

**CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
UTILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 13, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Andy Maron called the Zoom meeting to order at 5:30 pm

Members present: Andy Maron (committee co-chair), Ted Jones (committee co-chair), Charlie Averill, Svend Brandt-Erichsen, Sheina Hughes, Susan Hume, Martin Pastucha

Also present: Chris Wierzbicki (COBI, Public Works Director), Christian Berg (COBI, Water Resource Technician), Jon Quitslund (Council member liaison),

Minutes Approved

Minutes from the February 9, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.

Update on Little Manzanita Watershed Assessment

Christian Berg gave the UAC an overview of the stormwater action plan (financed by a grant from the Department of Ecology) that is being prepared for the “Little Manzanita” watershed, which is one of the larger watersheds on the island and one that hosts salmon. The assessment analyzes stream flow restoration and seeks to identify cost effective ways to ensure stream flow viability in the future.

In response to the question of why this particular watershed was selected as the focus of restoration (versus “Big Manzanita”, for example), Christian said that King County had conducted an extensive project to identify streams in all of Puget Sound for “ecological lift” and that Little Manzanita came out very high in terms of restoration potential. Another reason for this significant potential impact is that that the subject area is ranked high in terms of the possibility of new wells going in.

The assessment is about half completed, with a lot of soil and geology data already collected. The state is providing guidance on how to carry out the assessment. The approach includes a scoring matrix of the projects’ mitigation potential. It is expected that the assessment will be completed in about 18 months, resulting in a plan for a storm water design/retrofit. As part of a larger effort, landowners in the study area were asked if they would be interested in some design work to redo their drainage to improve drain flow; two property owners agreed to do this.

South Island Sewer Capacity

Chris Wierzbicki briefed the UAC on the City’s South Island Sewer Service area, which relies on an interlocal agreement with Kitsap County Sewer District 7 (SD7) for wastewater treatment. As outlined in a memo to the UAC from Chris, the City has allocated all of the allotted equivalent residential units (ERUs) identified in the agreement. Until an agreement regarding the City’s ability to reserve and purchase additional ERUs is reached, the City is unable to offer new sewer connections in the South Island Sewer service area. This means that at this time, the City cannot approve most kinds of new commercial development or new residential development in the

South Island Sewer Service area - which includes the Lynwood Center Neighborhood Service Center as well as other areas – unless those developments can be approved with a septic system design.

The decision to continue sewer service in the South Island Sewer Service area is consistent with decisions made in the past. In the near term, the City Council has directed the City Manager to formally request 100 additional ERUs from SD7. It also requested that criteria be developed to allocate these ERUs.

The bigger picture remains, however. In particular, what should the City do to protect, and perhaps improve, the overall quality along the shoreline in the southend? This should be considered as part of a longer-term approach to sewer service in the South Island Sewer Service area that will likely involve complex community and environmental considerations and take several months of informed research and discussion.

In response to the question of whether there were parallels to expanding sewer connections to connecting small water systems, Chris responded that there is not a similar incentive to connect since the economics aren't the same. He emphasized, however, that there needs to be better planning in terms of addressing potential failing septic systems. A key challenge is the lack of knowledge of the condition of the older septic systems. Jon Quitslund opined that we should avoid making policy without adequate information. Moreover, he said that there was a strong view that development first needs to be agreed upon before committing to new sewer hookups.

The UAC agreed that it would be important to outline the current policies to get a bigger picture. Chris said that proposed criteria will be developed for connections, including consideration of other areas where there could be meaningful impacts from connection. This will be brought back to the UAC for discussion.

Waste Management Study, Request for Proposal

Chris said that he and the City Manager have been discussing the capabilities of Bainbridge Island Waste Management, a private company. He noted that there is no franchise agreement with the company. Chris said a request for proposal (RFP) to analyze the situation will be issued, with the following issues to be addressed:

- What are the City's options for the most efficient and effective method of contracting and providing waste management services?
- How does the City's current waste management model compare to other municipalities in terms of service options, rates, sustainability, etc.?
- How could the City's reduction of solid waste be improved via recycling or other methods?
- Given current data availability about solid waste disposal, recycling and composting on the Island, how could the City test or prepare an estimate of the change in recycling and composting that would occur with mandatory recycling, composting and solid waste service?

It was recalled that if there's no contract with a municipality, the state WUTC has some oversight. It was also noted that about five years ago the UAC had discussed the provision of non-city services like waste collection, setting forth questions to be addressed. Chris said that he would review that earlier discussion.

Communities on the east side have been addressing composting and recycling for some time and it would be worthwhile to look at their experience. However, it was pointed out that Seattle has a dense population that would make comparison with the island difficult, given that a key driver of collection efficiency is the number of trucks required. Chris said that the RFP will address composting as well as solid waste. In addition, it will ask for an analysis of accessibility for pick-ups on smaller roads.

Public Works Update

Chris informed the UAC that the previous evening the Council authorized the City to obtain low cost loans for the new High School water tower. In addition, the Council approved seeking a state loan for the Ferncliff/Casey street water system extension (\$800,000 with 50% forgiveness). The relevant property owners will soon be given an estimate on the extension cost in order to decide whether to proceed.

The water/sewer rate study will begin soon, following the selection of a consultant. As the basis for this study, current rates, the staffing model, and asset management evaluations of the sewerage/water system are underway. This will entail analysis of the four different rates: water, sewerage, water GFC (general facilities charges), and sewer GFC. In addition, work has begun on study to upgrade the water treatment plant.

Next Meeting Agenda

Chris indicated that it may be timely to discuss specific policy issues emerging from the sewer/water rate study at the next meeting. He will brief the committee on the status of the ongoing rate study including initial data that has been collected.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Co-Chair

5/11/22