in plats under previous development regulations. He's interested in what
23 Pierce County did with stormwater and how much the County could include within its code
24 to say the County will require all new development to follow current development
25 recommendations, which the Council clearly recognizes as necessary. He asked if they can
26 require all new development to meet those impervious footprint, stormwater, and tree
27 retention requirements.
28

29 Crawford stated stormwater is so much a part of the platting process. He's not sure
30 it's as possible to build a house on a platted parcel and address stormwater as it would be
31 to address stormwater over several parcels. He asked if the intent is onsite stormwater
32 treatment for each home construction.
33

34 McShane stated that is his intent.
35

36 Crawford stated that won't be possible.
37

38 McShane asked why it wouldn't be possible. Sudden Valley requires it, and always
39 has. It requires treatment almost exclusively onsite.
40

41 Brenner stated it's called low impact development.
42

43 McShane stated that is exactly right. They have low impact development criteria.
44 The problem is the old plats that aren't required to do that. There are a lot of those old
45 plats. It is a major problem. They must recognize that there are a lot of those plats out
46 there. They create enforcement and inspection issues. Staff is dealing with multiple County
47 codes.
48

49 Nelson stated the problem is that individuals have gone through the platting process
50 and have gone through many problems to get a plat in place. Instead, look at what they
51 really want to accomplish with the regulations. Rather than create more regulations, work
52 with homeowners to accomplish protection goals within the existing regulations. It makes

1 sense to have uniform regulations to protect water quality, but only if people can comply in
2 a timely manner. The regulations should make sense.

3
4 Brenner stated she agrees. It's a code scrub. However, Councilmember McShane is
5 correct in terms of plats that have already been platted, but haven't begun development.

6
7 McShane asked when they're going to figure out the issue of not creating more lots
8 in the urban growth area (UGA), and whether they take that into other areas also. The
9 Council should finalize that by creating interim zoning.

10
11 Nelson stated look at the rural forestry zone. It's not a big deal, but it's one step.
12 Consider whether it's necessary to allow one house per twenty acres in a rural forestry
13 zone. If they really want to allow development in an area, then use the rural, one unit per
14 five acres (R5A) or rural, one unit per ten acres (R10A) zones. Putting a house on twenty
15 acres in a forested zone doesn't make sense. There are zoning issues with clustering. Look
16 at whether or not clustering makes sense.

17
18 Caskey-Schreiber stated her issue is that removing clustering may encourage more
19 road building. If roads are the most difficult things for the water shed to handle, they may
20 need to affect the other options, as well.

21
22 Nelson stated clustering typically involves a type of road development they don't
23 want. Individual lots can have roads that are pervious.

24
25 Brenner stated the cluster isn't working well in the agricultural zone. People build
26 very large homes, move in, and don't like the farming smells. She will defend forestry.
27 There are a lot of small tree farmers who have to have a forestry plan.

28
29 McShane stated bark dust should be added to phosphorus. Also, address off-road
30 vehicle use in the watershed. It is an enforcement issue that should be funded.

31
32 Fleetwood stated the Council will continue the discussion at a future meeting.

33
34 *(Clerk's Note: the Council took a five-minute break at 10:55 a.m.)*

35
36 **2. COMPREHENSIVE WATER RESOURCES INTEGRATION PROJECT UPDATE-**
37 **PRESENTED BY CH2M HILL AND PUBLIC WORKS RIVER AND FLOOD**

38
39 Paula Cooper, Flood Division Manager, stated CH2MHill is also the consultant for this
40 project. They held the sixth of seven workshops last week. Today, they will review where
41 they've been, where they're at, and where they're headed. The consultant will be back at
42 the January surface water work session to give a final presentation. Today, they will talk
43 about the model details in depth.

44
45 Nelson stated staff should meet with the new councilmember and get that person up
46 to speed.

47
48 Bill Derry, CH2MHill, read a power point presentation (*on file*). Think in terms of
49 public expectations. Staff went through all plans and pulled out every individual
50 recommendation to compile them in a master list. The visioning exercise asked the group
51 how they envision a water resources program in ten years. They gathered the common
52 themes to identify goals, which they expanded and refined. How they measure and achieve
53 those goals became their objectives. They got very specific about the point scoring for each

1 objective. They scored each project. Their most recent discussion was about issues related
2 to organization.

3
4 Fleetwood asked if the objective is more valuable than the goal because the
5 objective informs implementation. Derry stated that is generally correct. Many times, each
6 goal has multiple objectives. The objectives are more specific and can be measured.

7
8 He continued reading the presentation on lessons learned and number of
9 investments by area.

10
11 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side B.)*

12
13 Dan Speicher, CH2MHill, continued the presentation and referenced the presentation
14 handout from Paula Cooper on the Whatcom County Comprehensive Water Resources
15 Integration Project *(on file)*. The foundation of the entire process is the initial ranking. It is
16 to understand what the County values, how those values are reflected in goals and
17 objectives, and how they infer how well individual investments achieve those goals and
18 objectives. They rate the performance of those individual investments to produce a relative
19 score. The ultimate objective is to come away with a portfolio of those investments that
20 defines which investments they want to move forward with and in what order.

21
22 They're evaluating and refining the priorities. Evaluation is a means to look at the
23 386 individual investments through different lenses. They categorized the investments
24 through different sorting criteria. Resource value refers to the sub-basin they're located in
25 and the valuation of that sub-basin for drinking water and biological function. They're doing
26 that to see where the investments are located now and whether they make sense. They can
27 identify gaps using this tool. Each project is put through overlay questions regarding scale
28 and population served, regulations, outside funding, and sequencing.

29
30 Nelson asked if this is the process of gathering facts and assumptions on everything
31 they have, which supports the criteria, which then supports the goals and objectives.
32 Speicher stated that's correct.

33
34 There are three assumptions for creating the portfolio. The first assumption is that
35 there is a large set of aquatic-based resource needs that these projects must achieve. The
36 second assumption is that some areas within the County have higher values to the
37 ecosystems and/or the public, so there should be more focus of investments in those areas.

38
39 Brenner stated resource value may not have to do with geographic scale and
40 population benefited. The value may come from something such as culture. Speicher
41 stated that's correct. When they considered the resource values, they included factors such
42 as culture, recreation, and economic development, in addition to biological function and
43 drinking water opportunities. It's in there to a certain extent. Because a particular
44 investment provides a benefit to a small subset of people, don't infer that it's less valuable
45 or of less importance. They just need to have that data to understand the mix of
46 investments.

47
48 The third assumption is to optimize the resources and use staff, money, and energy
49 to create a value around the county.

50
51 He referenced the second page of the handout regarding vision, goals, and decisions
52 criteria. They want to reflect the vision of the organization. They asked staff what this
53 should look like in ten years. A vision is a stretch to the future. Elements are a part of the

1 vision. He read some of the elements on the handout. Results and implementation is an
2 important component to their vision.

3
4 Nelson asked if the goals are criteria that are the most important to the group or
5 from all the plans they gathered. Speicher stated they stepped outside the plans and asked
6 the question about a broader vision.

7
8 Cooper stated the goals define the criteria.

9
10 Nelson stated goals don't define criteria.

11
12 Cooper stated the goals set them up to identify specific criteria with numeric values.
13 Those criteria are what they have.

14
15 Speicher stated they ended up with 11 specific criteria that are a measurable set of
16 elements that asks how well 386 investments accomplish all the 11 criteria. Accomplishing
17 those criteria infer that they are accomplishing the goals, which are part of the vision of the
18 organization.

19
20 Speicher referenced and explained the third page of the handout regarding the
21 evaluation score. They rated the performance of all 386 investments across all criteria
22 using this scale. They had to be able to compare, contrast, and trade off all that
23 information across those multiple scales, so they had to normalize them.

24
25 Caskey-Schreiber stated the human element will be brought into this dry, scientific
26 process. This process will serve as backup for some decisions. On the other hand, the
27 human element will always be a factor.

28
29 Nelson stated he agrees that an emotional, subjective opinion will rise to the top for
30 some individuals. Nothing's wrong with that. However, those individuals will have to justify
31 that opinion to the public.

32
33 Speicher stated this process uses a combination of hard, analytical numbers and the
34 human elements of values and importance to produce the portfolio.

35
36 Nelson stated he admires this process. When they present the projects for final
37 decision, the Council may decide to not follow the process, but they'll have to justify that
38 decision. Speicher stated he agreed. That's why the staff and professionals have generated
39 data to make that trade-off or determination. He described examples of hypothetical
40 scores.

41
42 A large portion of their effort is based upon the foundation of having a set of results
43 based on very effective multiple criteria that are as objective as possible, which they can
44 use in subsequent steps. Having this list is go from 500 to 386 items is a huge step. The
45 list has been sanitized. Duplicate items have been removed. There is a very robust set of
46 criteria and a very structured way of capturing the data.

47
48 Amy Carlson, CH2MHill, described examples of an actual scored project of the critical
49 areas ordinance (CAO) administration and implementation.

50
51 McShane asked if the scoring group agreed with the 400 scores. Cooper stated they
52 did.

1 Nelson asked how they looked at each plan in relationship to projects. Cooper stated
2 that for each plan, they took out the project list. Each of those projects is an investment.
3

4 Nelson asked if they used these criteria for every type of project. Cooper stated they
5 did.
6

7 Nelson asked if a criteria was dropped out if it received a zero score. Cooper stated
8 it wasn't dropped out. It was formulated in with the weight. It is part of the math.
9

10 Middleton stated there isn't one criterion that has a zero all the way through it.
11 Otherwise, it wouldn't be a criterion.
12

13 Speicher stated a weight is still assigned to a zero, but there's no actual contribution
14 to the total score for that particular project.
15

16 Amy Carlson, CH2MHill, described examples of actual scored project for the Birch
17 Bay shoreline enhancement project.
18

19 Caskey-Schreiber stated the Birch Bay project may be ranked 19, but this
20 community has been engaged in this project. They are all ready to go. They have good
21 Council support. Therefore, the chance is that the project will be bumped forward. That's
22 why this ranking is a good base, but there still isn't a process.
23

24 Middleton stated the initial project ranking is done before being evaluated compared
25 to resource value. They haven't done the overlay for population, regulatory, outside
26 funding, or sequencing.
27

28 Jon Hutchings, Public Works Department, stated some of those value, human
29 element questions are asked through the process.
30

31 Nelson asked if they will recommend a process for community-wide participation
32 through a countywide mechanism, so there is a filtering effect. Speicher stated that's what
33 they'll ask for in phases two and three of this project.
34

35 Brenner asked what happens with projects that have a lower rank, but are totally
36 ready to go. Middleton stated that will be identified by the sequencing overlay.
37

38 Cooper stated every program manager will have these items as a list to use to
39 develop annual work plans and budgets. Together, they can put those work programs
40 together to see the County's water resources program. At that point, make sure they are
41 getting to the priorities. The community overlay is phase three.
42

43 Speicher stated it's highly likely that projects ranked very low, but which are
44 completely funded by outside sources, will get done sooner. There's no additional marginal
45 cost to the County. Just do those. They cannot miss those opportunities. That is the
46 reason for the overlays.
47

48 Speicher stated that from now to the end of January, they would finish the project
49 review, categorize, and apply the overlays. Then, they will recommend a set of lists that
50 includes a portfolio of investments. Then they will consider other, additional overlays
51 necessary to finalize that list.
52

1 Derry stated that once this tool is done, at the end of this phase, the Council has to
2 decide how to use this tool. That's another process. They took the organizational charts for
3 various County departments and identified how those departments and their staffs
4 communicate among each other to do their jobs. They had a discussion about individual
5 work plans. There is no glaring need for the departments to reorganize. However,
6 communications between sections and departments could be better and more formalized.
7 It's premature to talk about reorganizing until they know the final list of priorities, the
8 process for moving forward, and the range of funding.
9

10 Nelson asked if staff feels there are communications improvements to be made.
11 Cooper stated the biggest bottleneck comes from permitting.
12

13 Nelson asked if this works well for the permitting process. Cooper stated they need
14 to define a work process for all work projects, planning or construction. Construction
15 projects need a specific part of the process tailored toward permitting.
16

17 Derry stated the Council will always have the final say. Phases two and three
18 address how they use the tool, and who uses it. First discuss whether they can identify a
19 level of service for aquatic resources, then develop financial strategy from a mixture of
20 funding sources.
21

22 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape two, side A.)*
23

24 Derry continued to state that phase three looks more at the long-term decision-
25 making process. He read through all the tasks in phase three.
26

27 Nelson stated the Council funded only phase one. He asked if staff feel comfortable
28 and if this has been a beneficial phase. Cooper stated she does, personally. She put her
29 flood program aside during these months because she's felt the struggle of changing
30 priorities. She has a lot invested in this. She hopes it will give them stable priorities so
31 they can actually accomplish things. Their goal is to implement the flood plan. That will
32 solve many of the problems that keep diverting them from implementing the flood plan.
33 Personally, she has a lot of hope.
34

35 Nelson asked if the staff concurred. Middleton stated he's been with the County for
36 nearly 20 years. They've gone through one-third or one-half of this first phase six times.
37 They get to the part where it's a lot of work, a lot of headache, and many hard decisions,
38 and it's stopped every time. This time, they've carried through. The Council funded it and
39 made it a priority to finish this. The Council became tired of arguing about priorities. For
40 the first time in two decades, they're getting to the point of identifying the priorities. He
41 hopes they move forward with phases two and three and establish a process. It's
42 appropriate to have a tool and process through which these investments can go.
43

44 Nelson asked the timeframe for phases two and three. Cooper stated the
45 supplemental budget request is in the works, and scheduled for December 4, 2007. They
46 will come to the Council for extensions in January 2008.
47

48 Nelson stated phase three is critical. He asked if there will be an avenue for the
49 Council to have input regarding that element. Middleton stated there will be.
50

51 Brenner stated this shouldn't bog people down from getting things done because
52 they're wrapped up in a process. Middleton stated he agrees. He's not a fan of another
53 level of bureaucracy. This is not about establishing a bureaucracy. This will formally

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address the issues and assign where people can get answers. It establishes a tool so decisions actually are made.


Cooper stated it's similar to what they do with the flood repair and maintenance program. It takes a little bit of time, but when they're done and have the list, everyone feels they're working in the right area.

Middleton stated they can provide ways for low ranked projects to team with other projects, find funding, or redesign the project so it will have more benefit.

Derry stated that now they have the list, which was developed entirely from existing plans, they must now step back and identify anything that's missing. They will identify gaps during the final workshop.

ADJOURN

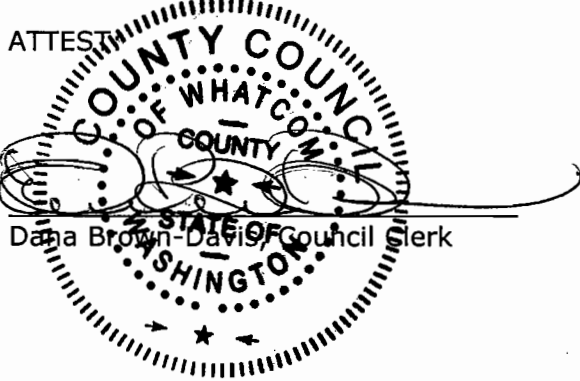
The meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.



Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

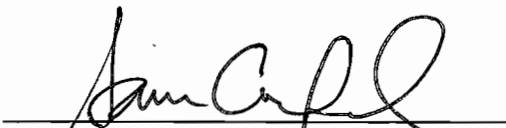
The Council approved these minutes on March 25 2008.

ATTEST



Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Sam Crawford, Acting Council Chair