

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
SPECIAL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2010**

The Special Work Session of the Grand Haven City Council was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Mayor Pro-tem Michael Fritz in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Present: Council Members Robert Monetza, Edward Nieuwenhuis, Dennis Scott, and Mayor Pro-tem Michael Fritz.

Absent: Mayor Roger A. Bergman, excused.

Others Present: City Manager Patrick McGinnis, Assistant to the City Manager Sam Janson, Administrative Assistant Mary A. Snedeker, City Engineer Brian Vilmont, and Finance Director James P. Bonamy.

1. Woodlawn Sewer, 1200 – 1300 Blocks

City Engineer Brian Vilmont reviewed the existing configuration of the force main and reviewed some options for routing flow from the Oakes pump station to the wastewater treatment plant. He explained the benefits of changing the discharge point of the Oakes pump station. He recommended that the City delay relining of the Woodlawn sanitary sewer until the City has made a final determination regarding the master plan for sewer reconstruction. Discussion came about for lowering the Griffin Street sewer in the future, and Mr. Vilmont explained that the City would have the option of rerouting some of this sewer in Woodlawn. If the City were to rebuild a section of Griffin Street, it could be sized large enough to accept flow from the Oakes pump station. There would be less back pressure that the pump station would have to pump against, increasing capacity out of the Oakes pump station and reducing operating costs. He would not suggest rebuilding just to accomplish this, but if Griffin Street were to be rebuilt, then, it would be an option.

Council Member Scott disagreed with using Griffin Street sewer as a rerouting option because of the likelihood that a blockage could flood the basements of this residential area. Council Member Scott also questioned why a stub was not used in the Beechtree sewer. City Engineer Vilmont clarified that a casing was placed because it allowed more flexibility for sizing and slope. Council Member Scott was in favor of looking at Woodlawn, as long as the funds are available.

City Manager McGinnis explained that wage determination would be a factor in the price for this project.

Council Member Monetza questioned the cost to do this job. He would like to keep this option open, so the City was at least thinking about it and would be prepared to act on it if the opportunity looked good. City Engineer Vilmont responded that it would be about \$80 per foot

for 650 feet, so it would be approximately \$52,000 for the reline.

Council Member Scott commented that relining would be the next best option, since there was not a quick fix.

Council Member Nieuwenhuis preferred to spend money on the most critical areas first, as that is where the major breaks were more likely to occur. City Engineer Vilmont explained that the Master Plan needed to be reviewed to determine what direction all the flows should go and reprioritize from there.

Mayor Pro-tem Fritz did not want to jeopardize the City's ICE grant and agreed that the critical ones were more important. He commented that reprioritizing would likely show a big change from when the City started. He thought the recommendation was good, but he also wanted to keep this option open.

City Engineer Vilmont said that this section would be taken under consideration when those priorities were reviewed.

2. Phragmites

Leslie Newman, 111 West Ann Street, Spring Lake, was present from Wetland Watch. She also noted that Wetland Watch members Wally Obitz, Doris Ducey, Pat Moss, and Bonnie Newman were present. Wetland Watch was applying for a grant from the Community Foundation to take care of a phragmites invasion on Harbor Island.

Ms. Newman described phragmites as an invasive giant reed grass that threatened the wetlands. Phragmites created monoculture quickly. Their winter straw created fire hazards and their huge biomass could dry out wetlands. The invasion would eventually create a fence around the water's edge. Left unchecked, phragmites would grow and infest the area's river and lake banks.

Spring Lake Village treated phragmites growing in the Mill Point Preserve. The village and Wetland Watch were also working with landowners to treat phragmites in the Grand River islands and shorelines. One of the challenges of treatment was that it could be costly, but the cost would increase if the phragmites were allowed to continue to spread.

Council Member Monetza questioned whether herbicide would be used to eradicate the phragmites. Ms. Newman responded that it was the standard and most effective method. If the phragmites were thick, the whole area was usually sprayed. She noted that the herbicide would affect any plant species in the area and that it usually took about three years of treatment to get

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rid of the problem. A dead mass would be left that would eventually decay. There was usually a natural restoration after that, if still a wetland.

Council Member Monetza supported some sort of action within the means of those involved. He appreciated Ms. Newman's interest and her desire to act on it.

Council Member Nieuwenhuis asked Ms. Newman to explain what Wetland Watch was and why the City should spend money on phragmites over other plants; such as, Purple Loosestrife, Garlic Mustard, and Oak Wilt. Ms. Newman explained that very little Purple Loosestrife was seen now, because an insect had been found of which Purple Loosestrife was a host for and because phragmites outcompeted it. Wetland Watch was a grassroots organization that was formed in 2002 when the members were concerned about overdevelopment that was impinging upon the wetlands. The organization had worked with the DEQ to follow up on litigation projects. Wetlands Watch spoke for the wetlands and educated students and the public. There were many invasive species, but phragmites were the worst, because they created monoculture more effectively than other species, grew very high, and took up so much biomass. Phragmites is the only species that have the potential to dry up a wetland, which is why they are Wetland Watch's focus.

Fritz thanked Ms. Newman for making Council aware of this problem. Mayor Pro-tem Fritz was in favor of supporting their grant application. He noted that the appropriation of funds would need to be discussed, and it would require a vote of council.

Ms. Newman stated that Wetlands Watch would appreciate a letter of support with a financial commitment to seek other funds, if possible. Other sources may be available. The organization could bring the project forward, but could not take it all the way. Wetlands Watch could work with environmental companies to obtain estimates to eradicate the phragmites problem and the City could determine what funds to seek and how much money to apply.


City Manager McGinnis commented that the City could research other sources of funding, such as State or Federal funding.

Council Member Monetza was in support of seeking other funding sources, for example grant opportunities.

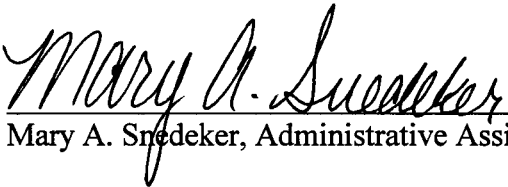
City Manager McGinnis indicated that a resolution supporting the Wetlands Watch grant application could be added to tonight's regular agenda, but it would take four affirmative votes to add this late item. In the absence of four votes, McGinnis indicated that he would not ask that this late item be added to the agenda.

3. Adjournment

After hearing no further business, Mayor Bergman adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.



Michael D. Fritz, Mayor Pro-tem



Mary A. Snedeker, Administrative Assistant