

Greenbank Marsh Working Group Next Meeting
8/23/19, Friday 9-11 AM Day Road Fire House

Minutes

WELCOME - Judi Moore, President, Greenbank Beach and Boat Club (GBBC)

INTRODUCTIONS – In attendance were:

Greenbank Beach and Boat Club (GBBC)

Judi Moore, GBBC President
Barbara Bennett, Co-Facilitator, Greenbank Marsh Working Group
Sharon Dunn, recording secretary
Bob Monroig

Greenbank Beach Water Co (GWC)

Michael Stansbury, Co-Facilitator, Greenbank Marsh Working Group
Pam Torrance
Jane Alexander
Reliance Ricketts
Dick Wearn
Richard Johnson

North Bluff Assn (NBA) Betsy Harris

Owners South on Private Wells No representatives in attendance

IC Public Works Matthew Lander

Port of Coupeville No representative in attendance

WI Conservation District (WICD) Tom Slocum, Engineer

REVIEW AGENDA – no changes requested

UPDATE from GBBC presented by Barbara Bennett, with contributions by other GBBC representatives

Property owners of Holmes Harbor Estate have:

Responded to a questionnaire distributed June 2019. To date more than 50% have responded and responses continue to be accepted;

Voiced substantial support for proceeding with open channel project. To date, more than 70% of responses support proceeding with the open channel;

Raised a number of concerns and requests for additional information including:

- What are actual costs for work to be done and what will be covered by grants?
- Will costs to maintain and operate a pump proposed on the southern edge of the current lagoon be shared with neighbors who benefit from that pump?
- What will the transition from a fresh water to salt-water marsh be like and what steps might be taken to enhance and shorten that transition?

The Board of Greenbank Beach and Boat Club has:

Accepted an extension of its current grant through January 2021 which will be used in part to research remaining questions.

Key Question for working group at this meeting:

- Will operation & maintenance costs for the pump to be installed on the south side of the channel be shared with adjacent property owners who benefit from the pump?

UPDATES FROM Greenbank Beach Water Co. (GWC), presented by Michael Stansbury, a GWC property owner and co-facilitator of the Greenbank Marsh Working Group, with contributions from 5 other GWC property owners:

Michael reported that the annual meeting of the GWC took place August 16, 2019 and the question of cost sharing for pump operation and maintenance was discussed. He explained that the GWC was organized and is operated for the purpose of providing potable water to designated lots (approximately 31 lots located south of the GBBC lagoon but not including property owners on private wells south of the lagoon) and is probably not an organization that can assess its members for costs outside of this function. This limited role makes it doubly important and challenging to inform and incorporate individual GWC lot owners.

Michael reported that, even though there had been two informational meetings on the open channel project earlier this year, the August annual meeting was the first time that many GWC members were introduced to project details. In addition to questions already raised by HHE property owners, GWC members had questions about:

- the effects of an open channel on the marsh, the beach and the trees and vegetation along the east side of North Bluff Road (across the road from the marsh), since many beach lot owners are closer to the marsh than other affected groups
- the impact on well water
- whether there are ways to mitigate the impacts (such as a fresh water band along North Bluff Road or dividing the marsh into half fresh and half salt water)
- the scope and costs of the tide gate and pumping system to which cost sharing would apply
- the public process by which the project would be authorized.

Although the issue of cost sharing was discussed at the GWC annual meeting and there is an open mind on the subject, the members of the GWC did not feel they were in a position or had sufficient information to answer the question at this time. Michael expressed the hope that the concerns of the GWC members identified above could in some way be reflected in the additional research to be conducted under the grant extension and felt that this would help inform beach lot owners.

He also raised the need to identify ways to communicate with residents on private wells south of the lagoon who are not members of the GWC and who also lack a structure for cost sharing and have no formal structure to convene themselves for discussion or information sharing.

DISCUSSION – Discussion included many questions about the project. Tom Slocum and Judi Moore were especially active in the discussion and referred all to Greenbank Marsh Working Group website hosted on the Whidbey Island Conservation District for the full archive of supporting documents:

<https://www.whidbeycd.org/greenbank-marsh-overview.html>

Betsy Harris of the North Bluff Association (NBA) noted that NBA property owners are concerned about the impact of the proposed open channel and the existing boat ramp on the beach profile. The NBA has consulted with a geo-coastal specialist and concerns are based on that report. Barbara noted that Island County requires GBBC to monitor the beach profile through 2021 as a condition of its permit for 2016 boat ramp repairs.

Tom responded that it would be helpful for the specialists working with this project and those working with the NBA to share information and observations. He stated he will send Betsy the GBBC geo-coastal morphology report and asked if she would send the North Bluff report to him. She said she would not.

Risks presented by future, increasing storm surge and sea level rise were also discussed. Tom explained that the open channel project is being pro-actively designed to buffer properties north and south through increased dike heights on both sides that will match the height of North Bluff Road, and installation of regulated tide gates under North Bluff Road and at intersection of the dike to the south with the drainage ditch. These design elements are intended to keep risks to all properties at or below current levels. Beyond that, the project cannot be expected to provide protection from future developments that might exceed historic conditions.

NEXT STEPS

Greenbank Marsh Working Group Meeting Minutes 8.23.19 (3 pages)

1. Tom will send Jessica Cote's report on shoreline and intertidal conditions to Betsy Harris.
2. Betsy Harris was asked to share reports received by the NBA from their coastal consultant.
3. Barbara and Michael will convene the Working Group when there is news to report or decisions to be made
4. Barb and Judi will inquire about a contact for neighbors to the south on private wells