

Minutes
Water Resource Management Utility Meeting
(Formerly Stormwater Utility)
January 8, 2008

Please note: Minutes are unofficial until approved by the Water Resource Management Utility (formerly Stormwater Committee) at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Present: Alderman Ken Harenda, Alderman John Hopkins, Alderman Bill Moore, Mayor Jack Chiovatero & Commissioner Jim Kern

Others Present: Nicole Hewitt (Division Engineer), Cathy Schwalbach (Project Engineer), JP Walker (City Engineer), Chuck Trevorow (WRM Supervisor) & Sue Hanley (Office Coordinator Utilities & Streets)

Meeting called to order at 4:50 pm by Alderman Harenda. Roll call and declared a quorum with all members present.

Nicole Hewitt was introduced as the new Division Engineer replacing Eric Nitschke.

Old Business

SW 01-08 Minutes from October 9, 2007 Meeting

Motion by Alderman Hopkins to approve the minutes from the October 9th Water Resource Management Committee meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Kern and upon voting the motion passed unanimously.

SW 07-06 Resident Request for Corrective Action Re: Drainage Concerns (tabled)

This item remains tabled.

SW 19-05 Approval of Stormwater Utility Updated Five-Year Plan (tabled)

This item remains tabled.

Harenda: Do you have an idea when we will be bringing this up again.

Schwalbach: We are waiting to get more done on the Comp Plan and introduce Nicole to the Plan.

SW 02-08 SP-2 Pond Prescribed Burn Project Summary Report

Cathy Schwalbach showed a PowerPoint presentation with photos of the prescribed burn on November 16th, 2007 for maintenance around the ponds southeast of the post office and east of the Preserve Golf Course, south of the City Center. She said that the whole perimeter was burned except the eastern edge. Crews met at 11:30 and started with training, then completed the burn. Our consultant Bonestroo did the burn and training for the Street Department and Park and Rec crews and Alderman Moore assisted on site. The only drawback was that there was a lot of smoke because of somewhat moist conditions and that a few areas of old material would not burn well. Choosing the date for a burn is really a hit or miss situation, watching the wind and other weather conditions. After the burn, it was a very black coating left on the ground which is how it looks yet. The burn was done in a few hours and the leader from Bonestroo stayed until all of the fire was out and it was safe, and he notified the Fire Department. There were a few areas left that wouldn't burn well, but we will look at it in Spring. She said that the burn was a success and that this will assist the area in growing back sooner, healthier and with more natural species. Prior to the burn more than 1,000 residents in the area were notified and only a few people expressed concern because of asthma conditions. These residents were called to remind them the day prior to the burn. There were no complaints that she was aware of and it went very smoothly.

Harenda: Asked if we are looking to establish this policy around other ponds

Schwalbach: We will be watching the effectiveness of it in the spring on the effectiveness of the burn. Looking at the ponds in the city and the needs, it is a good option as opposed to chemicals or constant mowing. It is in are arsenal now.

Harenda: Are we using this as a pilot program or in private ponds?

Schwalbach: Yes. We will be watching this and using this as an option in the future.

Kern: Is this the first time the City has done this?

Schwalbach: I believe it is the first time.

Kern: Is it more cost efficient than the other alternatives?

Schwalbach: A burn is usually required every 5-7 years, versus the cost of chemical applications which are more frequent and have an environmental affect, and mowing many times a year which is more costly.

Moore: This is a natural occurrence in prairies and mimics the natural regeneration that has occurred on the land. It is not just cost effective, but the best thing to do environmentally. He said he was at the burn site and it was very educational to me and showed that you need to choose the right moisture conditions, and it was a little difficult for all the grass to burn because it didn't catch right away because of the extra moisture. There were crews on site to keep the fire from spreading, but they really weren't needed because it was so damp and because of the ponds themselves and the walkways that bordered the burn area. The City did a good job sending information and the neighbors were well informed and were almost nonchalant about it.

Motion to adjourn at 5:03 p.m. by Commissioner Kern. Seconded by Alderman Hopkins and upon voting the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Hanley, Office Coordinator Utilities & Streets