



Clean Water Commission Meeting Summary

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Virtual Meeting via Teams due to Severe Weather

I. ROLL CALL and INTRODUCTIONS

Virtual meeting called to order at 6:04 pm by Chair Gathe. Roll call and introductions were made since the new Deputy Public Works Director was present.

(v) Members Present: Tracy Ceravolo, John Chatel, Glen DeWillie Ted Gathe, Emily Hess Alison Schweitzer and Phil Struck

Members Absent: Alejandra Cortes and Rudy Salakory

(v) Staff Present: Jennifer Coker, Devan Rostorfer and Alice Millward

(v) Public Present: none

(v) indicates appeared via video conference

Approval Meeting Minutes: *Commissioner DeWillie moved, and Commissioner Ceravolo seconded that the December 18, 2024, minutes be approved as submitted. Motions unanimously approved.*

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No requests for access, comments and/or questions from the public were received by staff.

III. PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATION / ACTION

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2024 Annual Report Review:

- As part of the code requirement, every year the Clean Water Commission creates an annual report to Council on its previous year's activities, achievements, challenges, community involvement and action plans for the upcoming year. During the meeting, the Commission finalized its 2025 goals that it would like to pursue.
 - Stormwater Management Action Plan (SMAP)
 - Rate Study Implementation
 - Nonpoint Source Pollution / Nutrient Management
 - *The CWC would like to this to be this year's symposium theme and not have it specifically focused on any particular watershed.*
 - Climate Change and Resilience
 - Community Engagement and Inclusion



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- As a priority for the year, the Commission would like to collaborate with more with other advisory bodies and continue to hear more informative presentations from various clean water functions and/or other stakeholders throughout the year. Staff will send a survey with options for commissioners to prioritize their interests and how they would like to have it organized.

CLEAN WATER DIVISION UPDATES – Devan Rostorfer, Clean Water Division Manager

- Devan reported that the division was just notified today that our **four State Water Quality grant** applications had been published on Ecology's "draft offer list". This means that the \$1.8m worth of grants have been selected, dependent on state budget adoption, to move through the approval process. The timeline is still about a year out before there would be grant contracts offered, but it is very exciting. How this news will could affect the rate study assumptions and impacts of GMA noncompliance were discussed.
- Devan reported about an innovative model that Clean Water is currently on the ground floor on and is receiving grant funding to create. **Community-Based Public Private Partnerships otherwise known as CBP3** are a new alternative procurement model where public entities and the private sector can cooperatively leverage funding in more efficient and effective means than how traditionally government procurement works.
 - Clean Water is using the CBP3 model to create a "partnership" to provide maintenance for our public bioretention facilities. This is a great opportunity for both sides. Traditionally, Clark County's public bioretention facilities are maintained by Public Works Operations but due to staffing levels and workloads, this has been more and more difficult. This particular CBP3 project is geared to work with private partners to develop their workforce, since this is a specialized skill, and meet the county's infrastructure maintenance needs.
 - Devan will be presenting at the CBP3 Learning Network panel discussion on February 12 about this innovative project.
- Devan highlighted the **Clean Water's Urban Forestry Program** efforts – which are part of the new NPDES Permit requirements.
 - The **Urban Tree Assessment** has been completed, and the tree plotter is in the final stages mapping the canopy changes for entire county. The next steps which are a Permit requirement are to develop policies and goals for assessing the canopy needs and mitigate the negative impacts of canopy reduction. Tree shade can reduce summer temperatures by 19°F and help alleviate the effects of climate change as well as provide valuable stormwater protection.
 - Devan described the collaborative **urban forestry pilot grant program** work that is currently ongoing. This partnership is between the Conservation District (grant holder) and Parks, Clean Water and Roads and looks to plant 1,000 trees in the Minnehaha neighborhood. This is an area that has been determined to be priority area for a number of reasons. There are several tree planting volunteer events are scheduled in local parks and right of ways and CVTV will be featuring this program. In addition, there will be free tree give aways for residents of that neighborhood to plant in their yards to help increase the tree canopy that area.



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- The \$3.5m **Heritage Farm loan** is currently in negotiations between Clean Water and Ecology. Construction is planned for this summer. The CWC is interested in a tour of the project. Alice will work on setting this up as part of the commission's calendar of activities.
- **Stormwater Rate Study:** The rate study was successfully approved on November 12th at the highest service level. The 62 new or enhanced services will promote greater watershed health. Over the next five years, 30 new staff are anticipated to be hired to meet these needs. It is expected that this will be regularly brought to Council every 5 years in order to better meet new NPDES Permit requirements and so that the increases will be more incremental.
 - The new rates have been sent to the Treasurer and this new fee is expected to go out on the property tax assessment statements after February 15 as part of our interdepartmental agreement. The final rates are:
 - \$85.59 within UGA / \$63.74 outside UGA – Single Family Residences
 - \$61.55 within UGA / \$39.70 outside UGA – Multifamily Dwellings – per unit
 - \$85.59 within UGA / \$63.74 outside UGA – Nonresidential per 3,500sf unit
 - There are senior and disability single family residence reductions available.
 - In preparation for an anticipated influx of inquiries, Clean Water staff are thoughtfully preparing on a communications plan, FAQ information, updating our website, phone tree, and developed an internal tracking method in order to better assist people who have questions about the increase or would like to dispute their fee. It is important that public understands the value and services they are receiving. The CWC is encouraged to help spread the word.
 - We are also reaching out to the top 10 most impacted rate payers who will be affected by the fee increase. Nine of the ten, are public institutions such as Clark County' Roads and Parks divisions, the Amphitheater-Fairgrounds, and Clark public utilities. The county is not exempt from this fee.
 - In fact, Public Works' stormwater charges have increased by \$6 million this year (up from \$8m to \$14m). The Roads division alone saw their fees go up by over \$2m. One of the challenges for the county this year is that this rate increase was made so late in the year, that it was not included in the approved budgets for these departments. Ken Lader, the Public Works Director, is working with Devan and affected county departments.
 - There was discussion regarding the impacts to local educational institutions such as WSU and the Vancouver school districts. There is a fee reduction program in place for these organizations. However, in order to qualify for the fee reduction / waiver, they must meet minimum program requirements. The past several years, most school have not wanted to participate in the program.
 - In 2025, there is planned to be new 10 new Clean Water division staff and 8 new positions in Roads & Ops which will funded by the rate study. This will be a very heavy growth period for the division. Devan outlined the recruitment timelines.
 - The Commission asked how they can best support the division during this transitional time period. Due the varied and depth of expertise on the Commission, it could make sense to utilize one or two commissioners for some of the upcoming RFP reviews. (Of course, individuals to indicate they are able will need to be aware of the county's conflict of interest guidelines – the link can be found in the



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CWC's bylaws. Devan will think more on other ways the Commission can help the division.

- **Vancouver Lake Management Plan – Phase 2 Technical Advisory Group (TAG):** Commissioners Ceravolo and DeWillie and Jenny Coker discussed their impressions from the recent TAG meeting in January. Devan gave an outline of the remaining six-month timeline for this very complicated project that has so many differing visions and perspectives. It is unknown if there will be another legislative proviso to continue this work from this session.

Staff Liaison Report – Alice Millward, CW Program Assistant.

- Alice is currently working on the 2024 Annual Report. Please send any pictures you have of local water ways, the public or commissioners interacting with watersheds or CW activities. She will incorporate them. The report will be able to approve it at the April meeting and then present it to Council in spring.
- It is time for the biannual review of the CWC bylaws. There was a significant update two years ago, so it shouldn't be much that needs to be revised. She needs one of two commissioners to assist her.
 - While reviewing the bylaws for the recent new commissioner training, Alice discovered that the time of the meetings is incorrect after the CWC changed the meeting time from 6:30pm to 6:00pm last year. Although this wasn't on the agenda, she advocated the scriveners error be corrected now rather than wait for the full review.
 - *Commissioner DeWillie moved, and Commissioner Schweitzer seconded that the meeting time be changed to 6:00pm. Motion carried unanimously.*
- Alice provided a draft of 2025 calendar for the year. It lists all the upcoming scheduled CWC meetings with agenda topics and proposed activities and events for the year. The CWC has indicated they would like more interaction / presentations from stakeholders and more tours. In order to better plan for the year, she would like direction from CWC on what and how they would like to this scheduled. For example: should the special topic presentations included in regular meetings – which means less time for “business” or scheduling 1-2 optional special meetings that are devoted to presentations with little to no business – which means there could be more meetings to attend. The CWC has used both models in the past and she would like to know which this board prefers.
 - Since there wasn't enough time again for discussion, Alice will add questions to the commissioner survey regarding what fieldtrips, collaborative efforts, topics and format the CWC would like, as well as availability dates for the Council Work Session and Fall Symposium out a survey.



NEW BUSINESS:

Develop 2025 Priorities and Work Plan:

- As mentioned previously, the Commission would like to host another symposium in the fall, but instead of focusing on a specific body of water, they will address a water quality issue such as nonpoint source pollution. It will still be targeted towards decision makers and implementation partners and not to the general public.
- The Commission is interested in attending a Columbia Land Trust tour while the sandhill cranes are still in residence and other tour / fieldtrip opportunities which will be included in the survey.
- Throughout the meeting, discussion ensued surrounding how the Clean Water Commission can assist with the rate study implementation and how best to utilize the expertise on the board and areas that the commission would like further information on. Some of these included ideas for possible work groups or individual commissioners to help advise in some of the following areas: assisting businesses and HOAs, technical support on policy issues, continue to voice opportunities for collaboration, nutrient reduction, nature-based solutions, habitat restoration, non-point source control – pollution prevention, asset management programs, assisting development of new programs such as the pipe inspection, help with education and outreach, preservation and protection, 6PPD, equity for fees for economically disadvantaged.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

- none

VI. ADJOURN – 8:05 PM

For a copy of the meeting slides, please visit our website's meeting section or click on this [link](#).

Summary provided by: Alice Millward, Clark County Staff Liaison

Audio/video recordings of this and most previous Clean Water Commission meetings are available through the county website at: <https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-works/clean-water-commission>.