

**SEWARD / BEAR CREEK FLOOD SERVICE AREA
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
SEAVIEW PLAZA BUILDING, SUITE 122
MEETING MINUTES
1 November 2010**

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

B. ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS

Bill Williamson, Chairman
Bob White, Vice Chairman
Terry Federer
Tena Morgan
Mac Eads

STAFF

Christina Stauffer
Service Area Coordinator

Matt Hall - Absent

BOROUGH STAFF

Dan Mahalak, Hydrologist, Gilman River Center
Sue Wilcox, Special Assistant to the Mayor
Jessica Bohn, Secretary, KPB Mayor's Office

B1. SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS/ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Service Area Coordinator swore in newly elected board members Bob White and Tena Morgan.

Bill Williamson opened nominations for Chairman.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Bill Williamson called for approval of the agenda.

Vice Chairman Bob White moved to approve the agenda.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

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D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bill Williamson called for approval of the minutes from the previous meeting.

Bob White moved to approve the minutes as written.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

D1. WORK SESSION-SEWARD FLOOD HISTORY

See Work Session Notes. The Work Session commenced at 7:10 PM and ended at 7:35PM.

E. PRESENTATIONS

- **City of Seward**

Christina Stauffer explained that Christy Terry had sent her regrets and that there was no City of Seward report.

- **Kenai Peninsula Borough**

Dan Mahalak, Hydrologist for the River Center reported from the borough. He stated that he had two items tonight. Dan reported that since the last meeting he has met with the US Army Corps of Engineers twice, once in the field, once in a meeting atmosphere with the economy team. They asked two important questions that the borough has been unable to answer but the federal government has and those questions are how much money has been spent on emergency flood response since 1986 and how many times and which subdivisions have been evacuated since 1986. That seems to give the federal government one up on the borough. Dan said he was still waiting for some of the study team members from the borough to answer those questions. Dan also reported on a teleconference meeting attended by himself and Christina Stauffer, a Sediment Roundtable conducted at the University of Washington. The seminar included engineers, floodplain management people, planners, and representatives from NORFMA, the regional floodplain management organization. The focus was on Mt. Rainier watersheds. A lot of their highly aggrading, high velocity, high gradient tributaries come off Mt. Rainier into King County, Pierce County, other areas that have substantial levee systems. They are having a lot of the same problems we are with sediment aggradation and how to deal with it. It was an interesting conversation. What Dan state he took away from the

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teleconference is that although it often feels as though we are not making a lot of progress, we are further along than the State of Washington as far as Dan is concerned. They asked for input from the State of Alaska and Taunnie Boothby referred to Dan and Christina so they were able to speak to this group about the similarities in our sediment problems and what we are doing about it.

Sue Wilcox, Special Assistant to the Mayor for the KPB introduced Jessica Bohn, the new secretary in the Mayor's Office. Sue explained that Sue would be answering the phone at the mayor's office but would also be working very closely with her and might be attending some of the SBCFSA board meetings. Sue also stated that she wanted to speak to the follow up on the Seward Summit. She said that he did not yet have the final language on the legislative changes the borough was proposing and that Colette Thompson was working on but that as soon as it was available she would pass it on. Sue said she wanted the board to know that they are in the final stages of that.

Dan Mahalak said he had one additional comment on the teleconference. He said he had taken the opportunity to ask one question that he has been dying to ask. Has anyone in attendance found a source for federal dollars for sediment management and their answer was no. We are on our own for this funding unless we get help from the borough or the state. There is currently no federal funding for sediment projects. Dan said that perhaps discussions like this will open up a dialogue on that subject.

Tena Morgan suggested that this should also encourage the board to look for federal dollars for other types of projects, not just dredging. She mentioned bridge building or tunnel building, whatever.

Dan Mahalak said that the rivers of concern in Washington State are pretty much leveed from top to bottom. The question then is who paid to build them and the answer would be the federal government. Where are the maintenance dollars for that. Sediment is causing substantial aggradation behind these levees.

Christina Stauffer commented that there had been a lot of conversation between those in attendance at this seminar indicating that they felt the FEMA maps are inadequate for the Pacific Northwest in areas where the streams are moving and aggrading the way that they do. Everyone seemed to agree that this was the case and that FEMA needs to recognize that their usual riverine model that works in the east and other places in the country does not work here. From Alaska to northern California we have situations where it does not apply. The people at the seminar talked about getting together and possibly putting together a paper to present to FEMA to gain recognition of this problem.

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F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Randy Stauffer said that he had a question on the teleconference this morning. He asked if FEMA Region X was represented at the meeting. If we are going to get

FEMA to realize that their maps are inadequate this is where we have to start.

Dan Mahalak replied that they were not present.

G. BOARD'S RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bob White said that one thing to realize in this area is that there a lot of small levees around. The railroad and the highway are levees in themselves. The question Bob has is to find out whether the railroad was granted any permits to make them in compliance with the Ports and Harbors Act of 1898. In order to alter a stream they had to apply for permits and it is pretty obvious that the railroad is a levee, pretty much all through the state.

Tena Morgan had no comment at this time.

Terry Federer wanted to thank Duane Levan and Mac Eads for their contribution.

Mac Eads asked if it would be in order for him personally to go to the railroad and talk to some engineers there. He said he knows people there. Perhaps they might get an agenda of some kind. Would this be out of place?

Bill Williamson said it would not be out of place. The location of Eads property is particularly affected by the railroad and they have made many changes that affected this property. It would be very interesting to see what they would say about it.

Mac Eads went on to ask if it would be appropriate for him to speak with people he knows in the state legislature as well as a member of this board?

Bill Williamson said that any dialogue Mac can open would be a positive addition to our efforts. Bill went on to say that he wanted to comment that he was kind of surprised that FEMA did not attend the Sediment Roundtable but that he could kind of understand why they would not. They do not want to address any levee issues whatsoever. The problem is that man built these levees and anything man builds he must maintain or nature takes it back. This is an issue that we will probably have to figure out for ourselves. One of the key issues was the DNR thing. We must make

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the state understand that it is everyone's business. It is not just one subdivision or property owner. It affects everything we have including the only road in and out of town. As Mac said, the more people we talk to, the more information we give out and the more legislators we make aware the better.

Tena Morgan stated that she had a comment after all. She said she would like to address the borough regarding their lobbyist. She asked if the borough has a lobbyist. Would the board be able to use that lobbyist at all for our purposes?

Sue McClure, Member Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly replied and said that the borough has a lobbyist in Washington D.C. Whether or not they might help the SBCFSA would depend on what they wanted done.

Discussion was held regarding the possibility of hiring Ray Gillespie as a lobbyist.

H. CORRESPONDENCE & PAYMENT REQUESTS

There were none at this time.

I. PERMITS FOR REVIEW

- **ADOT/Dredging-Material Removal at Seward Airport/KRC #8537**

Bill Williamson asked for a staff report.

Christina Stauffer explained that this permit was part of the airport flood mitigation project that was funded by the state legislature. She went on to say that she had included the entire 18 page Coastal Management portion of the permit to acquaint new board members with the full scope of the permitting process and the amount of paperwork involved.

Discussion was held regarding the tediousness and length of the permitting process.

Bill Williamson pointed out that out of the entire document there were maybe 10 questions to which the applicant answered yes. He suggested they might consider a short form.

Discussion was held regarding the work that was proposed.

Christina Stauffer explained that the board has the option of approving the permit but including concerns and comments.

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Bill Williamson said that he had a question about the funding. ADOT had received 2 million dollars for this project and this material removal would not cost that much. Where is the rest of that money going to go?

Further discussion was held regarding the scope of the project.

Bob White stated that it seemed pretty inadequate to just put the gravel back in the same location where it will run over again the next time there is a half inch of rain. Without adding more material or putting something there to hold the material there, it

seems like they are just wasting their time. Bob said he did not see anything in the permit for any kind of ground stabilizing material or anything to allow water to run over it without washing out the gravel again. They will end up just doing it again next year.

Bill Williamson noted that ADOT was not planning anything to deter water from covering the runway. They only intend to repair what washed out the last time. They have repaired it 3 times in the last 10 years.

Dan Mahalak stated that ADOT spent \$250,000 on it last year and spent \$500,000 on an airport Masterplan. The airport was closed due to water 5 times this summer.

Bill Williamson said that they really should consider doing something upstream where the water is coming from to keep it away from the airport. It seems they are not looking at anything but fixing the problem that keeps occurring year after year. We should find out what their plans are. If the state cannot figure out any effective maintenance perhaps we should give them a hand. What they have planned will only be a bandaid on the wound.

Bob White commented that if they could come up with \$500,000 per year to do some dredging we could fix that problem. Basically what they are doing is not a long term fix. The real issue of where this water is coming from needs to be addressed in the form of dredging in Resurrection River, preferable not adjacent to the airport. We do not want to encourage the water to keep running there. We want it to run somewhere else. Bob White moved to send a letter approving this permit with board comments.

The motion was seconded and opened for further discussion.

Discussion was held regarding the possible substance of a letter on this issue.

Dan Mahalak added that the Corps had come up with an analogy, we keep putting bandaids on the wound but we should put in stitches first.

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Tena Morgan suggested that in the letter the board ask them if they intend to appropriate the rest of the 2 million dollars to for another project in that area.

Christina Stauffer stated that the letter in the current motion goes to the River Center. If the board wishes to write a letter to ADOT about the other issues that can be done.

Dan Mahalak said that ADOT plans to use the remainder of the 2 million dollars to put 19 culverts under the taxiway.

Discussion was held regarding the efficacy of this plan with regard to reducing damage to airport runways.

Bill Williamson recommended that the board send a letter to approve the permit but also send a letter to ADOT and ask them what else they plan to do besides the bandaid.

Tena Morgan suggested that the board offer their expertise on this question.

Bob White said that the letter to the River Center should consider the recommendation that material should not be merely put back but that it should have some sort of mechanical covering on it to try to hold it in place. In a letter to ADOT itself we should ask what they plan to do with the money and question if the 19 culverts are actually going to keep the runway open which should be their priority. During times of disaster that airport is incredibly valuable. Kodiak, after the earthquake, used their airport to fly in a generator so they could keep their hospital and critical services running. They use the airport here for similar things. If ADOT cannot keep the airport open by doing this we need to ask what they will do with the money to keep it open.

Christina Stauffer was directed to prepare a draft letter to ADOT expressing board concerns regarding the airport.

J. OLD BUSINESS

There was none at this time.

Bob White reported that he had made contact via e-mail with Mr. Stewart regarding the property on Salmon Creek. He said he would follow up on that. He said he forwarded Mr. Stewart the DNR ruling on navigability for Salmon Creek.

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K. NEW BUSINESS

There was none at this time.

L. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND REPORTS (No action required)

- **Seward Summit Follow Up**

Christina Stauffer explained that there were copies of letters in the packet that had been written by Mayor Carey as follow up to the conference. She also pointed out that she had passed out the video recording of the meeting provided by Sue Wilcox.

Bill Williamson thanked Sue Wilcox for bringing the DVD's over.

Sue Wilcox said that if anyone else needed a copy to just let her office know and she would make sure they get one.

- **Empty Board Seat (B)**

Discussion was held as to possibilities for filling this city seat.

M. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sue McClure thanked the board for inviting her father to come and speak at the meeting. If the board has any other issues they would like to consult with him on he would be more than happy to share his knowledge.

Bill Williamson said that in his opinion it was not possible to replace the knowledge of our elders. They have seen this problem going on for many years. They are probably one of the best resources we have.

Dan Mahalak stated that he was in a meeting the other day with the Corps of Engineers discussing dollars and cents and building scenarios for things that may or may not happen. Dan said he was trying to get them to commit to an amount of money that would need to be spent to get the federal government to commit dollars to Seward flood mitigation. They were unwilling to commit to that but it brought up the thought of what will happen when there is another big flood. The bottom line was that the emergency managers for both the city and the borough basically agree that at some point response becomes too cost prohibitive. For instance, if the Seward Airport, railroad and highway are gone and they had to consider flying equipment in

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by helicopter that would be too expensive. At that point response moves on to a recovery effort. This is where flood insurance is vital to protect individual financial security.

Randy Stauffer requested that the board gather more information on exactly how to obtain flood insurance. There is still not an agent in the area that knows about flood insurance and what is involved. For instance, do you need a base flood elevation for your property to get flood insurance. Do you need to go out and spend \$1,000 on an engineer to get a certificate and then who do you need go to in order to obtain the insurance. We do not really have this information and the board office should have this. Someone should be able to call the office find out how to get flood insurance here in this area. The last time this was brought up we were told that the best agent was in Fairbanks.

Bill Williamson suggested that the board should contact Taunnie Boothby to ask this question.

Terry Federer commented that when the new maps were presented at the Rae Building we were told that FEMA was willing to come to Seward and train the insurance agents. Perhaps we could also contact FEMA and make this suggestion. They may not want to learn about it but it should be suggested to them.

Christina Stauffer spoke as a public comment. She said she had noted a piece of property for sale along Nash Road just west of the bridge. There is almost no development on the property. The sign indicates there is 6 ½ acres and the asking price is \$60,000. One of the reasons that the railroad has given for not wanting to put a culvert under Nash Road is that they do not want to dump water on people's property south of Nash Road and get sued. This property is closer to the existing bridge than might be ideal but it could work. If the board or the borough could purchase this property it could serve as wildlife habitat as well as somewhere to put the water. Christina said that she knows that the board resources are stretched too far already but a culvert under Nash Road at that point would allow water to spread out there.

Sue Grundman stated that she had looked online at this property and that it and the property on the other side of Salmon Creek were owned by the same people, D & J Property Investments from the lower 48.

Discussion was held regarding the parcels involved and the need for removal of trash and debris from the property.

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N. BOARD COMMENT

There was none at this time.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Bob White moved to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:10PM.

**NEXT MEETING WILL BE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2010 AT THE
SEAVIEW PLAZA BUILDING, SUITE 122 AT 7:00 PM.**

Christina Stauffer

Secretary

Minutes Approved: 15 November 2010
Date of Approval