

MINUTES
WETLANDS REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
March 15, 2012, 5:15 p.m. City Hall Room 224

Meeting Summary

Board Members Present: K Koski, Hal Geiger, Lisa Hoferkamp, Ron Berg, Dan Miller, Andrew Campbell, Brenda Wright, Jerry Medina

Board Members Absent: Mike Mauseth

A quorum was present.

Staff Members Present: Nicole Jones, Teri Camery, Eric Feldt CBJ Planners

Public Present: Catherine Wilkins, CBJ Engineering; Joann Lott and Aaron McDonald, Jensen Yorba Lott

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

II. December 8, 2011 Regular Meeting minutes were approved.

III. Agenda was approved.

IV. No public participation on non-agenda items.

V. Board Comments

Dr. Koski passed out information regarding the successful restoration of a floodplain along Johnson Creek, a tributary of the Willamette River in Portland, Oregon.

VI. **Agenda Items**

VAR2012 0004. The Board reviewed VAR2012 0004, a Variance review to encroach into the 50' setback of Bay Creek for parking and circulation improvements at Auke Bay Elementary School. Applicant, CBJ.

Ms. Camery explained the Board's scientific advisory role and the review process.

Staff Presentation

Mr. Feldt provided an overview of the proposal, the two areas of encroachment into the Bay Creek setback, and described the applicant's reasons for developing within the setback: 1) to allow separation of parking areas; and 2) for improved safety and vehicular circulation. Mr. Feldt stated that 34 parking spaces are required by CBJ Code, while 55 spaces are proposed. Mr. Feldt explained that there are no trees within the impacted area of the setback, only grasses and weeds. A Variance is required because grading is not allowed within the setback according to the Code

definition of development. Mr. Feldt stated that pollutants currently run directly into the creek. The applicant has designed a curb to prevent water runoff from the parking lot from entering the creek, and the setback area will no longer be used as snow storage.

Applicant presentation

Ms. Wilkins stated that the purpose of the project is to separate the buses and parent drop-off areas. She said that the new drainage system will have “storm ceptors” which will remove contaminants to a much smaller level than a traditional oil-water separator. The west staff parking lot covers and protects the ground-source heat pump/geothermal loop. Mr. McDonald reviewed the alternatives that project managers looked at, and the problems with each design. He said that the final design provides the most efficient traffic and the most safety. He said that they explored options early in the process but that it was not possible to reduce the impact to Bay Creek without cutting parking spaces. Ms. Lott noted that the project stays within the boundaries of what has already been impacted.

No Public Testimony

Board/Staff Discussion

Board members stated that the Board’s role is to protect the stream. Members expressed anger over the statement that the applicant does not wish to redesign the project due to time and financial constraints. Members noted that the stream is a valuable asset to the school and an excellent educational opportunity. Members stated the importance of regular maintenance of the storm ceptors, and the need for a schedule. Members questioned the need and the safety benefit of having 20 parking spaces beyond the code requirement. Ms. Lott explained that the parking requirement is not adequate according to the school district. Mr. McDonald explained that less parking leads to more congestion which leads to more hazards such as double parking and visual blocks, and providing more parking capacity improves safety.

The Board discussed the use of the parking lot by boaters as overflow parking from the Statter Harbor boat launch. Members were concerned that the tight turns of the parking lot would not allow for a truck and trailer to turn and stay within the driving aisle. The proposed parking lot may result in trucks and trailers driving over the curb and into the 50-foot setback from Bay Creek.

The Board suggested several different approaches for minimizing the impact, such as reducing the two-way traffic to one-way. The applicant indicated that this would not be possible because the traffic needs to be separated. One board member was skeptical that adding more parking would change behavior, and said that the application needs an analysis of the pros and cons of each alternative, and alternatives must be exhausted before applying for a variance. Another board member had sympathy with project budgets and a tight schedule, appreciated the project design and safety concerns, but felt that more effort was needed to reduce impacts within the setback. Another board member expressed frustration with city projects and the expectation that city projects will be granted variances while tighter standards are expected of private citizens. The member stated that as the largest landholder, the city should be able to stay out of the streamside setbacks. The member agreed with the safety concern, but said that the project needs

mitigation for the remaining setback area. Members noted that removing the fence would be an improvement for setback functions.

The Board concluded that the applicant did not utilize available options to reduce the impact to the stream, and that additional protective measures are needed to address construction impacts, reduce contaminants, and restore the remaining setback area.

The Board unanimously passed the following motion:

The Board strongly opposes development in the 50' setback of Bay Creek and the Board believes that the applicant needs to make a greater effort to avoid impacting this area. Impacts may be reduced by:

- 1) *eliminating the infringement in the southwest corner of the staff parking lot;*
- 2) *relocating the fire hydrant and the access pad outside of the 50' setback;*
- 3) *shifting the two-way access driveway to the staff parking to the east by reducing the landscaped areas to the west;*
- 4) *using a retainage system to maximize the fill slope (i.e. make it steeper) and minimize the encroachment to the west of the driveway.*

In the previously disturbed area, to the west of the driveway leading to the staff parking lot within the 50' setback, the applicant should plant alders with 75% coverage with a 50% survival rate over two years. The applicant should submit an approved maintenance plan addressing the storm cepter system. The Board is also concerned about the impact of the geothermal drilling on the Bay Creek habitat and request special attention to this operation to ensure that no contamination occurs. Lastly, the Board encourages uses of pervious pavement if possible.

Pending Permits and Updates

1. **CIAP Habitat Mapping Project/Juneau Wetlands Management Plan Update.** Ms. Camery announced that though CBJ has the final award from the federal agency, the project is now stalled at the state level because the state must develop the grant agreement before CBJ can appropriate the funds and proceed with the project. LiDAR and imagery are delayed until 2013, however staff hopes to begin the wetland methodology phase of the project this summer if a grant agreement is received by May.
2. **CBJ/DOT Ditch Maintenance.** Board members suggested that staff re-send the letter to DOT and CBJ staff again to encourage a continuing dialogue on this issue. The Board needs to see DOT and CBJ's maintenance schedule to see where they'll be working, and also invite CBJ and DOT maintenance staff to a future WRB meeting.
3. **Spring/summer airport site visit.** The Board will schedule an airport site visit after the Jordan Creek area is complete and re-vegetated.
4. **Southeast Alaska Watershed Council conference update.** Staff and the two board members who attended this conference described the theme of cooperation and collaboration in watershed management, and noted that it's difficult to replace the function in functioning wetlands.

Next meeting: April 26, 2012, 5:15 p.m. City Hall Conference room #224

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.