Approved Minutes

The Board convened workshop at 9:43 a.m.

Attendance: –Board members, Patricia Preiner, John Waller, Steve Wagamon, Mike Bradley, and Barbara Haake.

Absent: none.

Others: Administrator Phil Belfiori; Permit Coordinator/Wetland Specialist Nick Tomczik; Technician Samantha Berger; Office Manager Theresa Stasica; District Engineers Mark Deutschman and Chris Otterness-Houston Engineering; District Attorney Chuck Holtman-Smith Partners; representing the City of Circle Pines, Pete Willenbring and another representative from WSB & Associates.

Items for Discussion

Update on City of Circle Pines variance application.

Permit Coordinator & Wetland Specialist Tomczik and Technician Berger wanted the Board to be aware of two separate items regarding the City of Circle Pines, a variance request and an erosion control issue. A Circle Pines resident contacted the District regarding an erosion control issue. This resident has filed 5 complaints with the District regarding a sediment delta deposited in the channel by his property. After the initial call, the District called the City and provided assistance to them on how the District would handle this kind of complaint. Staff wanted the Board to be aware of the situation given that this issue may be brought forward to the Board as part of the upcoming consideration of the City of Circle Pines variance application. Staff noted that one of the reasons that this item was brought forward was to note that his erosion issue is separate from the City’s variance application.

Manager Waller requested Pete Willenbring representing the City of Circle Pines to speak to the situation.

Mr. Willenbring informed the Board, that the city is aware of the situation. The City has been doing weekly inspections, working with the contractor, and has been working with the landowner to resolve the matter. They have also contacted the MPCA about the matter as part of the City’s SWPPP. There may be a fine brought upon the contractor or city regarding the
sediment discharge. The City believes the sediment has occurred partially because of the open channel that is not stabilized and with the recent large rainfalls and the high water in the open channel it is causing the sediment delta.

Manager Waller replied it seems the city is following protocol on the situation and this is a learning curve for the City.

Administrator Belfiori informed the Board the channel is not a part of the public drainage system. The City could pursue grant funding under the District’s USWR program if the City were restoring the channel. Staff reiterated that although this issue is not a part of variance, staff wanted the Board to be aware of the situation.

Manager Preiner would like the Board to take a closer look at the permitting audit process the District uses when permitting authority has been given to the municipality.

Permit Coordinator & Wetland Specialist Tomczik informed the Board that the District is still awaiting clarification on the City’s variance application before it can be brought to the Board for consideration.

Manager Preiner questioned if this is an after-the-fact variance.

Permit Coordinator & Wetland Specialist Tomczik replied that it was.

**Initial discussion on review of District Water Quality Grant Program.**

Technician Samantha Berger review the initial proposed changes that were presented to the CAC at their October meeting. The proposed changes included: simplify the screening form; add an additional funding level at 25% for projects with less benefit; and add a method for determining the grant award by using pollutant reduction numbers to assign a project score which would relate to the different funding percentages. Staff also discussed the idea of taking remaining budgeted grant funds a rolling them over to the USWR program. The District would have an RFP to the cities and counties for that area for flood control or water quality projects. Another idea is to use the District existing sub-watershed assessments to target project locations. The Board discussed the initial proposed changes.

Technician Berger also mentioned to the Board that staff is working on an exemplary grant recipient award recognition, much like the permittee award the District has given in the past.

The workshop was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.