

MINUTES
WETLANDS REVIEW BOARD
April 21, 2016, 5:15 p.m. City Hall Room 224

Meeting Summary

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Amy Sumner, Brenda Wright, Lisa Hoferkamp, Irene Gallion, Andrew Campbell, Hal Geiger, Ben Haight

Board Members Absent: Percy Frisby, Nina Horne

A quorum was present.

Staff Members Present: Teri Camery, Senior Planner; Tim Felstead, Planner II

Public Present: Debbie Hart, Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership; Dr. Paul Adamus; Mike Short, SECON; Greg Albrecht, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Meeting called to order at 5:25 p.m.

II. Minutes approved as written for: March 3, 2016 regular meeting; March 12, 2016 special meeting; April 7, 2016 special meeting

III. Agenda approved

IV. Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items.
None

V. Board Comments.
None

VI. Agenda Items

1) USE2016 0004 Hidden Valley (Upper Lemon Creek) Gravel Extraction

Staff presentation

Ms. Camery explained that the Board was reviewing this project in its advisory role. She said that the project was scheduled for the April 26, 2016 Planning Commission meeting, and therefore Board comments and motion on the project would be provided in the Commission's "blue folder" that they receive before the start of the meeting.

Mr. Felstead provided an overview of the project, and the various measures used to minimize habitat impacts. He described the access to the mining site and the ADFG required distances from the streambed. He reviewed the proposed conditions, including a 10 year renewal period for the permit.

Applicant presentation

Mr. Short described the different mining zones, and discussed flooding in the area. Mr. Albrecht described the habitat in the area and said that the stream is catalogued for adult coho.

Dr. Hoferkamp asked about turbidity testing, and what the process is for when turbidity exceeds maximum levels. Mr. Short said that the turbidity results are reported to ADEC, and that gravel operation stops when turbidity readings are high. He said they step back 10 feet and start extraction in a new zone. He noted that there is usually a particular reason for high turbidity, such as pond water escaping. He said this happens rarely.

Mr. Albrecht said that ADFG monitors Lemon Creek gravel extraction regularly. Prior to mining ADFG walks the site to see where spawning is occurring, and this is marked with GPS. He said that with the larger buffer requirement in this upper reach, the mining areas will be dry at all times except for extreme floods, so it does not require as much monitoring as the lower site (which has a separate Conditional Use Permit). He said that ADFG conducts turbidity measurements independent of SECON.

The board had a general discussion of flooding issues in the area.

Mr. Campbell asked why a timing window was not proposed. Mr. Albrecht said this was due to the large 35-foot buffer from the stream.

Mr. Campbell asked if SECON intended to stop gravel extraction in the lower stretch. Mr. Short said that SECON intended to operate in both sites. Mr. Campbell noted that CBJ's hydrological study showed that gravel extraction was beneficial in many ways, including for habitat.

Board/staff discussion

Ms. Gallion proposed the following motion:

- The WRB supports the project as proposed, finds it compliant with 49.70.950c7
- We support extension to year-round mining, as supported by ADF&G.
- We support a mining sequence established by the contractor.
- We support flexible approach to access as proposed, as approved by ADF&G's annual review of the mining plan.
- We support review every 10 years.

- The WRB requests that annual inspection reports be routed through the Board as an informational item.

The motion passed unanimously.

2) Continuation of wetland methodology review on formulas and models

Ms. Hart provided an overview of recent technical review meetings. Ms. Camery explained the Scope of Work of the wetland methodology review, and emphasized that this is the Board's last opportunity to ask Dr. Adamus questions about the methodology.

Dr. Adamus recapped the information that he presented to the Board in previous meetings, including formulas for each of the models, variables and indicators, and how they were combined. He said that he had provided information to the board regarding the level of confidence and certainty, with a memo on the importance of each function. Dr. Adamus said that these are standardized functions, but some are more important for the unique Juneau area. Dr. Adamus went through his chart to review the importance of each function.

Dr. Geiger said that this information needs to be translated into summarization. Dr. Adamus clarified that this was just his opinion, his own personal view. Ms. Hart described the WESPAK technical review team on summarization.

Dr. Hoferkamp asked about communities that have done wetland categorization with WESPAK. Dr. Adamus said that he did not know of a city, but there have been two governments: the state of Washington and the province of Alberta. He referred to two slides on this topic that were provided in his original presentation to the Board.

These minutes also include the following facilitation notes from Ms. Hart:

- Introductions/background
 - Briefly highlighted past WESPAK-SE methodology review meetings: March 12 and April 7; notes are available from each and may help track future work for the WRB
 - Teri noted contract language and reviewed the scope of work for the educational meetings with Dr. Adamus and intent of the evening meeting with Dr. Adamus
 - Teri spoke to the role of the board in recommending any revisions to the methodology and wetland categorization

- Debbie provided an update on SEAKFHP technical review; noted one-day review to be scheduled in early June, associated reports will be made available to the WRB
- Review of WESPAK-SE Methodology
 - Dr. Adamus provided a spreadsheet noting a selection of the high and low functioning CBJ wetland assessment areas, this spreadsheet can be used in combination with the draft Juneau Area Wetland Management Plan that includes the CBJ assessment area information
 - He provided an overview of the various functions and noted the ones that were of greater relevance for the Juneau area (song bird habitat, plant habitat and anadromous fish); he reminded the group of the memo he provided previously that provided his input on the relative importance and confidence for each variable
 - Paul responded to last remaining questions from the CBJ WRB members
- Group Input
 - Group briefly discussed the role the value may play in a categorization process
 - Group discussed future plans to take up the categorization process
 - Group discussed timing of finalizing the Juneau Wetland Management Plan, upcoming May Planning Commission meeting; Teri noted she will be providing the updated draft to the WRB soon and will include a memo to describe the changes included in the new draft

VII. Pending Permits and Updates

Ms. Camery said that the board, Planning Commission, Habitat Mapping Working Group, and Assembly Lands Committee will all hear presentations from Bosworth Botanical Consulting on the final contract draft of the Juneau Wetlands Management Plan. She emphasized that this is the final draft only under the contract and the grant, and that CBJ/CDD is not seeking final approval of the document at this time. She said that CDD would continue to revise the document after the grant and contract expire and bring it back for formal approval in probably two-three months.

Mr. Campbell asked for a summary of the changes made since the Board's review in November. Ms. Camery said she would provide that.

VIII. Planning Commission Liaison Update.

Mr. Haight explained the Commission's marijuana reviews, and the West Douglas road review.

IX. Next meeting:

Regular Meeting. Thursday May 19, 5:15 pm, City Hall room 224.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.