

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF THE
PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL OF NOVEMBER 19, 2019**

Mayor Patricia Randall called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Councilmembers Lori Knapp, Claudette Reid, Terry Urban and Mayor Patricia Randall. Councilmembers Chris Burns, Richard Ford and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson were absent with excuse. Also present were City Manager Joe La Margo, Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis, City Attorney Randy Brown, Director of Transportation & Utilities Kendra Gwin and Deputy City Clerk Erica Eklov.

Mayor Randall asked City Manager Joe La Margo to introduce the purpose of the meeting. City Manager La Margo relayed that the City Administration had received the Fishbeck report on Friday, November 15th and stressed that it is a draft report. The City Manager provided a summary of the basis for the Fishbeck study and then turned the meeting over to Director of Transportation and Utilities Kendra Gwin.

Director Gwin first provided an update on the status of the short-term permit with Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and noted that the long-term response was the reason for the Fishbeck study. Director Gwin introduced the representatives from the Fishbeck engineering firm.

Mr. Brian McKissen, Senior Civil Engineer, and Elise Tripp, Senior Environmental Scientist, introduced themselves and began the presentation by outlining the area studied for the report. Mr. McKissen explained the preparation efforts undertaken by Fishbeck to date. He noted that the proposed high water level remediation plan included a piping outlet through the bogs in the area. Mr. McKissen then detailed recent meetings between Fishbeck representatives and EGLE in order to gain feedback, concerns and plan the next steps in the remediation process.

Ms. Tripp of Fishbeck then presented the five areas the firm had studied to date including wetland delineation, a natural features survey, an invasive species survey, a threatened and endangered species survey and surface water samples. Ms. Tripp explained that the natural features survey examined, among other things, the project area's plants and potential impacts to the natural habitats. Ms. Tripp noted that the study found the bogs to be free of invasive species, whereas Portage Creek has an extensive presence of invasive species, which is preferred when it comes to the movement of the water travelling from a clean area to an invaded area. With regard to the threatened and endangered species, Ms. Tripp noted there are five rare species present, but none were observed in the project area. She stated that additional surveys will be needed in the spring season to confirm the species and the additional details. Ms. Tripp then elaborated that there is a significant pH difference between the two bogs that measured acidic, the creek wetland that measured neutral and the creek and Hampton Lake water that both measured alkaline. Ms. Tripp further stated that the water temperatures measured normal and there were no red flags. She noted that ammonium nitrogen level was also sampled, showing three areas above regular levels and two below. Ms. Tripp went on to explain the stream stability assessment in which EGLE wanted to know whether the stream could handle increased water inflow. Area surveys found that the stream is a high functioning and stable stream. A hydraulic evaluation was also performed and it was noted that some water is feeding from the adjacent highway, as well as the surrounding communities including Texas Township.

Mr. McKissen and Ms. Tripp further discussed the proposed storm water outlet diagrams, noting that the system should have no impact on the surrounding creek wetland. They further presented data regarding 50-year and 100-year storm events and impacts. Mr. McKissen explained that the next steps for the representatives from Fishbeck included a meeting with the regulatory agencies on the preliminary study findings to ensure that the draft reports meet the regulatory agency concerns to allow for a complete and final application. Mr. McKissen finished by summarizing the design challenges and the strategies prepared to address these challenges.

Mayor Randall inquired on the expected cost of the proposed design. Mr. McKissen responded that no estimate had been prepared as of yet. He relayed that Fishbeck wants to meet with the regulatory agencies first in order to understand the scope and potential hurdles in order to best

understand the project and what it may cost.

Mayor Randall then asked whether Fishbeck was preparing alternate solutions before meeting with EGLE. Mr. McKissen responded that Fishbeck will need to have alternative options prepared in response to a requirement of the permit application to the EGLE.

Mayor Randall then asked about high water levels and the impacts on the surrounding residents. Mr. McKissen stated that, in the event lawns were impacted by standing water and rain events, it would be minimal and only for a short duration.

Mayor Randall inquired about the lake on the Moorsbridge golf course and why it was not included as part of the Fishbeck study area. She further inquired about the potential impact on the lake as a result of the proposed drainage project. Mr. McKissen answered that the lake should be brought to the same water level as the bog as a result of the project. Mayor Randall then opened the floor to Councilmember questions.

Councilmember Knapp asked for clarification on the water levels noted in the report regarding the normal high water levels. Mr. McKissen responded.

Councilmember Reid inquired about the timing of the temperature readings, noting that Portage Creek is a certified trout stream due to its low temperatures. Ms. Tripp responded that the temperature sampling was done in the month of August. Further, Ms. Tripp stated that the data is encouraging as bogs are colder than streams and the water route would allow for an equalization of the water temperature. Mr. McKissen commented that storm events and ground water travel also tend to cool water temperatures. Councilmember Reid then inquired whether the final report will address where water in the bogs is coming from as it will aide in figuring future assessments. Councilmember Reid also asked if the final report will address the source of the water in the bog, noting developments to the west appear to have a low impact but surrounding developments have a higher impact on the water level. Councilmember Reid inquired on the length of the permitting process with EGLE. Mr. McKissen responded that most of the work has been completed and that they are hoping for a quick review by EGLE. Ms. Tripp noted that the state is ultimately in control but that EGLE understands the urgency of the matter.

Councilmember Knapp asked whether Fishbeck representatives factored in any of potential future developments. Mr. McKissen responded that they had.

Councilmember Urban asked about the "joint" permit connotation. Mr. McKissen responded that joint was simply the name as the permit is used in multiple fields. Councilmember Urban then questioned the definition of a 100-year weather event and whether that has changed in light of recent events. Mr. McKissen responded that the definition does not change but the data behind it does. He stated that the new data and models from recent events were being accounted for. Councilmember Urban asked if the Greenspire Bog varies in water levels as much as the Hampton Bog. Mr. McKissen responded that it does not due to less storm water feeds and more outlets. Councilmember Urban inquired on the Texas Township project of active pumping versus the passive project planned for the City of Portage. He asked if EGLE had a position on the passive form of storm water management Fishbeck proposed and are there other passive examples currently operating in the state. Mr. McKissen responded that there are versions of the passive system around the state so the concept is not foreign but offered that the Portage project is a specific design due to the nature of the bogs. Councilmember Urban then inquired on the ammonia levels noted and whether the proposed system will address these levels. Mr. McKissen noted that the proposed limestone filter will help to address this and even out the levels.

Mayor Randall acknowledged the citizens present and opened the meeting for public comment.

Dan Farrell, 7646 W. St. Andrews Circle, inquired as to the new high water level. Director Gwin noted that the new level is 872.4. Mr. Farrell then asked what the timeframe was in terms of getting the new system in place. He also inquired about the permitting process and timeline versus the construction process and timeline. Mr. McKissen answered that the time frame was hopefully months and that EGLE has 90 days to process a permit application. Mr. McKissen also stated that Fishbeck will

prepare a construction plan concurrently with the application process. Mr. Farrell asked if the current project will be similar to the Eagle Lake pumping and its deadline of 2024. Mr. McKissen responded that the Portage project should see results within a year as it is not as robust as the Eagle Lake project. Mr. Farrell then inquired of City Council what the final cost was of the emergency pumping that was done in the spring. Director Gwin responded that it was around \$50,000 and included set-up costs, but less pumping due to a drier weather period. She noted that next time the emergency pumping was needed it would be about the same costs since the set up costs were already taken care of but the period may not be as dry.

Bob Fogarty, 7770 W. St. Andrews, noted he is interested in the high water mark since he installed french drains on his property and was frequently operating his sump pump system during the high water period. Mr. McKissen responded that EGLE will have a role in defining what the new high water level definition is once the outlet is in place.

Steve Antoniotti, 7774 W. St Andrews Circle, noted that he has spent \$25,000 on a french drain and sump pump remediation system. He commented on observations of the 18th fairway ditch that was previously dry in prior years, but has had standing water since the fall of 2017. He inquired if the 872.4 high water measurement would mean a dry ditch for the 18th fairway or equates to standing water in this area. Mr. Antoniotti also asked if Fishbeck had accounted for the commercial development to the north and east on West Centre Avenue, along with the impact to the Greenspire Bog. Mr. McKissen responded that new developments should have appropriate storm water management included as part of the planning and that the Greenspire Bog will have its own management levels. Mr. Antoniotti then asked how the name of the Greenspire Bog came about, whether it was done as part of the project or was this a historical name. Mr. McKissen responded that the Greenspire Bog had been named as such as part of the project.

Cathy Haines, 7745 W. St. Andrews, inquired whether the temporary permit will be issued before winter. Director Gwin noted that the desire is to have the permit issued before winter and only used when the high water level rises to 873. Director Gwin stated that the current high water level is 872.5 and the city is only permitted to pump six inches.

Mayor Randall asked if the temporary permit is for a one-time pumping or repeat pumping. Director Gwin responded that the permit covers a 12-month period whenever high water instances occur. Mayor Randall then asked if the proposed project will address the area residents' need to continually pump on their properties, whether this addresses the surface level water or the ground water level used. Mr. McKissen responded that the proposed drain project should address the residents need to pump to a certain degree. Director Gwin stated that the pumping project should address the flooding issue for surface water.

Mr. Antoniotti questioned what the normal level should be. Councilmember Urban noted that change in the ground water level is normal and the Southwest Michigan region is seeing higher water levels in recent years.

Councilmember Reid asked if the proposed plan requires easements or permissions in light of the project area where the water is expected to travel. Director Gwin responded that an easement is needed from the Woodbridge Hills shopping mall, but only once EGLE approves the permit.

Councilmember Urban asked if the city has approached the DNR about putting water on state land. Director Gwin responded that the DNR had been informally made aware but there was no formal inquiry or notification as of yet. Councilmember Urban asked Director Gwin if she had an inclination on the position of the DNR on the matter. Director Gwin responded she did not.

City Manager La Margo and Director Gwin highlighted that the city had budgeted funds in the next fiscal year of \$1,000,000. Director Gwin commented that the project is also dependent upon the economy, which affects the prices.

Mayor Randall asked Mr. McKissen what the next steps for the project were. Mr. McKissen responded that the next step is to meet with the regulatory agencies and get their feedback in order to tailor the report and application based on their feedback and concerns, and then proceed with a final

application.

Mayor Randall closed the meeting by relaying that the Fishbeck presentation would be repeated at the regular Council meeting at 7 p.m. that night and would also be posted on the city website. She noted that additional items would also be posted in the Hampton Bog section of the website.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Erica L. Eklov, Deputy City Clerk