



Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #11

**Location: Planning Conference Room 170 (NW entry/stairs),
Planning and Development Center, 4700 Bragaw Street**

Date: August 20, 2007 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

MEETING NOTES

1. Introduction – agenda review, introductions of CAC, consultants, guests, public attendees

Committee

- David Lappi
- Carol Fries
- John Reese - absent
- Lori Davey
- Niel Thomas
- John Weddleton
- Chris Hamre
- Connie Yoshimura - absent
- Dee High
- Victor Mollozzi
- Fred Jenkins
- David Beveridge
- Wayne Westberg

Staff

- Chris Beck – Agnew::Beck
- Heather Stewart – Agnew::Beck
- Kurt Bauer – HDR Alaska, Inc.
- John McPherson – HDR Alaska, Inc.
- Brian Baus - AWWU
- Dwayne Adams – Land Design North (LDN)
- Roberta Piper – AWWU
- Dave Coolidge – Larsen Consulting Group, LLC
- Glen Foust – Larsen Consulting Group, LLC

2. Chris Beck gave an overview of future products.

3. Review Issues, Goals, and Choices report: On-site Water and Wastewater

- Dave Coolidge & Glen Foust (Larsen Consulting Group) gave an overview of onsite section of Issues, Goals and Choices

Discussion:

- Question about location of higher concentration of nitrate in vicinity of Huffman & Elmore
- Clarification that higher concentrations of nitrate may indicate septic problems, but not necessarily because there are many potential causes of nitrate concentration in groundwater (e.g. fertilizing trees & lawns, natural concentrations, shallow aquifers)

- Needs to be more consistency, clarity and objectivity among paragraphs on nitrates – need to be careful how we’re wording this stuff (Wayne W. had specific comments)
- Will consultants be able to make some statement about whether septic systems are a viable wastewater alternative on the Hillside?
 - At this point, we’re in information summary phase; next phase looking at alternatives; final phase recommending alternatives. Answers will vary by location within the Hillside.
- On page 13, language indicates that onsite systems are a viable alternative.
 - Clarification: quoting EPA that onsite systems are a viable system given the right system. Not meant to be specific recommendation for this area.
- Keep in mind that in essence this will become educational material for many people. People coming into the Hillside (new, young) swayed by emotionally-loaded terms. Need clear, objective, factual information.
- Love the graphics, but no context for nitrate map – don’t know whether to be scared or proud. If it’s a good-looking map, say that upfront.
 - If we don’t have a nitrate problem, let’s say that; if we have problems in isolated areas, let’s say that and figure out what we need to do in those areas.
 - Be clear: dark areas are still below regulatory; no areas of Hillside above regulatory standards.
- Maybe require landowners in problem areas to have a simple \$18 annual well test.
- There are 2-3 inferences in this report to a trend.
 - Have to draw a few “starter conclusions” at this point, so as not to leave people guessing and worried.
 - Let’s make clear what the trends are, what these maps show in terms of health issues, etc.
- Arsenic may come up in meetings. Have you found anything in your studies that you can put in these?
 - No incidence of arsenic.
- “Subdivision Map” – areas that have been identified by MOA as having slightly increased onsite system “malfunction” (areas of recurring problems, not necessarily decisive problems)
 - need to be explicit about where data for this map came from – seems like you’re putting polygons on a map without data to support the polygons
 - Mixing apples and oranges on the “subdivision map” (green polygons): areas highlighted because they have problems with septic, should not include malfunctioning systems, lots too small to accommodate a second drainfield and whatever else. Not having a place to put a second drainfield is not the same as a failed septic system. You're mixing apples (how well septic systems function) with oranges (the physical characteristic of a parcel). Just because certain lots may be too small to

accommodate a second drainfield does not necessarily make the existing septic systems a problem.

- Disagreement with statement that onsite systems have an average lifespan of 10 years.
 - There are areas with high complaints and these areas should be highlighted, but be sure those areas are identified based on solid data
 - There are steps people can take to extend the life and health of their onsite system; let's highlight that as well.
 - Septic needs regular maintenance to avoid failure. Public systems require maintenance too.
 - Let's explain why some areas are lasting a long time and others have many problems. Is it natural factors or personal responsibility or some combination of factors?
 - Please add costs of typical onsite septic, wells
 - What about water quantity/availability if we continue to draw onsite wells? The public will want us to draw some conclusions about this matter on the Hillside.
 - Water budget has been done; referenced in whitepaper. Report will include a summary of conclusions.
 - How many of that 4,000-6,000 homes have been built since 2001? How many spaces do we have left?
 - About 800 + built so far. Final report needs specific information.
 - Please say simply upfront that we don't see any problem with running out of water on the Hillside.
 - How do you see choices being framed for these issues?
 - Combination of multiple things – what are we going to do as a community about areas where there are problems? In general, are onsite systems working well on Hillside? (generally, yes, so doesn't necessarily require hillside-wide change in strategy)
 - Regulatory changes that need to go into effect for cluster systems
 - Upper Hillside versus all Hillside development needs to be more explicit (define upper, lower, middle Hillside)
 - Discrepancy on costs of cluster versus traditional developments
4. Review Issues, Goals, and Choices report: Public Water and Sewer
- Brian Baus (AWWU) gave overview of public water and sewer section of Issues, Goals and Choices

Discussion:

- Question about boundaries of water & sewer service districts – please check to make sure they are correct before publishing
- Is it possible to convert those mock percentages to dollars?
 - Difficulty in that costs vary over time; don't want to mislead people
 - Although if consultant does not do the math, citizen will; can you just make it clear that these are examples and state in 2007 dollars?
 - Conclusion: add real figures from illustrative examples.

- Isn't there an annual average cost?
 - LUC rate;¹ we take last 5 yrs of improvements districts and average that; use it as a cap.
 - Can paper identify LUC rate for past couple of years? (yes)
- Possible discrepancy in interpretation of table about lending institutions and hooking up to water/sewer
 - City – only requires hookup in identified areas
 - Lending institutions – mixed whether they require hookup or not
- With city, came up with a number of \$40,000 - \$60,000 for hookup and that seems realistic; if that's the number we have, let's use it. People need to know some hard estimates.
- Just state estimates in today's dollars.
- People also want to know if they pay for it in one lump sum or spread out over time.
 - Explained in whitepaper – private developer pays all up front but individuals have payment plans spreading costs over time.
- Maybe take a couple of examples (typical ones; maybe one for each of those 3 major project types) to give people a sense of what they might expect rather than have them do the math themselves.
- Who is the audience? Developers understand all this; the guy who owns a lot and wants to build a house on it - these are the people who need to be educated about what they're in for.
- You've got people living in existing subdivisions with the fear that they will be put in the situation of table on next to last page (lender forcing them into connection)
- When a private developer extends a main to reach their parcel(s) and it passes other property owners' lots, the developer can petition the Assembly to get reimbursed from those benefiting property owners if they choose to hook up to the main. If Assembly grants the right for reimbursement, there is a 3-year limit on it, so that if the other benefiting property owner(s) connects within 3

¹ “In general a LUC assessment is charged for a water or sewer main extension when the parcel is not assessable through a Municipality of Anchorage Assembly approved Water or Lateral Improvement District (WID or LID). If not included in a WID or LID, a parcel connecting to a water or sewer line is assessed at a rate per square foot determined by dividing the certified project cost for the water or sewer line by its total benefited area. In the absence of a certified project cost, or subject to certain conditions, ² a property connecting to a water or sewer main is assessed at the LUC rate for the year of water or sewer main construction.

“The tariffs define the LUC rate for a given year as the assessable project cost of all water or sewer mains for which water or sewer improvement district assessments were levied in the preceding year, divided by the total square footage of benefited area subject to such assessments. In the event there is a year where no improvement district assessments were levied, the LUC rate for the following year is established by adjusting the LUC rate for the last year in which assessments were levied by the difference in the ENRCI on January 1 of the year in which no assessments were levied and on January 1 of the following year.” – Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU), Tariff Action Memorandum, Docket No. U-99-115, October 6, 1999

- years, they have to pay the developer either the project or LUC rate (whichever is smaller). After the 3-year limit, benefiting property owner(s) may still connect to the main, but do not have to pay an assessment to reimburse the developer. Regardless of whether they pay the assessment to the developer, property owners connecting to the main pay to the Municipality a permit fee, the cost to construct the service, and (for sewer only) the trunk rate.
- Most benefiting property owners wait out the three-year limit and avoid paying the assessment to developers.
 - Clarification about what people are paying for (please put some info about connection costs in paper):
 - Do have to pay for cost of construction but project share...
 - to pay for stub to buy option (\$3,000)
 - Where did you get the number of people served by transient vs. non-transient systems?
 - Would have to ask HDR
 - Are we going to get a map of where sewer physically can and cannot go?
 - With enough time/money we can get a pipe anywhere- it's a policy issue. The framework plan and draft Hillside District Plan will include infrastructure "concept alternatives."
 - There is a fear by the public that if you allow sewer/water, that area gets rezoned to higher densities over time – will that be addressed?
 - Yes. Answer is complex: mix of economics and policy.
 - Need to give background on economics, process
 - Ultimately there is no mandatory link between the availability of water & sewer and density, but high costs mean there will be a strong incentive to increase the number of units in order to share the cost over a broader base.
 - There used to be a notation on the map that said essentially the area served by AWWU (sewer) was served at 3 DUA, but no MOA department claimed responsibility for the requirement, so the MOA passed AO 2002-97 to change the HWWMP map and remove the notation.
5. Review Issues, Goals, and Choices report: Drainage
- Kurt Bauer (HDR) gave overview of drainage section of Issues, Goals and Choices
- Discussion:
- Is figure 6.1 totally built out or are some areas not yet built out?
 - About 70% built out; will show that
 - Are less developed areas paved or gravel roads?
 - Gravel
 - Figure 6.2 is excellent. Would original flowpath have been dramatically different?
 - Would have to recreate what surface flows would be.
 - Clarification requested on wording of setback definition

- Can define based on centerline if width of stream doesn't vary much or base on distance from ordinary high water if width of stream does vary quite a bit. Elevation of ordinary high water will also vary. The best reference is the ordinary high water mark.
- How do I know what a minor stream is?
 - Shown graphically; tried to describe – need more description?
 - Ultimately plan, working with the Municipality, will need to classify streams
- Where did you get definitions?
 - City is acquiescing to the Corps right now, setbacks will become regulatory
 - We're recommending easements, not setbacks. Easements protect in perpetuity; act by allowing certain things to happen there.
- Easements on existing properties too?
 - Yes; requires purchase of easements.
 - Are you going to force people to sell these easements? – This is a land use issue; goals are reasonable though.
- These are science-based recommendations.
- Did you walk these sites?
 - Not every one of them.
- Maybe break recommendations on standards out and put them in end? Or footnote where recommendations came from?
- Surprised how few storage areas there are – more are needed.
 - Point is to plant seed and increase later.
- Suggestion to rephrase “recommendations” as “choices” offered for discussion with note that they are not an agreed-upon action at this time
- Map 6.5 shows degree of effort that will have to go into dealing with drainage issues if developing on the Hillside
- If we know about other wetlands, do you want to know about them?
 - Yes
- What definition of wetlands did you use?
 - Corps definition of a wet area – saturated soils, vegetation associated with such soils
- Add note that the recommendation for no development on wetlands is actually a “choice” offered for discussion; not an agreed-upon action at this time.
- What criteria was used to generate “extreme”? (Map 6.5)
 - Slopes greater than 10%
 - But that didn't take into account existing drainage engineering (culverts, etc)
 - Suggest different title and labels: “Potential for drainage problems” or something to that effect
- Existing drainage maintenance (p6) – add a transition on how drainage and roads are connected; it's not clear.
- P7, “drainage systems are unplanned” – actually they are planned, just on the level of the lot; not planned beyond the boundaries.

- What are existing standards and rules?
 - existing Title 21 not been enforced; part of problem that they need to be revisited
- Can we separate enforcement issues?
 - Drainage regulations on Hillside are not applicable in Bowl and vice versa – ideally, we need some sort of addendum to the Design Criteria Manual (DCM) that refers to Hillside drainage specifically; perhaps separate Design Criteria Manual standards for the Hillside
- Is there a need to note how drainage problems divert resources from improvements (ongoing maintenance vs capital improvements); clarify that drainage impacts are being dealt with by road associations who are not supposed to be responsible for that.
 - Storm drains come with city water and sewer
 - Describe difference between how these issues are dealt with on Hillside vs. Anchorage Bowl
- Storage areas will be critical. The approach used in the Anchorage Bowl does not work on the Hillside.

6. Review Issues, Goals, and Choices report: Transportation & Trails

- John McPherson (HDR) & Dwayne Adams (LDN) gave overview of transportation & trails section of Issues, Goals and Choices

Discussion:

- Could shorten this section.
- Going to do a model?
 - At least to level of major collectors
- Define buildout?
 - To level allowable by existing zoning, as modified by site constraints
- Dots are schoolbus stops?
 - Yes, all the way to the top of Prominence Pointe, according to the Anchorage School District. Is this accurate?
 - Doesn't seem like a very safe system for kids
- P4, road system suffices at “low levels of development” – meaning “existing levels”? Please clarify how the road system works today. Same question as for onsite: give us a report card.
 - Basically traffic planners will plan certain density for road grid; increasing density too much overloads networks; as a network, it is not set up to balance so much traffic, so we're seeing congestion.
 - The road system works with the existing densities in the northern half; we don't see a lot of congestion problems because it's set up for existing densities.
 - The paper needs to connect that theoretical explanation to what's there now.
 - What's the diagnosis: are things good? Are there problem spots? Have that story come out earlier; hit it at beginning.

- Many roads on Hillside have uncertain ownership: Who owns the road in front of the house? Do I own my half up to the center of the roadway? My understanding is this: The roads are not part of our property. The plats show them as separate. When a traditional plat is recorded, there's a statement of dedication and acceptance. Our plats have no dedication or acceptance. By the habit of public use and common law, they are dedicated to the public at large, but not to a governmental entity. Essentially, they are public roads, not private. In my area, our lot lines do not go to the middle of the roads. (John W.)
 - *Since the meeting, John was told this: "... ownership of an existing road can be acquired by the government, in this case the Municipality, by "prescriptive easement", which means they begin some positive action like maintaining it (LRSA's are formed to maintain only muni roads. They can't maintain, by law, private roads.) and so even if it started out as a private road, the MOA gets it because no one protests over a private road receiving maintenance and that's how you perfect a prescriptive easement."*
 - *Discussion, continued:*
 - Add alternatives from the whitepaper
 - Make Tom Knox spell it all out for you.
- There is a whole area of education on LRSAs, RRSAs and the challenge of how you get roads improved? Take it from the status of being original Federal property through the stages that get it to a Municipally-owned street.
 - Lay out alternatives for maintaining those roads
- Who has responsibility for improvements other than maintenance (i.e. capital improvements) and what does it take to get some entity to take on that responsibility?
- Clarification: Area Trails Plan – not dedicated trails, just inventory of desired trails
- If you co-locate trails with gaslines and powerlines (utility easements), maybe that's a mechanism (assuming that you still have to pay for an easement but not much more because the land already has an easement on it)? Who constructs trails? It's questionable to require developers to do so (sidewalks maybe, but not trails)
 - Experience is that property owners still charge fully for double use easements
 - There may be more hope for easements with soft surface trails, going to a standard of service that is lower; volunteer efforts; maybe make a Hillside trail association modeled after what's been done at Rabbit Creek?
 - Anything through State or City grant must use full (Davis Bacon) wages
 - But there are ways to seed public effort with funding
 - There are a lot of trails that don't need to be constructed, are fairly self-maintaining, but located on private land. What happens to those when the land gets subdivided? (White paper will provide clear answers)

- Any examples of enlightened developers providing trails?
 - EagleWood, but that's relatively dense (3 dwelling units per acre) and the land was purchased at a relatively low price
- CB is optimistic – trails add value as a low-cost amenity, although incentives are needed.
- Is there a comprehensive plan for the whole Hillside about this? (that's what we're going to do with the HDP)