STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, October 28, 2010
Botanic Gardens, Fort Worth, Texas
6:30 – 8:30 pm

MINUTES

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 28, Greg Simmons, City of Fort Worth's Assistant Director of Transportation Public Works, called to order the first stakeholder committee meeting of the Storm Water Management's Feasible Options Study. Mr. Simmons' opening remarks included thanking stakeholder committee members and citizen observers for their attendance. He then introduced Burton Johnson, project manager with Michael Baker Jr., Corporation, who is leading the feasible options study process, and turned the meeting over to him.

Mr. Johnson invited stakeholder committee member to introduce themselves and state how long they've lived in the watershed, who they represent, and whether or not their property has ever flooded:

Stakeholder Committee Members Present:

Lynna Kathleen Fulton, CAH, lives on historically-designated street
Paula Monthie, CAH, lives on historically-designated street
Matt Plumb, CAH
Sergio Yanes, CAH, Engineer, Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association
Paul Dennehy, FPB, Architect
James Hawks, FPB, President of Paschal Neighborhood Association
Jennifer Moody, CAH
Gloria Thompson, CAH Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association
Michael Anne Wright, CAH
Judy Williams, Community member
Libby Willis, Fort Worth League of Neighborhoods

Committee Members unable to attend were:

Joe Self, FPB
Walter Dansby, FWISD
Joe Schneider, CAC,
Juliet George, CAH
Chanda Harville, FPB
LaWayne Hauser, CAC

Staff members present include:

Greg Simmons, Assist Director, Transportation & Public Works (TPW)
Don McChesney, Engineering Manager, TPW Storm Water Management
Steve Eubanks, Senior Professional Engineer, TPW Storm Water Management
Linda Young, Senior Professional Engineer, TPW Storm Water Management
Cristi Lemon, Neighborhood Education Manager, Planning and Development
Regis Andrez, Neighborhood Education Specialist, Planning and Development

Consultant Team Members present:

Burton Johnson, Project Manager, Michael Baker Jr., Corporation
Pam Roach, President, Pam Roach Public Relations

Watershed Consultants in Attendance

Brenda Gasperich (AECOM), FPB
Kelly Dillard (Freese & Nichols), CAH
Scott Hubley (Freese & Nichols), CAH
Terry Barr (Halff Associates) present at first public meeting only]

There were also a number of community observers present as the meetings are open to the public.

WE HEARD YOU

Mr. Johnson continued by reading a summary of feedback received from attendees of the first public meeting held on September 22, 2010. He said, "We want you to know that your voices have been heard and we get it. The following comments were taken into consideration as we move forward with this process.":

- Very little has been done that is productive…good money down the drain
- After two studies we have no answers…now a third more expensive study
- Nothing has been done…nothing will be done
- It will be years, if ever, before the city takes action
- I have no idea where to turn
- Study is worthwhile only if something is accomplished to alleviate problems
- Get on the ball, take action
- Keep work on timeline
- Come up with phased innovation plan
- Get creative about solutions
- Come to a conclusion on this issue which takes citizen input into account

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mr. Johnson then reviewed seven guiding principles of the FOS planning process s.

1. We are looking forward.
2. All views are respected.
3. Communication is a two-way street.
4. Feedback from the community is one of several inputs into the decision-making process
5. The process will be transparent to and inclusive of the public.
6. We will not waste your time.

7. We're not going to patronize you.

Next, Mr. Johnson presented an overview of the project goal; objective and the constraints:

GOAL

- Develop a sustainable approach to flood risk and flood damage reduction planning for the city of Fort Worth

OBJECTIVE

- Increase public safety and improve quality of life by providing additional protection from flood risk and flood damage

CONSTRAINTS

1. Project/plans must be implementable with respect to COFW financial resources
2. Project must be acceptable by the community
3. Project may not devalue the community
4. Disruption during construction of project must be acceptable by the community
5. Project implementation must treat citizens fairly and with respect
6. Project must not increase flooding in adjacent neighborhoods.

WORKSHOP

The next segment of the agenda was the "Workshop" which Mr. Johnson explained was an opportunity for the stakeholder committee, staff and consultant team members to explore traditional and nontraditional ideas for flood mitigation in each watershed. Mr. Johnson described the types of options that are being considered and explained the advantages and disadvantages of each:

Traditional Options

1. Bigger pipes
   - Advantages – good, effective, invisible
   - Disadvantages – cost is higher, disruptive
     - Tunneling
       - Advantages – Least disruptive
       - Disadvantages – Expensive
     - Open Cut
       - Advantages - Cheaper
       - Disadvantages –Street would have to be torn out. Disruptive to community.

2. Detention – means to store excess runoff.
   - Advantages – very phase-able, effective, can be a nice amenity
   - Disadvantages – takes up space, would require acquiring homes; usually done in a number of ways that look like big square basins. Not necessarily attractive.

   What detention won't look like – big ditch in the street where houses used to be. Instead it would be a nice amenity designed by landscape architect.

Nontraditional Options

1. Bio-detention – native vegetation combined with detention. Types include:

Rain Gardens - The garden is positioned near a runoff source like a downspout, driveway or sump pump to capture rainwater runoff and stop the water from reaching the sewer system .

- Advantages – This works best on smaller sites. Usually fits in communities and neighborhoods nicely; a good example of eating on the elephant one bite at a time; city would prefer the purchase of vacant lots for this use rather than houses.
- Disadvantages - Minimal effectiveness, Requires acquisition of some property

2. Stream Restoration – another natural way to control flooding.
   - Advantages – phase-able, effective, an amenity
   - Disadvantages – requires buying homes

Questions & Comments

During the workshop portion of the agenda there were several comments and questions in response to options presented. They are as follows:

1. ***Question***: Will 100% of storm water capital funds be used if the solution identified requires as much?

   Staff response – No. The city cannot commit its entire budget at one time for one project. It will have to commit funds incrementally.

2. ***Follow up question*** – Then how much are you willing to spend?

   Staff response – We don't have an exact number but the maximum we are likely to be able to spend annually for the entire City is $30 - $35 million. It would be very hard to justify spending more than $10 - $15 million on one project. If we can develop a solution that could be phased in over 10 – 15 years we might be able to spend more than that.

3. ***Question*** – The map appears as if we have flooding problems and we don't on Tremont. The block next to ours has flooding problems. Why is our street on the map?

   Staff response – The map shows street flooding, with perhaps some back yard flooding of homes near Bryce. Also, the map shows flooding estimated during an event that has a chance of occurring once every one-hundred years. It is likely that we have not seen an event nearly to this magnitude in the past 30 years or so.

4. ***Question*** – Is it your sense that if we had all the money we needed we could fix all of the flooding problems?

   Consultant's response - There is a finite benefit to be realized from correcting existing flooding problems. What we're looking for are solutions for which the cost corresponds to the benefit that will be realized. In cases where the full solution is cost prohibitive, maybe the answer will be to break it into smaller projects and implement the solution over a period of years.

5. ***Question*** – How do you replace a pipe if someone's house is on top of it?

Burton Johnson's response - Rather than putting pipes back where they are now, we would create a new pipe system—probably under streets rather than under houses. Methods would include tunneling, open cut in the street, but the street would have to be torn out. This would still be disruptive to the community

6. ***Concern*** - Lots of concerns expressed regarding the preservation of historic property in the Central Arlington Heights neighborhood. There is an entire block that is listed in the historic resources survey of Fort Worth. It is the only block with such designation.

   Staff response – we prefer to put pipes in in a way that doesn't endanger any homes. In past studies, the open cut option involved installing the new pipes in the road rights-of-way to avoid impacting homes.

7. ***Question*** – What does city staff hope to take to City Council from this process: only an engineering solution or an engineering solution as well as development criteria to control flooding as the neighborhoods re-develop?

   Staff response – A project to solve the problem. A definitive plan to put in place (not necessarily a long-term development plan). As a parallel initiative, though, City staff can evaluate the potential for a long term development plan for these neighborhoods. Property owner rights in Texas can make something like this very difficult to accomplish.

8. ***Comment regarding buyouts*** – If a home floods every year, is there devaluation? Four houses across from mine flood terribly. All they have to do is open their doors during the rain and it goes straight through their homes. These are rental properties.

9. ***Citizen Question*** – How soon will we know if our homes are identified for acquisition? We don't want to put more money into the property if it's going to be needed for this solution.

   Consultant Response – If, during the course of this process, a certain area has been identified as a likely location for home acquisitions, those property owners will be contacted immediately.

10. Question – Why do we have to take out houses? Why can't we take out streets like Bryce instead?

Staff response – Every idea is up for consideration, so we can certainly consider using Bryce for detention.

11. ***Question from Staff*** – In identifying solutions, to those whose homes chronically flood, what would be your response to someone saying that you won't flood every multiple times a year to once every 2 years? Would that be an acceptable solution?

    Response from committee member whose home chronically floods – At least that would be a step in the right direction.

    Response from another committee member whose home chronically floods –Yes, if you could at least make it better than that would be okay.

12. There was a discussion about City development regulations and the use of eminent domain regarding recent and new development (specifically the Walgreen's) in the Central Arlington Heights watershed. The conclusions were:
    - Under state law, if a developer met applicable ordinances they were allowed to develop.
    - The City did review the Walgreen's site plan to determine that there would be no downstream impacts.
    - If the City tried to prevent development or regulate it unreasonably, the developers and property owners could consider themselves damaged.
    - The City has the power of eminent domain for flood control purposes, but it has to have funds available for that purpose.

Before the meeting adjourned, Pam Roach, community relations consultant with the Baker team, asked members to write down who else needs to be involved in this process. The following is a list of feedback received:

- Homeowners whose homes might be affected should be involved in this
- Texas Christian University – owns biggest land area in Berry Street/Forest Park watershed.
- Fort Worth Planning and Zoning Commission
- Fort Worth Infrastructure Committee
- Don Mills
- Will Stalworth

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. by Burton Johnson and Greg Simmons thanking everyone for their attendance. A second meeting date of December 9th at 6:30 p.m. was set. Location to be determined.