

WATER COMMITTEE
APRIL 26, 2017
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pete Frisina, Chairman
Steve Rapson, County Administrator
Lee Pope, Water System Director
Chip Conner
Commissioner Steve Brown
James Preau, Vice Chairman

ABSENT:

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

Dennis Davenport, County Attorney
Michael Diaz, CH2M

STAFF PRESENT:

Russell Ray

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pete Frisina at 8:00 A.M.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON APRIL 12, 2017.

Lee Pope made the motion and Commissioner Steve Brown seconded, to approve the minutes from the meeting on April 12, 2017. The motion passed unanimously.

II. WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPDATE.

Michael Diaz reported the contractor has completed all the punch list work. The last payment application is being completed. All the change order work discussions have been completed, at this time they are expecting a relatively small amount of money going back to the Water System as the project is closed. That will be a positive cash flow from that perspective. There is one item outstanding; they are contemplating closing the plant due to the issue with the seals. They were out doing closer inspections and found one or two seals that did have some damage; nothing out of the ordinary. It appears the retaining ring that is bolted to hold down the seat was not torqued properly. He said they are expecting to hear back from either Rotork or ValMatic as to what has come out of their investigation and ultimately what they plan to make the corrective action. Everybody seems to be moving forward, either ICS, Rotork, or ValMatic to assume responsibility and be able to take care of the issue. It doesn't seem to be anything grave that is going to require having to pull the valve out or anything like that. It will require shut downs to make the corrective action; during construction we went through a lot of the steps to make sure those seats were accessible. Ultimately, they are replaceable, they can be damaged. They indicated they wanted to move in starting Monday; we are slowing things down a little bit until we can get that report; so we know we are headed in the right direction. He said they want to make sure they have all parties on the same page, which they all seem eager to be, but he wants to be sure, they all agree this is truly what happened, why were the bolts not torqued, what could have caused that issue, this is going to be the corrective action.

Mr. Pope commented he thinks everybody has done a good job on this. Nobody has drug their feet, all connected parties that have been involved have done a great job. He said he really appreciates everything Mr. Diaz has poured into it to make sure he was available; to make sure they are taking care of us. He said he feels comfortable they will get this addressed as soon as possible.

Mr. Diaz said they have had a discussion with EPD, nothing on paper yet, but verbally, they are comfortable if we have to high rate the filters just like we did a year ago when it was a massive rehabilitation project. This is minor in comparison. They are comfortable, if it comes down to it, then it should not be an issue in that respect.

III. STARR'S MILL CLEANUP.

Mr. Rapson reported we are scheduled for May 11, possibly May 13 also. Mr. Pope said we are thinking about that Saturday to give local residents, everybody who has jobs that might not be able to make it on May 11 might like to volunteer, they could come on Saturday. The tall trees that have been flagged will be removed by a contractor. When they come in, they will take care of the stumps and the limbs. When they leave the tree will be gone. The bid is out to vendors who have been used in the past for removing trees on other county properties. Some of the trees on the site are extremely tall. They could do some damage if they fell the wrong way. Those prices should be in next week.

Mr. Diaz commented that Rochester has been given the green light to delineate the west side of the property. They will be marking the boundaries sometime next week. Further discussion pertained contacting the church about their property adjacent to ours. When the bridge construction starts there may be issues with entering the property of Highway 85.

IV. DISCUSSION ABOUT REEVES CREEK MITIGATION PROPERTY.

Mr. Pope explained the Water System owns mitigation property located in the City of Stockbridge. In the late 1990's or early 2000's, Stockbridge drilled a couple of wells hoping to utilize them for water supply to the City. There were some issues with the Corp and the Corp did not give approval to allow them to go in and drill those wells. They were forced to remove the roads and cap the wells and do some mitigation for the work they had done on the property. Now, City of Stockbridge has come back and said they would possibly like to activate those wells. At least go in and test to see if they can use them as a viable resource to offset the water they have to purchase from Henry County. Mr. Pope went on to say we are looking at first of all, finding out if the Corp is open to allow them to do this. The first step is for them to uncap the wells.

Mr. Rapson commented this is mitigation for Lake Horton. He said he and Mr. Pope met with the Stockbridge City Manager; they discussed talking with the Board as to whether there is an interest in allowing Stockbridge to be on the property or to

use the wells on the property; as long as it doesn't impact anything to do with the mitigation that we have. We will not be the ones going to the Corp and EPD to get the permissions. All of that would have to be laid out first before we go to the next step. He and Mr. Pope said that we are not comfortable saying they can have access to our property for the purposes of pulling water out of some wells, unless this Board felt like that is okay with whatever stipulations. They told them they would take it to Water Committee. The City Manager of Stockbridge is confident, from preliminary discussions with the folks they have with the Corp that they would allow them to get on that property. Once you do that, there has to be some kind of access road to get to the well. They have to work all that out, and what we are saying is as long as it is not to the detriment of us in our mitigation, we don't want to get into a situation where the Corp is upset because there is a road there five years later. They have to get some kind of commitment from the Corp that this relationship does not impact us.

Commissioner Brown said the problem you have is six years later there is somebody new at the Corp who is in charge of this thing and they look at it. Then they all of a sudden declare you are in violation. Dennis Davenport commented if it is not a violation now, it could be a violation in the future. Mr. Rapson said we are a little skittish with some of the issues we have had with mitigation where we had monitoring set up, sent all the stuff to the Corp for four or five years and then found out in the fifth year, now we have some problems that no one let us know about for four years. It has nothing to do with this site, but that is a concern.

Attorney Davenport commented even if the Board likes the idea before it goes to the Corp, he wonders what the relationship looks like. It is one thing to ask the Corp, can you go on the property; typically in this type of relationship you want some kind of an easement. If they don't tell the Corp that we are looking to get a permanent easement, which is a conveyance of property rights, which might not be consistent with the framework of the mitigation site. If that is not clearly communicated to the Corp we could have an issue, even if Stockbridge thinks it is okay because they tell us the Corp said it is okay, because they did not ask the right questions. We need to make sure that we are part of that Corp meeting, if we go that far.

Mr. Rapson commented there is a flip side, if they are going to be using this to offset the expenses they have for buying water, because now they are basically getting free water from a well, the question is, is there some type of compensation they perhaps should give the Water System for allowing them to pull that water off our property. Those are all questions as a Board we probably need to discuss, so we can go back and Lee can have a conversation with the City Manager of Stockbridge.

Mr. Pope showed the property on the GIS map; he outlined where the wells are situated and the location of the access road, he also pointed out the power easement. The Committee reviewed the location of the property, the power line easement, and the access road. Commissioner Brown expressed reluctance at pursuing something like that. We have a good thing there, it is mitigation property, it has been accepted

as that and if you jeopardize that what are the consequences for us if something happens on that site. Do we have to go get another piece of property to mitigate that?

Mr. Davenport explained that in the mid 1990's we allowed City of Stockbridge to put the wells on the property. Either there a miscommunication with the Corp or the Corp took the position they did not know about it, that is a violation of the permit. We were starting to impound water at Lake Horton and they made us open the gates at Lake Horton and would not let us impound water until that problem was resolved. By resolved that meant cap the wells and take out the gravel roads. It is a thorny issue, it might be okay today, but it might not be okay tomorrow and you will have to pay for it. You are the one the Corp can get to, not Stockbridge; because you own the property.

Mr. Rapson commented that we need to tell them we are concerned with the long term nature of the mitigation and the relationship with the Corp. Mr. Pope said he is concerned if they start pumping water out of there, what it is going to do to our wetland area; it may drain it down. Commissioner Brown commented we do not want to jeopardize our relationship with the Corp. He suggested not doing this.

V. EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT.

Mr. Pope explained that Daniele Mattesco could not be here due to school. He has asked that Mr. Pope stand in for him. Daniele is asking for approval of his Eagle Scout project which is to build a couple of benches and do an enclosure for one of our trash cans at Starr's Mill. Mr. Pope showed Daniele's presentation to the Committee. He pointed out where Daniele would like to put the benches. The benches are similar to those in the photo and will have a concrete platform. Daniele is requesting permission to start this project as soon as possible.

Steve Rapson made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of Daniele Mattesco's Eagle Scout project as presented for two benches and a trash can cover at Starr's Mill Park. Commissioner Steve Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT.

There was no public comment.

GWINNET HERITAGE CENTER FIELD TRIP.

Mr. Pope suggested a field trip to the Gwinnett Heritage Environmental Center to see what they have there for community outreach and wetland education. They have a really nice center there. We can plan something for the Water Committee to all meet up there, or go as individuals. Mr. Rapson suggested using the Recreation bus and go as a group. The Water Committee meeting scheduled for June 28 is tentatively planned for this trip. Mr. Diaz will communicate with Steve Cannon to set up the trip.

Mr. Pope explained the Gwinnet Heritage Center concept is like the Fernbank Science Center; but it focuses on wetlands, watersheds, wastewater and water. It is a large educational center; UGA and Georgia Tech hold classes there. They have a flowing creek around the building, it is a 100% LEED certified structure, and was built with SPLOST funds. They get a percentage of every SPLOST dollar that is collected.

Mr. Rapson commented that if we build a Heritage Center here, it would probably be an ongoing source from the General Fund and the Water System. Mr. Pope commented we would not build something as big. Mr. Diaz suggested if anyone has an opportunity the Chattahoochee Nature Center in the City of Roswell is also a good place to visit. It is a similar concept, a little more low-key and blends a little bit more with the environment. It gives a different perspective; they hold a lot of events and summer camps. Mr. Rapson commented we have probably twenty cases of artifacts and this would be a good place to house all that kind of stuff. The concept is some type of stand-alone building that we would at some point mirror up with Starr's Mill to make it happen. We have a building now that is not being used, which is the old pump house.

Mr. Pope explained that Steve Cannon who developed the center for Gwinnett is kind of the brain child everybody picks from when they want to do something like this. He came and spent the day with us a couple of weeks ago; he said our existing pump station is the perfect building. We were talking about demoing the inside and putting things in. Mr. Cannon said don't demo it; leave the pumps and pedestals and all those things so kids can come in and walk around. He suggested putting up rails so they can go around; maybe demo the electrical units on the walls, and then around the outside wall install display cases for artifacts. He suggested taking the building just like it is. Mr. Rapson said start small and you can always add to it.

Mr. Pope commented that Mr. Cannon said this is one of the best sites he has ever seen to do something like that; especially when he looked at the property we have. WASA's property butts up against that property, we have property, and Southern Conservation and the Board of Education have property. We are all right there together. There is a great place to do trails in the future, we have a beautiful scenic old mill; Mr. Cannon had a lot of suggestions for a twenty year plan. Mr. Rapson said this is good vision of where we are now and where we could be. We obviously will land somewhere in the middle, but it is always good to have a goal in mind.

Mr. Pope stated another suggestion from Mr. Cannon was to build a center across Highway 85 that would overlook the pond that would be a livable building, a health center where people come to get their blood pressure checked. Mr. Cannon said you could partner with the local hospital and have a walk across the top of the dam where they could walk or wheelchair to the other side of the property to see the mill.

Commissioner Brown mentioned one thing with the bridge; one thing we asked DOT about was having an observation deck coming off the bridge. Where you

could take photographs of the mill and the site, which would be a very unusual project for DOT, not necessarily out of their scope, but, it would be something he has not seen them do before.

Mr. Pope commented the parking lot would be small; people could come in there, have a health check, have the hospital partner with us and have volunteers come down there to do that. Then they could roll over or walk to the other side, walk the trails and see the center. He said Mr. Cannon had a lot of long term, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty year ideas. Mr. Cannon said this is a beautiful place, certainly if we look at adding properties on up. This could become a really nice nature center.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.

Commissioner Steve Brown made a motion to adjourn the Water Committee April 26, 2017 meeting. Chip Conner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Chairman Pete Frisina adjourned the meeting at 8:30A.M.

Peter A. Frisina

The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 10th day of May, 2017.

Lisa Speegle