

CITY OF AURORA
Save Sunny Lake Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 14, 2007

The Save Sunny Lake Park Committee Meeting of the City of Aurora, Ohio, met on Wednesday, March 14, 2007 at Aurora City hall Council Chambers for the purpose of holding a regular meeting. Chairman James Kraus called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Justin Czekaj
 Mike DeMay
 Bill Fellenstein
 Amy Holsthouse
 James Kraus
 George Mazzaro
 John Trew
 Rich Werenberg
 William Zawiski

Absent: James Fisher
 George Hettinger
 Dennis Kovach

Also Present: Madeleine Marazzi –Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Mazzaro moved to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2006, Save Sunny Lake Committee Meeting. Mr. Zawiski seconded and the motion passed 4-0 – with a voice vote, 5 abstained, Mr.Czekai, Mr. DeMay, Mr. Fellenstein, Mr. Trew, and Mr. Wehrenberg.

Citizen's Comments: Mr. Ted Turner, 169 Fox Run Trail stated he was present as an advocate to the lake. He would like to maintain the water basin as much as possible due to the reality of the situation.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a: Sampling chart review: Will be covered in potential solutions.
- b. Matrix review: Will be covered in potential solutions.

NEW BUSINESS:

a: Potential solutions: Mr. Kraus stated Mr. Zawiski has assembled a preliminary report on Sunny Lake Park which includes potential recommendations that he was asked by the committee to put forward at this meeting.

Mr. Zawiski drafted up a report for the committee to discuss and modify if needed to be approved and ultimately submitted to council for their approval of the recommendations to address some of the issues.

Mr. Zawiski updated the committee on the TMDL(total maximum daily load) draft report on the Chagrin River Water Shed required by the EPA. The report comment period ended March 12 with only one comment letter received. The goal is to finalize the report by the end of March to be submitted to the USEPA for their approval. Most likely the report will be approved sometime in April which will make it an official approved TMDL report. The recommendations in the TMDL are the impacts from the toxic discharges in Sunny Lake due to the algae blooms on the Aurora branch of the Chagrin basin. This has been included in the preliminary report to the committee on page 3.

Mr. Zawiski stated he gave a brief history of the committee and how it was started, discussed the evaluation methodology which was an overview of the matrix table and its set up. He highlighted the larger reports that the committee relied upon is included on page 5.

Mr. Zawiski stated he included the matrix table with explanation and reasoning of the categories including the EPA and Committee needs. On page 8, he explained how the evaluation process was prepared with ratings. The scoring system was on page 10 to restore the water shed. Mr. Zawiski stated he made 8 recommendations starting on page 11.

Mr. Trew stated he was against lowering the lake at all at this time. Because the lake is so shallow the loss will not just be a foot of lake line, in some areas you may loose up to 24 ft of lake which detracts from the quality of that entire lake and what the community likes about the lake. As part of the administration he felt he had to maintain the lakes integrity as a body of water, which means we need to look at every other avenue before we lower anything on the lake.

Mr. Czekaj asked if dredging was so much of a problem, what about a combination of dredging and construction of an aquatic bench over a portion of the lake instead of lowering the lake. Mr. Zawiski stated he was looking at the cost of dredging and projected the dredging costs from ten years ago and it would be over two million dollars at the present. Dredging alone will not be enough, there is also the need to look at some sort of stabilization for the shoreline with or without lowering the lake. Mr. Czekaj asked if dredging materials could be used to form an aquatic bench. Ms. Holtshouse stated it would need to be dredged out in three months again if those materials were used.

Mr. Zawiski stated the southwest corner of the lake already has an aquatic bench. If the committee wants to eliminate lowering of the lake as an option then the carp would have to be eliminated since they eat all the vegetation on the shoreline causing erosion.

Mr. Zawiski stated as a representative of the EPA if the committee wants to try everything in phases before lowering the lake, then he is fine with it but to understand there are other levels of commitment that will have to be made to improve the discharge in the Aurora branch going to the Chagrin water basin which is his ultimate goal.

Mr. Mazzaro stated there is a need to put a price tag on the different options available to help decide what will be the best route to obtain.

Mr. Kraus summarized the recommendations:

Recommendation (1): The overflow from Sunny Lake should be lowered by 12 inches: If the goal of lowering the lake was to improve the edge of the shoreline as well, what else could be done to improve the edge. He and Mr. Fellenstein had discussed letting the grass grow a little longer in certain areas of the lake, or things to be added to the shoreline not only to control the geese but erosion. Mr. Kraus stated if the city can work in a phased approach, lowering the lake at this point might not have to be done, but there are specific things to review.

Recommendation (2): Continued efforts to remove carp, grass carp, and bluegill in the lake should occur: Mr. Kraus stated if we don't lower the water level we will have to decide how the carp is removed. Mr. Zawiski stated this would be done by different options: Purposely drain the lake once and getting the fish out or by continued efforts at electro shocking the lake which is not a guarantee of ridding the carp. This electro-shocking effort would be more extensive than a one day event. Ms. Holtshouse stated this has been done before and the results from the one time it was done showed no change in the composition of fish population. This will have to be done more than once and the cost of the maintenance should be figured in also.

Mr. Zawiski stated the fish population is all out of whack because of the carp. Mr. Kraus stated we will need to review costs of options and results to decide. Mr. Turner (citizen) stated he worked with the water systems with Sea World for a number of years had built farm ponds and has worked with ODNR so he is familiar with the basics of lake and pond management. When he first saw the lake he was struck with how beautiful the lake was from far away but how bad it was with the fish population being unhealthy, the bass are thin, the coloration is pale and in his opinion it's mostly from carp. He read an article from the Department of Natural Resources of Madison Wisconsin for a lake similar to ours. The summary of the article stated if the carp are removed the whole ecology of the lake will change. By eliminating them it allowed sediments to settle with the result of clear water, allowing native plants to grow, reestablishing the lake bottom farther out from the shoreline, crowding out the invasive aquatic plants.

Within a month the water started to clear and today the plants are growing in water two feet deeper than before, sunlight is reaching the bottom giving new plants life. In addition, the carp eat the lake bottom covered called the chara which is a plant like algae that stabilized sediments. Mr. Turner stated as a fisherman the carp at Sunny Lake are destroying the lake, they will always be there simply because they are an invasive species, they will wash in from streams, people will put them in the lake, it will be a constant maintenance issue and agreed with Mr. Zawiski that a jump start on this problem is needed.

Recommendation (3): Watershed restoration efforts should be directed at the southern tributary to Sunny Lake: Mr. Kraus stated this deals with the wetland on the south side of the road. This will be working through mitigation efforts or something of that fact to create a larger wet land area on the south side to filter in everything. Mr. Zawiski stated also the storm pond northeast of industrial area that is tributary and will need to be looked at due to down cutting and channel problems because of the flashy flows. Mr. Zawiski stated he had discussed some of this with a representative from Oxbow and is aware the city is already working with them on other projects as well. Mr. Trew stated we should move forward with this as soon as possible with Oxbow. Discussion was held on other potential wetland areas.

Recommendation (4): The hydrologic model HEC-HMS should be rerun with the lake level adjusted to 1 foot lower: Mr. Kraus stated at this point this might be obsolete if we don't lower the level. A future recommendation of potential impact if this does not work should be part of this report.

Recommendation (5): Monitoring should be conducted in 2008, 2010, and 2012 to document fish communities in the Aurora Branch at historic Ohio EPA upstream and downstream sites as related to the Sunny Lake discharge: Mr. Kraus stated this will continue over the next few years.

Recommendation (6): Additional efforts should be directed at excluding Canadian geese from Sunny Lake: Mr. Kraus stated apply some of the recommendations discussed. Ms. Holtshouse stated there are things you can do with native vegetation and grasses that grow higher and have deeper roots to give you better erosion control protection. She also suggestion what we try we should put signs out to explain what is going on so the community will understand the process. Mr. Czekaj suggested lowering the lake by only 3 inches to grow the vegetation. Mr. Zawiski stated what has been done in some other locations is to pound in a netting with fence post a specific distance from the shoreline to serve as a carp barrier so vegetation could grow and help the stabilize the shoreline. This could be done in a small area to see if it would work. Mr. Trew stated that the city currently has some left over snow fencing available for this purpose.

Recommendation (7): Evaluation of the restroom facilities at SLP boathouse should be done to determine the integrity and functional ability of the septic system serving the building: Mr. Kraus stated this needs to be done and potential options to be discussed. Because of the amount of use, a better

boathouse might be constructed that could generate more revenue. Restrooms will be included but options of what kind will need to be reviewed.

Mr. Zawiski stated there will be a die test in the spring to see if there is a leak, and if there is the EPA will want to have that fixed. From the results of this testing, if impacting the lake then the EPA would mandate a timeline to improve the restrooms.

Recommendation (8): Aurora School should be encouraged to become an active partner in the restoration as it is a unique real-world educational opportunity for students: Mr. Kraus stated hopefully this can be worked into the curriculum for next year. Mr. DeMay asked if we could be a designated experimental site for EPA and receive funding to accomplish these needs. Mr. Zawiski stated the current funding cycle for the environmental education grants is now open. You can get them from \$5,000 to 40,000 which include instruments that can be easily used in the school.

Mr. Mazzaro asked if and when the recommendations as presented are accepted what will change in the use of Sunny Lake. Mr. Kraus stated based on the recommendations nothing would change in the use. Mr. Zawiski stated even if the water was lowering by 1 foot, then nothing would change the use level.

Mr. Mazzaro stated that some of the community are concerned if this is a temporary plan we should do it right. He has told them this is not a temporary plan but options to review and try to get the Aurora branch of the water quality acceptable for the EPA and wanted to know if he was right in saying it's not a temporary plan. Mr. Kraus stated this is not a temporary plan but exploring the options to hopefully cure the problem. We will try the less expensive options first that have a minimal impact on use but have a maximum impact on the water quality. Mr. Kraus stated we may try all these things and in a few years we might be back to the next step which might include lowering the water, dredging or other options. We are doing it in a methodical plan and not making rash decisions.

Ms. Holtshouse stated the need to let residents and Council know what steps are going to be taken and when in a time plan is important. Future options if these recommendations don't work will be looked into. This way the residents are not blind sighted if it should have to be done in the future.

Mr. Zawiski stated he would redo the report to include the changes made for the next meeting and hopefully recommended to Council. If anyone has comments for him to include in the report, please forward to the secretary at least two weeks before the next meeting.

Mr. Kraus stated he would try to schedule the meeting in early May and would have the secretary inform everyone.

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MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Trew stated for the record we scheduled the meetings for 6:00 to accommodate the councilman and none of them are present. He suggested possibly once in a while have a meeting other than 6:00p.m. to accommodate other members. Mr. Mazzaro agreed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Mazzaro moved to adjourn: Mr. Wehrenberg seconded and the meeting adjourned at 7:15p.m.

James Kraus - Chairman

Madeleine Marazzi – Recording Secretary