

Portage/Arcadia Creek 319 Watershed Planning Steering Committee Meeting Summary: September 26, 2002

Meeting was held at Western Michigan University, Fetzer Center.

Attendees: Pat Holton, Mark Kieser, Janelle Hohm, Mike McCarville, Bill Reed, Ryan Teelander, Paul Olexia, Ron Commissaris, Don Brown, John Olech, Tom Small, Jeff Reicherts, Kathleen Buckham, Peter Maas, Mike Tenenbaum.

The following summary corresponds to the Agenda order of the meeting.

1.) Greetings, Introductions, Announcements and Agenda Review: B. Reed greeted all on behalf of WMU, our host for the meeting. Announcements included:

- a meeting next week in Kalamazoo where the National Wildlife Federation will announce their findings regarding levels of mercury washdown in stormwater
- publication of "The State of the Nation's Ecosystems" by The Heinz Center; available on line at <http://www.heinzctr.org/ecosystems/>
- a Site Plan for the Extended Stay America project in Portage (hotel and commercial development between I-94 and the West Branch of Portage Creek) has been approved
- agenda approved with no alterations

2.) B. Reed distributed Administrative Reports for July and August 2002. A brief run through of progress made was presented. It was noted that a meeting is to be held tomorrow (9-27), 9:00 a.m., at 415 Stockbridge Avenue, to coordinate all proposed activities for Axtell Creek between all key players. Educational opportunities and demonstration site concept are to be featured.

3.) M. Kieser addressed *priority implementation plan elements* of the Watershed Management Plan (WMP) updates that have recently been accomplished. Mark thanked his staff for their efforts to reflect the perspectives of the Steering Committee in the work produced. Priorities for Implementation within the Plan may best be visually illustrated by:

- color coding educational and policy features in the Tables on the web.
- use of another color and hot links to preliminary cost estimate tables

Policy and educational priorities should come back to the Steering Committee for action(s). A brief discussion took place with regard to what should be added, how should it be added and what will that actually mean.

Frequency of Steering Committee meetings after plan approval was discussed. Support was reached for the concept of meeting once each quarter (every 3 months) to review accomplishments, priorities and alterations.

A handout was provided for group discussion that included prioritized stretches from each sub-watershed with suggested BMPs and costs. The following questions were raised: “Are flow and flooding details sufficient for us to forecast that if these recommendations were implemented then flooding would no longer be a problem for the watercourse?” Another comment indicated that, “... some of the projected techniques and costs have ‘pretty hefty price tags’. If implemented, would it negate the need for the City of Kalamazoo to replace structural elements at the ‘pinch point’ and eliminate the need for residential flood insurance in portions of the Stuart Neighborhood?” The general response indicated that the BMP techniques recommended would all certainly assist in flood reduction. However, a new floodplain study for the upstream component would need to be undertaken for a definitive answer, which is beyond the scope of this project.

Communication with owners of potential sites for improvements should be one of the first actions taken by the SC after plan approval. Prioritizing a site in the plan for some action to be taken is a start, but if the property owner(s) are not supportive, the site will likely have to be dropped and new prioritizations put in place.

M. Kieser indicated that K&A could perform estimated hydraulic contributions for the primary sub-watersheds and currently identified stormwater drainages. The runoff volume estimates that would need to be addressed by BMPs/policies will be provided. K&A will include hydraulic summary information on the website.

ACTION: As a result of the discussion today, the Steering Committee decided that the information as proposed and provided by K&A should be incorporated into the WMP.

M. Tenenbaum next led a discussion of the handout addressing an *Analysis of Ordinances, Rules and Policies*. Within the context of the discussion, it was suggested that additional links be included for several topical areas. Overlay zoning and how a sub-committee might consider that topic should have more detail. Recommendations should also include “development of a policy or ordinance for phosphorus limits or bans for residential and commercial fertilizers.

R. Commissaris noted that presentations to local units of government must be made to achieve any level of their buy-in to these recommendations and observations. The State Coordinated Planning Act (HB 4571-4575), known as the Joint Municipal Planning Act should provide impetus to the type of shared information and planning considerations called for in this WMP. A joint meeting of Planning Commissioners from each municipality would provide an excellent venue of what the SC is trying to do and why we are trying to do it. Getting their buy-in will be significant.

T. Small noted that the City of Kalamazoo Environmental Concerns Committee is reviewing the specifics of environmental ordinances as part of the zoning ordinance review/revision process now on-going in the City. There will be 4 weeks to review the zoning ordinances prior to a public hearing, and then 4-6 weeks for any additional comments. COK zoning will include overlay zoning for both the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek areas. Lastly, Table 1, included with the handout, received a number of small edits. Once entered, the final documents will be posted to the website.

4.) **ACTION:** Once the discussed edits are made to the WMP, the SC approved that the WMP be submitted to the MDEQ as soon as possible. B. Reed will follow up on this and see that it is submitted.

5.) M. Kieser provided a Power Point presentation for current data interpretation as well as a review of remaining K&A activity-related project components. Based upon the Work Plan Tasks, K&A will now have less of a presence in on-going sub-watershed and educational efforts of the SC. B. Reed will step up in those areas and play a more central role. A need was expressed to connect with other activities in the watershed and maintain a presence.

6.) J. Hohm provided an update on MDEQ implementation funding. In brief, there isn't any this year. The 319 monies at the state are to be used for those CMI projects that were already approved several months ago. This situation is not likely to be altered until the state and national fiscal situations change for the better.

7.) B. Reed and M. Kieser both presented "Next step" opportunities with the aid of a handout that illustrated possible sources of funding. Included were approaches such as: MDEQ transitional grant in 2003; grants from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation in their next round of environmental project funding (due October 11, 2002); a shift of educational dollars within this project of approximately \$3,000 and possible joint volunteer/municipal efforts between such entities as WMU, City of Kalamazoo, Parkview Hills and the Wild Ones. Also noted were larger pools of funds, including one from the Joyce Foundation with potential for some of its spending here and another that makes \$21 million available to up to twenty (20) watersheds selected around the country through the EPA Watershed Initiative Grant. Submittals to the State GAP for the latter are to be received by October 4, 2002. The Forum of Greater Kalamazoo intends to submit an application for the Kalamazoo River Watershed.

8.) The Steering Committee will **meet next on October 24, 2002**. Please note that we are **starting that meeting earlier than normal, at 8:30 a.m.**

Submitted by Michael Tenenbaum, KIESER & ASSOCIATES