

Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary

Meeting date: March 5, 2008, 3:30 pm

Steering Group Members Present:

Patty Boyden Port of Vancouver
Pete Capell Clark County Dept. of Public Works
Loretta Callahan City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works (alternate for Brian Carlson)

Partnership Members Present:

George Medina U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Vern Veysey Citizen

Other Agency Members Present:

Katy Brooks Port of Vancouver
Jessi Belston Port of Vancouver
Ron Wierenga Clark County Dept. of Public Works

Public in attendance:

Jacquelin Edwards Citizen
Vinton Erickson Citizen

Project Management Team:

Phil Trask PC Trask & Associates, Inc.
Sabrina Litton PC Trask & Associates, Inc.

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any additions. There were none.

Partnership Business

Project Manager Update

Funding Strategy

The project manager provided an overview to the Steering Group on recent legislative fundraising efforts. Since completing and distributing the one-pager in conjunction with the Steering Group, Phil scheduled time in February to spend time in Olympia meeting with Senator Pridemore, and Representatives Fromhold and Moeller to discuss Vancouver Lake. Overall, he felt like the project was well received and some legislators were already familiar with the project. Since then he has followed up with emails to the legislators and City, County, and Port lobbyists. The group should stay tuned as the state budget is finalized in upcoming weeks. Phil discussed that despite the outcome, this supplemental budget year lobbying effort was a good beginning to a larger effort. The project management team is currently developing a comprehensive funding strategy for the Partnership to become organized and successful during the 2009-2011 biennium.

Phil passed out a draft Funding Strategy and asked for initial comments or reactions. The strategy outlined local, state and federal agency and legislative representatives to be in touch with over the next year to ensure that the Partnership can make a successful funding request. He would like to coordinate meetings with Steering Group members and some of the individuals identified in the strategy to show regional support for the effort. Currently there is no time line associated with this strategy, but it will be developed shortly. This funding strategy is intended to coincide with the technical strategy currently being developed with the Technical Group.

Patty mentioned that it would be important to get into the Governor's budget, not just the House and Senate's. Jim Jacks is the Southwest Washington representative for the Governors office and would be a good person to contact. She also mentioned that it would be a good idea to meet again with the Steering

Group lobbyists to map out a legislative strategy for 2009. Pete agreed with both of those points and also mentioned that it might be worth seeing if it's possible to piggy back on any of the Puget Sound clean water initiatives that are getting funded this year.

Vern added that the Partnership needs a clear statement of the purpose for funding. A politician will be less likely to spend money on a project without knowing what that money will buy. He also added that it will be extremely important to have the public involved to gain legislative interest.

On the topic of public involvement, Katy added that it is difficult to keep the public engaged for a long period of time. With Vancouver Lake restoration being a long process, it's important to keep their efforts focused.

Phil brought the funding strategy discussion to a close by reiterating that the product just handed out was a draft and to please comment on it as you review it. A new draft will be available in April.

Planning Objectives

Phil described to the group that currently the Partnership has a very broad vision. As the Partnership moves forward in the planning process it will be important to tighten this vision by developing solid objectives and indicators of success. For example, the Partnership currently describes that they want the lake to be "fishable", but the definition of fishable is not clear.

A draft graphic was handed out to the group illustrating a concept of various objectives being points on a continuum. The graphic breaks down the existing Partnership vision into distinct objectives including: fishable, swimmable, boatable, plant and animal communities, aesthetics and ecosystem. These objectives are further broken down into a coarse range of potential outcomes. The project manager said that he would like to assemble an ad-hoc group at the next Partnership meeting to build upon this continuum and make sure that it encompasses a full range of outcomes.

Using this continuum the Partnership can begin to answer the question: where are we? and think about where do we want to be in the future. By identifying management alternatives for achieving the different outcomes listed in the continuum, including potential costs, it could help refine our vision for the future. Katy mentioned that this would be a good tool to get a discussion going about Vancouver Lake and what a realistic outcome might be. Vern agreed that he thought this was a good tool and to remember that this is a long process. The group will need to think about the Lake and how they envision it for the next 50-100 years. Phil asked the Steering Group for permission to form an ad-hoc group at the next Partnership meeting to improve the graphic and was granted that permission.

Tech Group Update Questions Matrix

Phil provided background information to the group on the Vancouver Lake question list. He described the process it had been through to reach its current state and said that the question matrix had been sent out to the Technical Group with the assignment of scoring questions to the best of their abilities. Their initial responses had been compiled into a document that was passed out to the Steering Group. The Technical Group met on Feb 28 to discuss the matrix. In addition to compiling survey responses, Technical Group member scores were averaged across each question and then sorted according to the "significance to scientific basis" column. Discussion focused on the questions and next steps. This document is not a final product but more the beginning of a step-wise approach to organizing the technical questions. In this way the questions will go through a clear and transparent process so that the Partnership can see why some questions would be considered more urgent than others. The Technical Group will revisit their matrix responses before they meet again at the end of March. The project management team plans to contact members who did not yet respond to the matrix survey to gain wider input.

Vern pointed out that there seemed to be a missing link between the objectives and the questions matrix. Phil agreed and stated we are looking at technical questions at the same time we are refining our vision for the future. These two exercises are related and premised upon one another – hence, it will be an iterative process rather than a linear one. Also, there is a need to be careful of simplifying things too much because everything is important at this stage.

Phil reiterated that the questions, the technical strategy, vision, the objectives, and funding strategy will eventually be tied together. The planning process is going to evolve and the Partnership needs to figure out where they want to go in order to know what questions to ask and what strategy to employ about how to get there.

Corps Update

George spoke on behalf of the Corps and announced that they completed the bathymetry survey of the Lake. This information is being fed into a 2D model of the Lake, The model will be queried for several hypothetical management scenarios such as dredging in certain areas or increasing the flushing channel culvert size. He plans to present these results at the next Steering Group meeting in April and bring the Section 536 program manager to meet the group and discuss the project.

Pete asked if the clean water generated by the Port groundwater cleanup is being incorporated into the model. George said that he thinks it will be as that data has been made available to them. George also stated that after the 2D model work, the Corps involvement will be finished for their current fiscal year. Budget constraints have prevented them from pursuing additional technical work but it's possible they could revisit the project at the beginning of the next fiscal year. There is potential that the Corps will assist with fish studies in the future. George stated that once the model is set-up and running, they hope to turn it over to the Partnership for broader analysis. Attendees agreed that this was generous of the Corps and thanked them for the work they had done to-date.

Public Information Update

Loretta and Katy reported that they intend to work with SOLV for a clean-up this spring. Brian Potter from the Vancouver-Clark Parks Department will be coordinating the effort and they will keep the group posted on progress. Loretta said that they are very fortunate to have Brian coordinating the project because he has a great deal of knowledge about the Lake and surrounding area.

Partnership Member Nomination and Selection

Phil and Loretta told the group that the solicitation phase for the vacant partnership seat had closed several weeks ago. They received three qualified applications and today Steering Group members would be deciding on the vacant Partnership seat. Phil said that there would be brief discussion about the candidates, followed by nominations and a Steering Group vote.

Patty began by stating that all the applicants were excellent. In making her decision she looked at the applicants' technical knowledge, longevity, dedication, and familiarity with the Partnership. She nominated David Paige.

Pete agreed that the applicants were excellent and nominated Jacquelin Edwards.

Pete continued the discussion describing how both Jacquelin and David were valuable to the Partnership. He asked Phil if the Steering Group was able to add additional seats to the Partnership. Katy wondered if an even numbered Partnership might be a problem for votes and Pete said it shouldn't matter for such a large group because not everyone attends each meeting. Loretta asked if this was something Port commissioners needed to be included in, and Patty said that while they were involved in the original solicitation, this decision was under the purview of the Steering Group, not the Port Commission.

Phil asked the Steering Group members if someone wished to make a motion to expand the Partnership from 21 to 22 members. Pete made the motion. Phil asked if there was any further discussion. Following none, he put the issue to vote and the three Steering Group members approved by consensus to expand the Partnership from 21 to 22 members.

Building upon the earlier nominations of David Paige and Jacquelin Edwards as new Partnership members, Phil asked the Steering Group to vote on their nomination as new Partnership members. The Steering Group achieved consensus on the decision and approved Jacquelin and David.

Next Steps/Close

The project manager reviewed agenda items for the March 19th Partnership meeting stating that it would likely be an expansion of what was discussed at today's Steering Group meeting. Katy wished to add the SOLV clean-up mentioning that it would be an excellent time to recruit volunteers. George mentioned that he would not be attending the meeting and that he thought those present at the meeting today were sufficiently briefed to fill in on the Corps' behalf.

Phil thanked the group for attending and closed the meeting.

Agenda for March Partnership Meeting

March 19, 2008 Full Partnership Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome/Agenda Review
2. Partnership Business
 - General Partnership Announcements
 - Project Manager Update
 - Funding Strategy
 - Planning Objectives
 - Tech Group Update
 - Questions Matrix
 - Groundwater Modeling
 - Corps Update
 - Bathymetry Survey & 2D Modeling
 - PIO Group Update
 - SOLV Clean-up Volunteer Recruitment
3. Public Comment
4. Next Steps/Meetings

Next Meetings:

Full Partnership Meeting – March 19, 2008, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Steering Group Meeting – April 16, 2008, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

All meetings will be held at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.