

DRAFT
Utility Advisory Committee (UAC)
Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2013

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curtz.

Roll Call

- ☒ Thad Curtz
- ☐ Barbara Day
- ☐ Richard Doenges
- ☒ Carol Law
- ☒ Loralei Walker
- ☒ Chris Ward
- ☒ Judy Bardin
- ☒ Margaret Drennan
- ☒ David Dunn
- ☒ Jennifer Sievert
- ☒ Michael Young

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

The February 7, 2013 meeting minutes were approved.

Public Comment

John Cusick spoke about his concerns regarding storm water management in the City. He encouraged the City to adopt the Low Impact Development (LID portion of the NPDES permit) citywide and not wait until January 2017. Tom Holtz who is a member of the county citizen storm water advisory committee for Thurston County, said that their committee recommended to the Thurston County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) to adopt the Low Impact Development standards right away. Mr. Holtz recommended Olympia follow Thurston County's lead – adopt the highest standard for LID and adopt in now.

Announcements from UAC and Staff

- Liz announced that it would be Michael Young's last meeting with the UAC. Michael reflected on his time with the committee, working on projects when he started and still working on those same projects. He has worked with a great collection of committee members and staff. He complemented staff on their great work, made his job easier as a committee member. He noted that there is great value to have city staff come and present information to citizens, to help refine ideas and provide feedback.
- Liz will be taking notes during meeting to try and reduce the amount time we spend on minutes. The audio portion of meetings will still be recorded.
- Liz announced that Council reappointed Margaret, David, and Chris to the UAC and congratulated them. This leaves one seat open, and General Government Committee will keep the recruitment open until March 25th. Please encourage folks that might be interested to apply.
- Liz shared with the UAC the latest edition of the *Five Things* utility insert which is being distributed to customers during March and April.
- Comp Plan Action Plan – Planning Commission and Council would like advisory committee involvement during the spring/summer. More information to come during the comp plan update in May.

Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) Update

Judy Bardin gave an update on the Planning Commission review of the Comprehensive Plan. They are reviewing substantive changes and made some changes to the policies on Sea Level Rise in the natural environment chapter. They also made some changes to the Utility policies related to sea level rise to add

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some additional stakeholders to the list. Liz will coordinate with Amy Buckler to get the changed policy language to UAC members and staff.

BUSINESS OF THE EVENING

NPDES Annual Report

Laura Keehan, Senior Program Specialist with Water Resources, shared the 2012 annual report on the City's Phase II municipal storm water NPDES permit. Olympia is required to report to Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE) every year on the requirements under this permit. WDOE shortened the report this year, assuming the City would be doing the same activities from year-to-year. The permit expires in the summer and is then reissued in the fall. Laura briefly talked about accomplishments made within the last year within the permit requirements.

New permit requirements will include inspecting catch basins and field screening 25 percent of the storm system every two years. Two big areas of focus are monitoring and Low Impact Development (LID). The City can choose to meet all the monitoring requirements or pay into a regional consortium. For LID, Laura described that the City is proposing to use a variety of different activities that fall into the LID category, and follow the Puget Sound Partnership guidance document on LID. Laura also noted that the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC), the City's Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS) and the Storm and Surface Water Drainage Manual will all need to be updated as part of this process. Laura will be leading an effort to coordinate with staff starting soon, and will also have a website and newsletter that updates what is happening with the City's efforts.

UAC made the following comments:

- Suggest early and thorough outreach with the development community, professional engineers and citizens as part of the process, since there will be significant impacts on new development.
- What if the UAC recommended that the City should adopt that section of the permit as soon as possible? Andy Haub noted that the permit recommendations need to come as a package including the OMC, EDDS and Drainage Manual. Eric Christenson noted that in his discussions with County staff, they do not seem to have an accelerated schedule compared to Olympia. Laura also mentioned that coordination with other divisions and departments will require time.
- What if just the new Drainage Manual was adopted? Eric noted that the Drainage Manual would need to be consistent with the OMC and the EDDS. He noted we don't have engineering standards for pervious concrete for example.
- Suggestion was made to focus on maximizing the work we can realistically adopt.
- Laura Keehan noted that some cities have appealed the WDOE requirements, saying that it is too much to adopt too fast.

The committee unanimously agreed with the suggestion that staff try to find a way to fast track the process to finish before 2016. Andy Haub will follow-up on this and report back to the UAC in April.

Storm and Surface Water Utility (SSWU) Capital Facilities Planning and Land Acquisition Update

Andy Haub and Joe Roush presented information to the UAC on the SSSWU Capital Facility Planning (CFP) process and discussed how this ties in with land stewardship and acquisition. They proposed a strategy which would increase funding for aquatic habitat in the 2015 CFP, and also develop a land stewardship and acquisition strategy to help identify priority projects for future years.

Andy summarized his memo, including background, history of funding changes in the CFP, and noted that 25 percent of the SSWU operating budget currently supports aquatic habitat improvement. Andy discussed some specific proposals for the 2015 CFP that would be focused on aquatic habitat improvement, and noted that other CFP projects could be postponed to fund these projects. Joe described the scope of work for the land stewardship and acquisition strategy.

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The UAC made the following comments:

- Thad identified three questions related to land acquisition: Is spending more money on land acquisition a good idea? What land should we buy? Assuming there are some parcels we want to buy – could we have a successful process for purchasing those parcels?
- Asked how the budget is currently spent, CFP portion of the utility budget.
- What are the factors and decision-making criteria used to help us make decisions about whether to fund more aquatic habitat projects? UAC members appreciated the description of the desired level of service related to aquatic habitat.
- Concerns about the criteria being used to decide whether water quality or aquatic habitat projects should be selected for the CFP and at what level they are funded.
- Suggestions that habitat restoration is a focus of the utility and should be funded at a higher level that is equal to flooding and water quality.
- One UAC member noted that this is a good problem to have – the decision about whether we spend dollars on water quality versus aquatic habitat. It was noted that most storm water utilities are focused on flood control mostly.
- Suggestion to prioritize Task 5 (“*Identify and evaluate potential stewardship partners*”) to develop a model on how we could succeed at buying these different things.

UAC members voted on postponing CFP items to increase funding to aquatic habitat based on Andy’s recommendations and pursuing the land stewardship/acquisition plan. All committee members voted to approve Option 1, Margaret abstained.

Drinking Water/Groundwater Protection Land Acquisition Update

Donna Buxton, Senior Program Specialist, came to the UAC in late 2012 and provided an update on the City’s land acquisition strategy as it relates to drinking water/groundwater protection. At tonight’s meeting, Liz provided an update on this subject on Donna’s behalf.

The City began a partnership in early 2012 with the Ecosystem Service Transaction Pilot Project. This project evaluates transactions between buyers and sellers in new markets for protection of forested lands through conservation easements. In this project, the City would be a “buyer” of services from a forested landowner, and would potentially pay for efforts to protect and preserve the land so that the underlying groundwater is protected long term.

The Pilot Project has progressed to include: 1) contact with interested landowners in the McAllister Wellfield drinking water protection area; 2) the completion in April 2013 of an economic analysis of the benefits of watershed services transactions; and 3) the completion in June 2013 of a modeling effort by USGS to evaluate changes in land use on groundwater conditions.

The UAC had no specific comments on this item and were supportive of approach and the City’s involvement with the Ecosystem Service Transaction Pilot Project.

Adjournment

Chair Curtz adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.