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Whatcom County Council
Special Surface Water Work Session

October 20, 2009

Council Chair Seth Fleetwood called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m. in the Whatcom County Civic Center Annex, Second Floor Meeting Room, 322 N. Commercial, Bellingham, Washington.

<u>Present:</u>	<u>Absent:</u>
Barbara Brenner	None
Bob Kelly	
Carl Weimer	
Laurie Caskey-Schreiber	
L. Ward Nelson	
Sam Crawford	
Seth Fleetwood	

SURFACE WATER WORK SESSION (AB2009-024)

1. UPDATE OF SUMAS RIVER FLOODPLAIN MAPPING

Rollin Harper, City of Nooksack, handed out maps (*on file*) and thanked the Council for partnering on this project. The results will save quite a bit of flood insurance payment money for residents. It will also open areas not in the floodway for additional infill in the city of Nooksack. Areas in the city had an extensive flood plain where people were paying flood insurance. That has been significantly reduced. At least 115 properties have been removed from the 100-year flood plain. That is a savings of almost \$70,000 per year to those residents. Also, flood plain mapping was adjusted in Whatcom County. Properties are now in the flood plain that weren't before.

The final step in this process is to include this map in regulations through the flood insurance rate maps. They are in the process of amending those maps, which is a long process. He asked for continued County support, including County staff support. They will pursue alternatives with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to amend those maps.

Brenner asked where the areas have changed.

Paula Cooper, Public Works Department, described the locations on the maps.

Caskey-Schreiber asked about a concern regarding a slough area that needs to be dredged. Harper indicated the location of the slough on the map. Sediment buildup can plug the water in the slough. The City dredged a few years ago. If it fills again, a concern is that it could raise the flood level again.

Jon Hutchings, Public Works Department, stated that if it's contaminated sediment, the County would want to know.

2. STATUS REPORT ON ORDINANCE CHANGES REQUIRED UNDER NATIONAL POLLUTION DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES)

1
2 Roland Middleton, Public Works Department, stated there is a timeline for National
3 Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) phase II requirements. They still have to
4 do Title 20 changes, adopt the State Department of Ecology (DOE) stormwater manual, and
5 lower the threshold from two acres to one acre. Those are minor changes. The DOE
6 manual is already required in the urban growth area (UGA) through interlocal agreements
7 with Ferndale and Bellingham. A change from two to one acre only affects a few rural
8 acres. A final Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) ordinance needs to happen.
9 A public meeting on October 28 at 6:30 p.m. will cover phase II requirements and the IDDE
10 ordinance. The Title 20 changes will go to the Planning Commission on December 10. The
11 Council will introduce the Title 20 changes and final IDDE ordinance on January 12 to meet
12 the February deadline.

13
14 **3. REVISED FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT (FCZD) ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
15 **PRIORITIZATION METHOD AND RESULTS OF 2009 PROJECT REVIEW**

16
17 *(Clerk's Note: Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District*
18 *Board of Supervisors. Board Chair Weimer assumed the duties of the Chair for this portion*
19 *of the meeting.)*

20
21 Paula Cooper, Public Works Department, handed out information and read from a
22 presentation (*on file*). The Advisory Committee wanted to change the criteria for how they
23 prioritize projects. This is from the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee looking
24 only at flood benefit. They looked for the broadest benefit and uses consistent with the
25 hazard. She read from the presentation on the individual projects.

26
27 **4. REVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 2010 FLOOD CONTROL ZONE**
28 **DISTRICT (FCZD) BUDGET**

29
30 *(Clerk's Note: Council acting as the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District*
31 *Board of Supervisors. Board Chair Weimer assumed the duties of the Chair for this portion*
32 *of the meeting.)*

33
34 Jon Hutchings, Public Works Department, submitted handouts (*on file*). They may
35 continue this discussion at the next Natural Resources Committee meeting. He referenced
36 and read through the flood control zone district fund balance analysis handout.

37
38 Brenner asked if the projection includes reimbursements. Hutchings stated it does.

39
40 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*

41
42 Brenner asked if the Council has had presentations on how the Conservation
43 Program on Agricultural Lands (CPAL) is working. According to farmers, the program is not
44 working. She would like George Boggs to set up a tour of the locations.

45
46 Hutchings stated there will be additions to expenditures, revenue reductions, and
47 drawing down the fund balance. The Deming levee improvement project will be delayed for
48 a year, which will improve the ending fund balance for 2010. It provides a margin of safety
49 against a flood. However, when they go forward with that large construction project, which
50 is a high priority, there will be a lot of angst about what they are doing with the flood
51 district money. The ending fund balance for 2012 puts them at the margin of safety to
52 respond to flood events.

1 Weimer asked for a proposed fix for the declining flood fund. Hutchings stated
2 there's been discussion about vetting out options during the 2010 budget year.
3

4 Brenner asked if some of these things should be funded through the conservation
5 futures fund because it protects agricultural lands. Hutchings stated some of these things
6 could. They are already dipping into the real estate excise tax (REET) II program. There
7 are stormwater projects in the Lake Whatcom watershed scheduled for 2010. The REET
8 money is a bridge right now. They need to get to some of these projects built in the Lake
9 Whatcom watershed.
10

11 Crawford asked about the Academy Road project.
12

13 Kirk Christensen, Public Works Department, stated it is item six or seven on the
14 stormwater plan. It's not a 2010 project. It will be designed in 2011, with construction in
15 2012.
16

17 Crawford asked if those residents know that. Hutchings stated they do.
18

19 Hutchings referenced Exhibit A, the Flood Control Zone District Budget Summary by
20 budget code and the Flood Control Zone District 2010 Budget/Supplement Budget Request
21 detail. The councilmembers should review these handouts to see that they are getting the
22 work done. The numbers don't add up exactly, but the principal components of the plan are
23 going forward.
24

25 Brenner asked if Deming Levee Improvement could be funded with REET. Hutchings
26 stated it could.
27

28 Weimer stated REET revenue is going down.
29
30

31 **ADJOURN**
32

33 The meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.
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35

36 _____
37 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription
38

39 The Council approved these minutes on November 24 2009.
40

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4 Please contact the Council Office to obtain an
4 official, signed copy:
4
4 360-676-6690 or council@co.whatcom.wa.us
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