

MINUTES  
WETLANDS REVIEW BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING

May 21, 2015, 5:15 p.m. Marine View 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room

**Meeting Summary**

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Amy Sumner, Brenda Wright, Nina Horne, Jerry Medina, Andrew Campbell, Ben Haight, Hal Geiger, Dan Miller

Board Members Absent: Lisa Hoferkamp

A quorum was present.

Staff Members Present: Teri Camery, Jonathan Lange CBJ Planners

Public Present: Gretchen Pikul, DEC; Christopher Goins and Keith Karpstein, ADOT

Meeting called to order at 5:18 p.m.

**II.** March 19, 2015 Regular Meeting minutes approved with one correction.

**III.** Agenda approved.

**IV.** Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items

None

**V.** Board Comments.

None

**VI.** **Agenda Items**

**1) CSP 2015 0007 DOT Improvements Near Salmon Creek**

Ms. Camery explained that the WRB is reviewing this project in its advisory role. Board comments and final board motion will be included in Mr. Lange's staff report to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Lange provided an overview of the project and referred to the code policies under review as listed in his memo. He noted that the project does not require a streamside setback variance

because CBJ code has an exception for bridges. The project would construct a new acceleration lane on Egan Drive, outbound from Glacier Highway, and extend the inbound deceleration lane, on Egan Drive, for vehicles exiting to Channel Drive. The Salmon Creek Bridge would also be widened. The Mendenhall State Game Refuge and Salmon Creek are the two affected habitat areas. The board packet includes the Fish Habitat Permit from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Ms. Wright asked about accident rates at the intersection. Mr. Goins explained that the accident history is the major reason for the project, however he stated that he did not bring these rates to today's meeting.

Ms. Camery requested an explanation of how project impacts have been minimized, particularly the amount of wetland fill. Mr. Goins stated that the slope needs to be wider in this area so the earthen dam won't fail due to tidal influence in the area. He said that a steeper slope isn't possible in this area from an engineering standpoint, because the fluctuating water level on the tidal side of the road has the potential to destabilize the road. Mr. Geiger asked why this issue was important. Ms. Camery explained that a typical way of reducing the amount of wetland fill is to steepen the slope, however she understood that this couldn't happen in this area.

Mr. Goins said that the plan includes vegetation and stabilization of the stream under the bridge. He referred to the drawings, and explained that the project has been designed to avoid scouring at the bridge. He said it is similar to what it is there now.

Ms. Wright and Mr. Geiger asked about spawning habitat in the area under the bridge, and asked if there would be a loss of habitat. Mr. Goins stated that the ADFG Fish Habitat permit limits construction to a specific timing window to protect fish. He did not have information with him but he understood that spawning occurs higher up in the stream.

Ms. Wright and other board members discussed the total area of wetlands filled. Mr. Goins and Mr. Karpstein handed out a chart at the meeting which listed fill amounts in Salmon Creek, Twin Lakes, and Gastineau Channel Wetlands. Ms. Camery calculated the total amount of fill at .46 acres.

### **Board Motion**

Ms. Sumner stated that she is abstaining from the vote because she works for DOT.

Mr. Campbell stated that he is glad to see the improvements and believes that impacts have been minimized. He proposed the following motion:

*The Wetlands Review Board supports the project as presented. DOT has made an adequate effort to address environmental concerns, and the Board appreciates the safety improvements.*

Ms. Wright requested a friendly amendment as follows:

*The Board requests use of native plants in the development.*

The motion passed unanimously.

## **2) Juneau Watershed Partnership Jordan Creek Project Discussion**

Ms. Camery stated that she is on the board of the Juneau Watershed Partnership, therefore Mr. Lange will introduce the project. She noted that the project is for board discussion only; no permit applications have been received, and CDD has not yet determined if any are needed.

Mr. Lange said that a streamside setback variance may be required if the project requires grading, because grading is within the code definition of development. The project is out of the 0-25 foot no-disturbance zone, however grading within 25-50 feet of the stream would still require a variance.

Ms. Sumner stated that she representing the Juneau Watershed Partnership for this discussion. She referred to three projects included in the board packet, all of which address stormwater management to improvement fish habitat and water quality in Jordan Creek. These projects include: 1) Edward K. Thomas Stormwater Treatment; 2) South Jordan Avenue stormwater treatment; and 3) Jordan Creek Greenbelt Enhancement.

Ms. Sumner explained that Jordan Creek has been identified as a high-priority area for improvements because stormwater runoff from a large area currently goes into the creek untreated. She referred to maps in the packet and photos in the packet that show the contributing area. She said that a grading permit will be needed to construct the bioswale for the Edward K. Thomas stormwater project, and she is looking for early comments from the Board before she turns in a variance application. She noted that the project must be constructed within a year due to the grant. Ms. Pikul noted that the work plan states that the work will begin in July. She said that Jordan Creek is DEC-classified impaired water body due to turbidity.

Ms. Sumner noted that the project includes a significant revegetation effort and removal of reed canary grass. Mr. Campbell asked what will be in the bioswale. Ms. Sumner stated that the final design is still in process. Mr. Campbell said it is important to plant grass early to establish the vegetation early; he said that July seems like a late start. He suggested laying down sod in the bottom area of the creek to kick-start the effort. He said this could be shipped up from Seattle at fairly low cost.

Ms. Sumner described the second and third projects, which would create two retention ponds to treat stormwater and enhance the greenbelt in Lower Jordan Creek. She said that this area is a CBJ Natural Area Park near the airport, and noted that the airport has concerns that the project may create bird habitat. She said that St. Vincent de Paul, also located nearby, supports the project as a benefit to their residents.

Ms. Wright asked how large the retaining ponds would need to be. Ms. Sumner stated 13,000 square feet. Ms. Wright said this would attract ducks. Ms. Sumner said the ponds would be shallow, and the final design is not in place. She said she is not sure how large the ponds need to

be to treat the runoff. Mr. Campbell offered that if the ponds cannot be constructed, JWP could construct something to catch debris at the outfall points.

### **3) Juneau Wetlands Management Plan Update**

Ms. Camery stated that Bosworth Botanical Consulting is now in their second field season and expects to complete the remaining parcels in as little as a week or two, since 95 percent of the work was completed in one field season. She said that the next phase is to conduct off-site assessments using LiDAR and imagery for those parcels where CBJ was unable to obtain private property permission. Off-site assessments will have a separate enumeration system in the plan, so scores will not be ranked equally with the on-site work. She said that the project remains well under budget, and noted that a preliminary draft Juneau Wetlands Management Plan, which will be reviewed by the Board, is due in September. She said that the stream maps are currently under review by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. She explained that ADFG sets the mark of where a stream is anadromous, and that line determines where the CBJ 50-foot setback applies.

## **VII. Pending Permits and Updates**

none

## **VIII. Planning Commission Liaison Update.**

Mr. Miller stated that an overhaul of the subdivision ordinance is underway. Ms. Camery explained that the ordinance includes an expansion of CBJ Conservation Lot option, which provides more opportunities for owners and developers to set aside properties for wetland mitigation purposes.

**IX. Next meeting:** Thursday June 18, 5:15 p.m., City Hall room 224.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:25 p.m.