

## BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

OCTOBER 18, 2001

The special meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. at the Belfair Fire Hall by Chairperson Herb Baze. Commissioners Wes Johnson and Bob Holter were in attendance also.

### BUSINESS

The Board held a public hearing to consider the Belfair Lower Hood Canal Water Reclamation Plan.

Gary Yando, Community Development Director, read a staff report and then introduced Harry Sellers, Gray & Osborne and Tony Vivola, Gray & Osborne.

Tony Vivola, Civil Engineer, explained that the driving mechanism for the Belfair/Lower Hood Canal Water Reclamation Plan is the consent order between the County and the Washington State Department of Ecology. The state is concerned with Hood Canal and all waters in the state. One of the biggest concerns is the issue of closure zones in harvesting of shellfish throughout the state. The goal is to eliminate closure zones as they prohibit harvesting of shellfish.

Water quality issues are in existence. The Hood Canal has a shelf by Union. It limits the flushing action in the lower end of the Canal. Instead of seeing a flush which occurs and all the water is moved out in a day it takes a longer period of time. Any nutrients introduced in the Canal stay there and don't move. As more and more nutrients are introduced the problem gets larger. The population increases will help increase the nutrient level in the Canal.

The regulatory agency is the final approving agency for the Plan. What goes into the plan needs to be in accordance with their standards and requirements so they can approve it. The funding sources are grants and loans. If they are able to prove it, then the planning document becomes a tool to allow the County to look at funding sources. The funding sources are grants and loans. It is necessary to create a report which addresses all the requirements and looks at short term issues and long term issues.

The advisory committee felt there is a planning document that addresses how to serve the whole area. If the County builds anything it needs to fit into the large scale project. They have the ability to expand an increase in increments in the future as money becomes available to solve the large problem. They are looking at phasing with Phase I in Belfair.

It was noted that sewers will be more expensive in the future.

To determine if it is affordable, it is necessary to approve a plan and then begin the process of applying for grants and loans if that is what is wanted to do. Applying for a grant or loan may take as long as two years to begin the process. It may be necessary to apply for 10 – 20 grants or loans. When information is received from the funding sources then it would need to be reviewed to determine if there are enough funds to move forward.

There are two criteria to look at and two agencies which will look at the report. If there is a flow rate of less than 14,500 gallons per day then it comes under the Department of Health. If there is an aerobic treatment unit it may be necessary to enter a maintenance agreement or monitor the septic tank. If there are more than 14,500 gallons per day it comes under the Department of Ecology (DOE) and their criteria. DOE is not only concerned with Hood Canal they are also concerned with the groundwater. They look at degradation of groundwater. Once the 14,500 gallons per day are exceeded, there is concern not to degrade the groundwater. One of the biggest concerns is nitrate. It is necessary to design facilities to remove nitrate. For drinking water the nitrate limit cannot exceed 10 mg per liter. If there is a background nitrate level of 8 mg per liter, it is necessary to ensure whatever is put in the ground will not increase that level. Also, most septic tanks and drainfields unless they are aerobic treatment units specially designed with filters and other biological processes will not remove nitrate. It will go directly into the ground water. Treatment plant costs can vary due to different areas and different requirements.

Within the state, groundwater and water rights are a real issue. There are still periods of the year in which there is low stream flow that impact various salmon. The fish are getting first call on water rights and the people are coming in second. Additional ground water sources may not be available. If so, it will be necessary to demonstrate

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is a census block with a median household income of \$31,000 and another one across the street with a household income of \$17,000. There is a significant disparity of income in the area. Normally a bell shaped curve is looked at and there is something in the middle that defines a true median and it does not exist in this area.

There are water quality problems in lower Hood Canal that have been there for quite some time. Lynch Cove and Belfair State Park have been closed in an excess of 13 years due to high fecal coliform count. Department of Ecology lists certain areas that don't meet certain standards and they have been on Department of Ecology's list for 13 years. There was a much larger area of lower Hood Canal that was closed largely due to efforts by Mason County Health and others. A substantial portion of Hood Canal has been reclassified to a higher level due to sanitary surveys and subsequent repairs.

The problems in Belfair are a little different than other parts of the area since there is a fairly large commercial element which includes restaurants. Virtually all the food service industry has severe problems. For the most part, on-site systems are expected to fail sometime within the next 5 – 10 years.

One area which might be under consideration if a sewer system were built, is surface water such as rivers or marine outfalls.

Looking at possible sites is difficult. There were efforts to contact the Department of Natural Resources and other interested landowners as well as consideration given to tying in this area with North Bay Case Inlet. There were general letters sent out to see what interest and availability might be for a land base system. What they looked at was tying in the area with North Bay Case Inlet. If the commercial area of Belfair is looked at solely, there would be one facility instead of two facilities. Once this is done, expanding it to take in other areas is not as attractive. The other alternative which was looked at was working with the Overton & Assoc. property on the upland area the other side of Belfair.

Another possibility considered is taking a cluster of 50 homes and coming up with a satisfactory system that would serve solely 50 homes. The cost is \$30,000 per house which is unaffordable.

If you rely solely on the connective services of the businesses and put in a modest treatment system with a spray field and storage ponds on forest land it is still \$12.4 million. If you rely solely on the connective services and businesses to pay the freight it is not affordable. One of the reasons behind a utility local improvement district (ULID) it allows the property to be assessed that would be benefitted by the infrastructure which was going in place. It is not necessarily a sewer line, it could include a water line, water reservoir or any number of different types of improvements. It widens out the participants in the property and those that would stand to benefit would pay a proportion of the cost. There was a feasibility study and it determined there would be a benefit of \$3.2 - \$4 million by way of improvements.

It was noted the ULID boundaries can be drawn a number of ways. The main area which would benefit from the system would be located in the north part of an area towards Kitsap County. There is no final designation of any ULID or indication from the County at this time. There is an urban growth area which is supposed to be supported by urban services. The urban services allow for greater density which can't readily be provided by on-site systems. The quandry is whether the urban growth area is going to be served or not. If it is not served, at some point there would not be a designation for Belfair as an urban growth area.

Tim Wing urged the Board to consider progressing towards a sewer. The first being, jobs. He would like to see his children stay in the North Mason area if they choose to stay if they want to have a decent paying job, especially if they want a variety of interests in jobs. If there is not a sewer in the urban growth area, it will be difficult to ever attract in the future, businesses of a variety of nature which can support jobs of a family wage. He felt they should be able to attract simple small manufacturing jobs and other businesses which can have 30 – 40 employees.

The second reason is taxes. The taxes could be impacted severely by the presence of a sewer. The tax base of the area will be dramatically improved by the presence of some businesses. There are almost no businesses and very little retail business in the area. Need to make sure the citizens have enough money to protect the environment on their property.

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Dr. Brian Petersen, Belfair Subarea Planning Committee, also noted they are in support of the sewer system. He encouraged the Board to proceed as soon as possible with this. The major benefit is the increased tax base. He felt that the budgetary challenge can be eliminated with increased development and density. He hoped the plan is not fixed as there are two pump stations sitting in the center of the proposed commercial increased density. They would like to discuss this further.

Harry Martin noted the sewer systems have failed in some of the larger businesses already in the last five years. It is anticipated in the next five years there will be failures of septic systems and it is important to consider sewers in the area.

Steve Clayton, Belfair Subarea Planning Committee Member, also voiced his support for sewers. There is siting of a treatment plant at the Overton property where the Belfair Bypass is proposed and also the prospect of going to Allyn North Bay site. He felt they should take advantage of the income of growing trees on their own property and harvesting them. Currently, the water from that facility is going to DNR property. An advantage to the Allyn proposed site is it would go by the High School and that facility is the biggest user of sewage facilities. He understood the Allyn plant as is has a limited expansion capacity for Allyn to grow.

Anthony DiMiero, septic installer, expressed he is aware of the problems associated with high fecal coliform in the Hood Canal. He felt that Park Place, Belfair State Park and downtown Belfair are the main contributors to the problem of fecal coliform in the bay. There is a tidal fluctuation that goes in and out and the water never really leaves. It is the end of a finger of water that comes in. He understood that Belfair, Michigan Creek, and Union River, are all ancient river basins. There are soils that are 0 - 8' and then there is river rock. There were test holes dug in Belfair and it was reported that when the tide goes out the water flows out. When the tide comes in there is 30" of water. There is sewage waste products introduced into the tidal system. He did not believe the North Shore, South Shore and Old Belfair Highway are the problems with Belfair. He heard it would cost \$30,000 per home for 50 homes to have a sand filter system. He questioned why this is necessary. He understood there are other alternative systems than sand filter or pressure distribution or gravity that would not be as expensive.

Mel Armstrong voiced his opposition for a sewer. He felt the plan is a transfer of funds from taxpayers to developers and business men. He felt this system will bring more people. He voiced his objection to base the taxes paid on the amount of acreage. He strongly urged that the taxpayers get the opportunity to vote.

Dan Dubiak noted he has seen Belfair grow since 1976. The shellfish has been closed at the park for 13 years and if the park is doing the polluting the state needs to fix their septic system. He stated it almost costs the same to dispose of anti-freeze, it costs \$2 per gallon to get rid of old antifreeze and \$3.25 to purchase new antifreeze. He questioned if shellfish is closed and the park is overflowing why doesn't the state accept responsibility.

Brian Peterson Individual personal opinion surprised. bring the engineers back up to touch on topics.

Tony - ULID

further along is more detailed plans.

Degradation of groundwater - described most of the topography drains toward the Canal. Below the soil mantle

Harry Sellers question regarding storm water - from inlet area to marine water. Agree with comment there is a stormwater problem in belfair. Not sure sewer plan is right vehicle to address. Do think it is a problem.

At some point it should be addressed.

Gary Yando, Utilities & Waste Management, statement about Port of Allyn the Port contacted the county. It started in 1987 and 1988. In 1971 the county had the opportunity to pick up 95% funding for entire Belfair area.

They are in competition with a number of other areas.

The sewer project is a work in progress. The end result is not going to be what we are looking at. The dollar figure of

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falls city and king county - Now they are looking at down town area. The costs were in excess of \$2 million.

Judy Likkel - explored possibility of created wetlands.

Gary Yando recommended the Board . . .approve the plan as presented.

Bob Holter - last week we discontinued the connector . . .The building of the sewer system.

Cmmr. Holter/Johnson moved and seconded to approve the Belfair Hood Canal Sewer Faciliteis Plan . . . motin carried unanimously. make a

comment that the purpose is to proceed ahead or hold back. Also if there were conditions

**ADJOURNED**

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m. due to no further business.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Herb Baze, Chairperson

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Wesley E. Johnson, Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Rebecca S. Rogers, Clerk of the Board