



Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #6

Location: Rabbit Creek Community Church Auditorium

Date: May 21, 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 - absent
- Fred Jenkins
- David Beveridge
- Wayne Westberg

Community member(s)

- Jennifer Johnston
- Robert Regis
- Yvonne Goldsmith
- Reece Baldwin
- Larry Austin

Staff

- Chris Beck – Agnew::Beck
- Heather Stewart – Agnew::Beck
- Bob Butera – HDR Alaska
- Howard Holtan – PM&E
- Kristi Bischofberger – PM&E, Watershed Management Division

2. Update on schedule, work completed & in progress

- See Item 4.

3. Guest Speakers

Howard Holtan – gave a helpful overview of the development review process; a brief summary of highlights is presented below

- PM&E reviews subdivisions and commercial and multiunit development.
- PM&E review process is based on a number of regulations and administratively approved documents, including Title 21.
- PM&E has two main divisions dealing with development review and drainage issues: the Private Development Division and the Watershed Management Division

- “Can’t fix problems of the past (developers were allowed to do things they shouldn’t have done) but PM&E can and is improving process for the future”.
- PM&E is adding staff to keep up with development; authorized to have more inspection capability with increased staff. Upgraded development standards are being prepared (such as revisions to Title 21 and the Design Criteria Manual). PM&E has also established stricter enforcement policies.
- PM&E requires developers to prepare plans for individual sites, but there needs to be a better process on the Hillside to make individual plans fit into area-wide plans. A Hillside drainage plan is needed to determine where infrastructure needs to be built and define capacity for new development. PM&E doesn’t think there will ever be a moratorium for development on Hillside, so need stronger protections and infrastructure to accommodate development that will occur.
 - Presently, the only vehicle is capital funding for drainage from Legislature (road service areas don’t have the capacity to deal with capital improvement issues)
 - Using local service areas to address drainage issues is one concept to explore, but there are other ways to generate funds.
- CAC: Could you please summarize changes in Title 21 and other policies that relate to drainage? *Answer:*
 - The requirement for drainage plans will largely be deferred to the Design Criteria Manual, which is being updated right now (key sections of the revised document may be posted for review soon, in advance of whole manual).
 - PM&E is changing design standards to respond to a 24-hour storm event (current standards call for no downstream impacts and no net increase in drainage, but in reality this is not always possible, so the goal is to minimize offsite runoff).
 - PM&E is training people to sit down with developers during the pre-platting process to help select models and techniques.
 - PM&E is looking at doing more climate analysis, new methods for collecting data, and more orographic models (studying how precipitation changes as it goes up a hill).
 - PM&E is identifying specific problem areas to help intercept water before it comes out of the ground and glaciates. Trying to work with developers before development happens and with LRSAs on spot problems.
 - PM&E has drainage plans on different watershed areas, but doesn’t have anything updated on Hillside, so that’s what they want to do via the Hillside Drainage Plan.
- CAC: If requirements are *not* spelled out in Title 21 (an ordinance that can be enforced), and instead moved to the Design Criteria Manual, where is the enforcement mechanism? (*Answer:* Developers can’t come forward with construction until PM&E approves their plan.) CAC: And if the plan doesn’t work? (*Answer:* In past, a lack of staff has meant we can’t monitor development closely. Now we have more staff, so if it doesn’t work, we make the developer fix it, at least during the 2-year warranty period. We’ll watch it, and if it’s causing problems, we’ll hear it.)
- CAC: The problem with Prominence Pointe needs to be dealt with in its totality, but we’re dealing with three different departments; how to coordinate? Another problem: S. Goldenview has accommodated over 50% of growth on Hillside since 2001, and a

house was recently built on an area that collected drainage for an entire watershed. The “solution” involved completely switching the drainage pattern toward roads in a neighboring subdivision. This puts the burden on a different set of neighbors and a different LSRA. (*Answer: You’re right, new pathways have to be created to solve these previously created drainage problems. Most drainage-ways carry some portion of a creek, so we have a host of other regulations to deal with. We will have to come up with new agreements and techniques for dealing with these issues. Prominence Pointe had a drainage plan that didn’t work and was not accepted by PM&E, so the developer has to develop a fix.*)

- CAC: Will this plan identify new drainage-ways? (*Answer: Could be. Some major pathways may have to be identified. Minor pathways will have to be called out and everyone will have to use them. We want to identify these pathways so we can prevent development from occurring in key places. One of the main options to explore of options for working with private land owners to secure some land for drainage.*)
- CAC: Will the new Hillside drainage plan look just at future development/drainage issues or also at situations we have right now? (*Answer: Primarily new development.*)
- CAC: Will the DCON solve all these problems? (*Answer: The DCON will prepare a plan for dealing with these problems.*)
- CAC: Is the Design Criteria Manual just a set of guidelines for you? (*Answer: It’s a standard built from the authority of Title 21.*)
- CAC: How are you deciding on bonding requirements? (*Answer: Bonding is 110% of estimated cost requirements. Use unit price estimating method: take quantities of work estimated from developer and apply MOA unit prices for comparable work.*)
- CAC: If PM&E’s Private Development Division reviews larger subdivisions and commercial and multifamily development, then who reviews single-family houses and small divisions (ex. 5-acre tract split into 2 tracts)? (*Answer: Any new subdivision resulting in lots 1.25 acres or smaller must have a master drainage plan for the entire subdivision because they have large amount of clearing & grading. When individual owners come in with a plan, it must conform to the master grading and drainage plan for the whole subdivision. For existing subdivisions, the Private Development Division reviews those plans to make sure onsite drainage works. PM&E is working with them to tune up the process.*)
- CAC: Are open space and trail issues clarified prior to plat approval? (*Answer: The drainage plan has to be complete before platting goes for review. The Watershed Management Division records drainage-ways before preliminary plat approval.*)
- CAC: Has Title 21 given new flexibility on standards for improving sites (vegetation, roads, etc.)? Does PM&E make suggestions? (*Answer: There has been a change to the limit on clearing that’s allowed on some lots. The amount of impervious area has been limited on certain developments because they haven’t been able to show a lack of downstream effects. We’re asking people not to allow more water flowing off than pre-development conditions. High up on Hillside where detention basins are not feasible, we suggest retaining more existing/natural vegetation. The new guidelines may have changed the percentage of the area that you can clear. Some provision was included in Title 21 for changing road dimensions, but approval occurs on individual basis.*)

- CAC: Seems like there has to be a lot of local site-specific knowledge; do developers have to drill, do percolation tests, etc. before they present final plans? (*Answer: Yes, they have to do a lot of work up front, and much more than in the past.*)
- CAC: What is a drainage plan for 20 acres going to cost? (*Answer: Don't know. Maybe \$5,000-\$10,000?*)
- Is the Watershed Management Division funded area-wide or does ARDSA pay for it? (*Answer: Area-wide; staff paid by operating budget (mostly ARDSA), can do some planning activities (such as this project); try to get grants for Hillside to perform projects, but limited by funds.*) Does staff *really* come and look? (*Answer: Yes, we do. Do not have area-wide contribution. WMS has spent a great deal of time on the hillside identifying problems and their causes, would like to have the funds to deal with them on a watershed-wide basis.*)
- Wrap Up/Summary:
- Big changes are taking effect the over last couple years that are going to resolve a lot of past problems, particularly subdivision vs. planning process. PM&E inspectors are coming onsite, so are inspection staff from other agencies (Army Corps, for example).
- “We’ve added staff but we could use your help too. Every project in Hillside has to have a permit (land clearing permit for building safety), so if you see developments occurring without permits displayed, call us and let us know”.
- If you do have problems with pollutant runoff on Hillside, that is something we do take care of on an area-wide basis – we have a hotline (907-343-8135); please call and let us know.

Bob Butera (HDR Alaska, responsible for drainage component of the Hillside Plan)
Preliminary Review of Drainage Issues

- Introducing topics for Drainage whitepapers to be done over summer (looking for guidance from CAC):
 - What are the drainage goals for the Hillside? For example, a typical drainage plan models runoff at peak event and size pipes to handle that and models for the full build-out allowed by zoning. Residents want to use streams instead of pipes.
 - How does development happen on Hillside – what are the rules today controlling drainage issues? What are the issues associated with these rules?
 - What new management structure(s)/ option(s) can be used on the Hillside to address issues of funding for capital projects, for dealing with drainage on a watershed basis?
- CAC: appears drainage is not addressed very well in household survey; did you get much input? How are you going to get it? (*Answer: household survey will include at least a few drainage questions; other information will come from a range of other sources*)
- CAC: For drainage issues, seems like it makes sense to look at soils, type of bedrock, how subsurface water flows – do you have a mechanism for how to address that? (*Answer: we’ve been asked to prepare a “constraints” map looking at these issues and showing that there are better places to build than others.*)

- CAC: So we need to look at new rules for development? (*Answer: Howard talked about some new rules that are just coming into play, which should resolve a lot of development problems*)
- B. Butera: Recommendations include piping water to receiving areas (not all the way to the ocean) and/or especially contain/manage water onsite.
- CAC: Has anyone looked at extra water generated by development (i.e. people bringing up water from deep in ground and adding to surface flow)? By my calculations, it's on the order of 10% more water than septic systems – if you're asking natural systems to carry an extra 10%, I don't think it will happen. (*Answer: ??*)
- CAC: Are you updating stormwater? Is that done or a work-in-progress? (*Answer: Work in progress; still working on the supporting information that we need to give to developers.*)
- CAC: Are you going to make recommendations that include how much bad development is currently costing us and how much it will cost to fix bad development? (*Answer: ??*)
- CAC: Sounds like you're going to base drainage on road service areas, but I want to clarify that road service areas don't have any say about dealing with drainage. (*Answer: B. Butera doesn't know the answer yet about who is to take responsibility for drainage management. K. Bischofberger wants to work with CAC to come up with a plan for drainage management on the Hillside.*)
- B. Butera: Emerging drainage issues are
 - How to solve problem with limitations on LRSAs?
 - How to deal with land identified as key drainage areas?
- CAC: How do you pressure developers? (*Answer: Make it a requirement. Specify Low Impact Development with no net change as starting point, but then possibly select mitigation site off-site and contribute money toward the purchase of that site; MOA PM&E would consider that. Other options include infiltration systems (reverse septic systems) or putting in some open-space areas to reduce runoff.*)
- CAC: How do you, in both cases, deal with the fact that a natural wetland has enough water already; won't adding extra water create seepage problems further down the hill? (*Answer: trying to measure absorption capacity; there will be cases that will require pipe systems.*)
- Public: who is the developer of the senior housing project? (*Answer: ??*)

4. Scope of summer work

- C. Beck explained where we are in the process (*see HDP website: Data Organization Chart on HDP homepage or HDP Preliminary Timeline on HDP schedule page*).
- Consultants to produce series of “whitepapers” over summer. Whitepapers intended to get the facts on district-wide issues and options.
- CAC feedback on preliminary outline of whitepaper topics and general scope:
 - CAC: Please look at defining what services are area-wide vs. ARDSA funded
 - CAC: Is there any consideration for commercial development in addition to residential development? (*Answer: Yes*)

- Consultants working towards land use plan and implementation recommendations; base maps, geographic information. Will use information to synthesize issues by sub-district, determine what decisions need to be made for which areas, then prepare “Goals and Options” document.
- If there are errors in land use categories, what to do? (*Answer: Talk to C. Beck*)
- On maps (transportation, modeling) – will there be a paper describing modeling assumptions? (*Answer – yes, that information will be available through the Municipal traffic department and the transportation DCON*)
- Will there be one overall topo map? (*Answer: Yes, we’ve been creating a uniform base map for all consultants. D. Lappi can make copies of DVD for all CAC members*)

Question to group from Chris Beck: Is the plan to hold two CAC meetings per month as shown on the schedule feasible? (*Answer from CAC: Yes.*)

5. Discuss Draft Emerging Themes

- Postponed

6. Update on Household Survey

Update:

- Onsite will be incorporated into general survey.
- The On-site DCON will also be using a “professional survey” to interview professionals who have worked with well and septic issues on the Hillside for years to learn more about how well these systems are working.
- Discussion about survey organization and recipient database. Clarification:
 - The project team anticipates 10,000 or so surveys will be sent. In this sense, virtually everyone in the project area will have the opportunity to respond. Twelve smaller areas were developed to help assist with a number of issues: rural and urban delineation, local concerns about neighborhoods, rapid growth since Census 2000, etc. The smaller area boundaries are based on Census Tract and Block Group boundaries (from Census 2000); they may or may not have equal numbers of folks in them. The representative sample will be drawn from the Hillside project area, not each of the 12 smaller areas.
 - The database consists of all property owners plus all identified residential housing addresses in the study area minus any duplicate addresses. This combination gives the project team the best match to the U.S. Census data. One problem with sending the survey only to property owners was the systematic elimination of renters. Renters tend to have lower incomes than property owners so survey results would be automatically biased without any ability to correct for it. Hence, the project team decided to go for the more inclusive method which gives them the ability to weight to the Census or to the number of housing units.

Question and Answers:

- Will CAC comments be integrated into survey? (*Answer: Cathy Hammond makes that decision*)
- J. Weddleton: the Muni has been very responsive so far in making suggested changes.

- C. Fries: Do we have some assurance that our comments on original are getting looked at? (*Answer:* they're being looked at; Chris will ask Cathy to send a note to the CAC regarding comments received from [list of names] and an update on the next steps in the process.
- CAC: Would like to know that there's a thoughtful way rather than a fast way to respond to comments.

7. Public comment from the floor

- CAC announcement:
 - State Legislature approved \$15,000 grant to do PEER REVIEW studies of department studies (incl. HDP), distributed through federation of community councils to community action group. (CAC or HALO)
 - CAC will help manage use of these funds, and may want to apply to a specific area of the Hillside, review finished product, or determine if HPD is based on flawed assumptions.
 - Yvonne Goldsmith may assist Hillside Community Councils organize the peer review, starting with assembling a list of possible experts to perform it.
- The Transportation DCON is organizing a "Trail Summit" to discuss Hillside trail planning with local trail organizations, State and Muni staff, consultants and special interest groups – meeting to organize event 5-22-2007.
- Larry Austin: Putting in public water & sewer is going to cost more than I am willing to pay – how can I stop it?
- Robert Regis: Lawyer working in environmental law, wants less prescriptive, command-and-control plan. Rather, use information gathered in process to create a database that can be used by everyone.
- Reese Baldwin: Suggested prohibitive restrictions on land use (as used in S. Carolina).

8. Wrap-up (5 min)

Assignments

- C. Beck will ask C. Hammond to explain to CAC where MOA is in household survey process and how they're responding to CAC comments received.
- H. Stewart will add to meeting announcement on website guidelines for public attending CAC meetings & make a hand-out for public attending meeting.
- Add time to talk about peer review & emerging themes to next meeting.
- H. Stewart will send reminder emails carrying links to things to highlight on the website.

Next meetings

- June 18, Rabbit Creek Community Church
Public water & sewer – all topics;
Land Use – cluster development & housing density; open space & parks
- June 20, location TBA
Onsite – all topics

- July 16, location TBA
Transportation – all topics
- July 18, location TBA
Drainage – all topics
- Aug 20, location TBA
Review draft “goals & options” document