

Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary

Meeting date: October 17, 2007, 3:30 pm

Steering Group Members Present:

Katy Brooks Port of Vancouver
Pete Capell Clark County Dept. of Public Works

Partnership Members Present:

Thom McConathy Citizen
Vern Veysey Citizen
George Medina US Army Corps of Engineers

Public in attendance:

Jacquelin Edwards Citizen
David Page Citizen

Other Agency Members Present:

Jessi Belston Port of Vancouver
Ron Wierenga Clark County Dept. of Public Works

Project Management Team:

Phil Trask PC Trask & Associates, Inc.
Sabrina Litton PC Trask & Associates, Inc.

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any modifications. There were no modifications.

Partnership Business

Project Manager Update

The project manager reported that the Forum at the Library on September 20th went well. He passed around a summary of the attendee evaluations from Bob Moser and overall the comments were favorable. People enjoyed the subject matter and thought the speakers were informative. Thom commented that attendance was higher than normal because of the topic and noted that the question and answer session could have been longer. Ron thought that all of the panel speakers did a great job. George commented that a reoccurring comment from the audience was the absence of an articulated vision statement. He mentioned that this was something the group might want to think about: how to convey to the community that they have one.

Questions Ad-hoc Committee Meeting

The questions ad-hoc committee met on October 4th and consisted of Thom McConathy, Brian Carlson, Scott Robinson, Don Jacobs, and Ron Wierenga. There was good development of the question list by all and it appears as though the list is as complete as possible. The latest draft was handed out to the Steering Group and the project manager pointed out how questions have been grouped and modified. A new bin called Alternatives was created and will establish a foundation for potential management actions for the lake. In this way the Partnership can become familiar with the tools available for managing the lake and how the might help achieve the vision.

The next step for the question list is to have the technical group prioritize data needs and estimate rough costs. This assessment will be coarse and provide a snapshot of technical gaps. The project manager asked the Steering Group for feedback and welcomed comments or suggestions.

Legislative Budget

The project manager stated that he had spoken with two of the three of the Steering Group agency lobbyists. A next step is to draft a one page summary describing the request. The project manager asked the Steering Group for comments or ideas as to what specifically the request would be for.

The project manager also said that working through local House or Senate members such as Representative Fromhold would also be a good idea. It was suggested that an informational meeting with Steering Group members and key members would increase the likelihood for success. It will also be important to keep the city council, county commission and port commissioners aware of the effort and to gauge their support.

Vern commented that if the Partnership is going to request funding, it will be important to be specific about what the funding is for and what the benefit will be from new information gained from the request. It was noted that the technical group will begin assessing the question list soon and start identifying data gaps to develop ideas for new technical studies. This would provide important input into the request.

Work Plan

The project manager handed out a new draft of the Vancouver Lake Work Plan. He said that the planning horizon of this document has changed to encompass one year (2008), and that several of the work plan elements had been revised. Major plan elements include developing objectives to further articulate the vision, identifying and prioritizing data gaps, planning and coordinating additional studies, developing project funding, characterizing management alternatives and building and maintaining relationships with citizens and agencies. To encapsulate these elements in a comprehensive document, an interim Watershed Plan will be developed to document decision making and guide restoration efforts at Vancouver Lake. This interim Watershed Plan would not represent a final plan but it would reflect our knowledge and progress and decision making to-date.

To help illustrate how components in the work plan fit together, a draft strategic flow chart was handed out. The project manager noted how this will be an iterative process with defining objectives and developing management alternatives continuously feeding each other help further their refinement and narrow down management alternatives. The project manager welcomed feedback.

Thom commented that he thought it would be a good idea to better articulate the roles of the Steering Group, Partnership and Technical Group in the work plan. He would also like to see a distribution of work in the work plan and a timeline that illustrates this as well. Other members questioned inserting roles into the work plan. Phil mentioned that he is working on a timeline and will send that out with the work plan shortly. Currently it spans the length of the work plan, one year, but he noted that perhaps it might be a good idea to extend the timeline out several years so milestones and work plan elements can more fully be visualized. It was agreed that this is a good idea.

It was asked what would happen to the work plan after the Corps study findings came out. It was noted that no matter what results of the feasibility study are, the work plan still captures key elements of a forward moving process that will continue no matter what the Corps findings reveal.

Vern mentioned that as the process moves forward it will be important to keep track of why the Partnership decides not to do things. This is important for a long-term process such as Vancouver Lake and would help avoid revisiting items in the future.

Tech Group Update

Ron Wierenga reported on behalf of the Tech Group. He stated there was nothing new to report at this time but that the Tech Group would be meeting on November 7th to discuss the results of the Corps' studies and continue the data gap discussion.

Public Information Update

Katy Brooks spoke on behalf of the PIO group and discussed some ways to increase citizen involvement. She said that coming up with short-term citizen volunteer projects would help keep people from getting frustrated with the pace of Vancouver Lake project. Some ideas for short-term citizen volunteer involvement projects include: planting groups, weed removal projects, picnic table painting, trash removal etc. She noted that the City has hired a staff person to work on things like this and he has offered his list of volunteers to draw from. Katy also mentioned that she had come across a native plant source that could provide free plant starts should a planting group be initiated.

Pete suggested that a cafeteria list be created with various community volunteer opportunities including Ron's water quality monitoring volunteer opportunities. In this way people could pick things that they were interested in.

Katy said that they are going to be working on this and will be looking for ideas and feedback from the Steering Group/Partnership. One thing they hope to avoid is performing a project that might be in conflict with future plans

USACE Update

George Medina from the Corps said that the team was wrapping up the first phase of biological and hydraulic studies and will report to the Technical Group at the meeting on November 7th. At this time the team should know if salmonid use and hydraulic potential justify further study. The Corps will also be reporting their findings and recommendations to the Steering Group on November 14th and on December 12th to the Partnership. George added that he will pass on the Vancouver Lake question list to his team, and start filling it out based on their findings and what they now know.

Next Steps/Close

Phil thanked everyone for attending. The documents handed out at the meeting would be forwarded on the Steering Group for feedback.

It was noted that the Partnership meeting in December would be mainly be focused on the Corps study results and would also discuss/announce the recruitment process for filling the vacant Partnership seat.

Next Meetings:

Steering Group Meeting – November 14, 2007, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Full Partnership Meeting – December 12, 2007, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

All meetings will be held at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.