

Special City Council Meeting  
City Council Chambers

August 10, 2011  
11:00 a.m.

Present: Mayor –	Joyce Hudson	Absent: Council member Tim Strauser
Council members	Jeff Kennedy	
	Gary Fritch	
	Jeff Whiting	
City Administrator	Bruce Clymer	
City Clerk / Treasurer	Connie L. Dalrymple	

Press: *Gothenburg Times* - Beth Barrett

Also present: Shane Gruber, Anne Anderson, Rob Ostergard of NPPD, Travis Mason of Miller & Assoc, Mark Porath, Brad Newcomb and Jared Lorensen of the NE Game & Parks Commission, Ron Bishop of the Central Platte Natural Resources District, Paul Brakhage and Jennifer Swanson of the Department of Environmental Quality

Mayor Hudson opened the meeting at 11:07 a.m. upon arrival of a quorum of Council members. Advance notice and a copy of the agenda were given to the Council and members of the press. City Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a copy of which is available for public inspection on the north wall of the Council Chambers.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the algae issues at Lake Helen and options to reclaim the lake. If left unchecked, the oxygen levels will continue to drop, resulting in fish kill, and the lake will decrease.

In 2005 the City applied for funding through a clear water program to rehabilitate the lake. The project did not qualify because the anticipated cost of \$1.7 million was too high for the size of the lake.

Various agencies and programs were discussed as possible areas of assistance with the work and finances.

**Aquatic Habitat Program:**

Not all programs are successful.

Primary goal is fishing activities.

Lake Helen is an approved project by the legislature but feasibility needs to be determined.

There is no pre-set cap on funding but projects are prioritized on a cost vs. benefit basis. For example Lake Helen at 30 acres is small for an estimated cost of \$1.5 million.

Since the lake is on the impaired list, we may qualify for EPA 319 Water Shed Funding but DEQ will have to determine nutrients etc in the lake and that involves at least one year of intensive monitoring of all water sources into the lake. Testing can be part of the City's cost share and done in-house or with a consultant.

A water quality management program will determine how the City will manage the lake 10 - 15 years after the project.

The very earliest paperwork can be in place is September 2012. It would be spring 2013 before any work is done at the lake.

**Department of Environmental Quality:**

Determine the depth of the lake and the nutrients therein. Depth may be an issue and we may have to make the lake smaller but deeper.

The lake should be drained and excavated. It will be cheaper and better to get the lake area dry and know what is there. It will be important to close the canal off from the lake to keep undesirable fish and water out of the lake.

25% of the lake needs to be ten feet deep for fishing. An option may be to sacrifice some of the surface area of the lake to attain the depth and use the dredged material to build, shape, and stabilize the shoreline. It will be important the lake is dry to support heavy equipment because it is critical to remove all sediment or we'll be wasting our time and money.

Lake Helen is small, approximately 30 acres, but is large for an urban lake. It could work well at 10 acres.

**Game & Parks Commission:**

Will require control of the water fowl. This can be accomplished in various ways including the shape of the water area. The current shape and roadway pattern attracts water fowl and the fact it does not completely freeze over brings the geese. It's good to see the beginning of social re-training with the signs at the lake not to feed the geese.

Another option could be to make the storm drains on Lake Avenue drain into the small lake on the north side and use it as a wetland area.

**CPNRD:**

Can provide assistance with cost share requirements but needs to know if the lake is water right or storage water only. If it is water right, funding will be greater.

**Funding possibilities on \$1.7 million project;**

\$200,000 - \$300,000 Game & Parks Commission for water quality but it's important to understand that some water quality projects add costs to a project.

\$400,000 - \$500,000 Aquatic Habitat

\$250,000 Environmental Trust Funds

CPNRD assistance with match requirements

10% - 20% City match on the project, which would be \$150,000 to \$300,000 and can be in-kind. For example if a bid is given for the cost of seeding and the City does the work, the bid amount can be used as City match.

**How to proceed:**

NRD: Will check on the water right vs. storage issue

DEQ: Start collecting samples in mid-April 2012 and continue for a year to determine nutrients, suspended solids, phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment. The City can determine if this is something we can do ourselves or if we want to contract it. If we do it, it should be documented and used for cost share.

Will do applications with all funding sources. Any one source could deny the project based on their own priorities.

Prefers 10' to 12' depth with adequate sloping. The amount of dirt to move is a big driver for them. They will work with whatever consultant the City chooses to verify the compaction and seal of the lake.

Consultant: If Miller & Assoc is the City's consultant, they can work up ideas for how the lake should look and Game & Parks will work with them.

Whiting moved, Kennedy seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 12:15 p.m. Roll call vote: Yea - Fritch, Kennedy, Whiting. Nay - none. Absent and not voting - Strauser.

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Joyce Hudson, Mayor

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Connie L. Dalrymple, City Clerk