
MEMO

DATE: February 21, 2019

TO: City of Port Townsend City Council
Port Townsend, WA 98368

FROM: Michael J. Anderson, PE & PLS

SUBJECT: REVISED STORMWATER PLAN AND FINANCING

Although I have never received a reply from any City Council Person in the past two years of attempting to communicate directly for more than the 5 minutes allowed at the meetings, this is another memo to discuss the errors and omissions of the current plan under consideration for adoption.

As I requested in my memo to you collectively on January 5, 2018, I believe that the citizens of Port Townsend need an accounting of the funds collected over the past 30 years that were supposed to be spent on stormwater improvements and stormwater maintenance. The only communication I received was an email from the City Manager directing me to research the State Auditor's file listing their summary of the annual report. My inquiry was successful in learning that in 2013 the City received over \$600,000 that year in stormwater revenue. If the average over the past 30 years was one half million, that would indicate the City received over \$15,000,000 dollars for the storm drain system. The original 1986 plan anticipated a budget of \$3,500,000 to accomplish the list of projects and another \$ 130,000 annual maintenance cost.

In the current report under advisement by the City Council, the consultant report indicates that the value of the present City storm drain system is \$4,000,000. So over \$9,000,000 was available for the list of projects identified in that 1986 report. What happened to those funds that resulted in an expenditure of twice the present value? As I previously requested, the City management needs to outline how these monies were spent. If I had been a City official and was proud of the management of these fees, I would be extolling the accomplishments by the City staff and illustrating the benefits that were derived by the expenditures of the storm water revenues. Nothing in the present report of over 340 pages lists any past history.

In fact, the area that is shown on the 1986 map as Area 15 was summarized on Page 2-32 of the report as quote...."No problems indicated". But somehow this same area is now defined as the Rainier Street Regional Stormwater Project and is the Number 1 priority with an approval back in October, 2018 by the City Council (Resolution No. 16-024) which references partial financing by the stormwater fund. A very curious set of circumstances that need clarification by the City Administration were funds from a FUTURE SOURCE had already been assigned. The amount of \$800,000 for this project would be better spent on local street drainage where there is water flowing onto private property from street areas that should be captured by local underground storm drains to prevent subsurface flow that drains to the basement areas under existing residences.

And please see the final list of stormwater projects, Page 6-15, the first item listed is the “16th Street-Sheridan to Landes Street”, which is budgeted for \$210,00...a transfer from the list in the 1986 report, Table S-1, System 8-3 which was budgeted for \$259,000. Since it was never built, this might indicate that it really should not be on the list as a budget item but a notice to any future development in that area, that a City storm drain may be necessary. When I worked as the Assistant City Engineer for the City of Newport Beach, California, in the ‘60’s, the City would defer a master plan facility that was designated for a particular street wherein the City would contribute to the privately financed project to install an oversized Master Plan facility, integrated into the private development project. A little complicated but with full disclosure by all parties, an amicable and equitable solution was always arranged.

It is interesting to note that the proposed pump station at the Golf Course Pond in the 1986 report did not make the list in the new report, which identifies the location as the Hastings Pond...this new report is showing overflow into the adjacent private property and onto the pavement in F Street. I suggest that the pump station delivering the excess flow to the Kai Tai as shown in 1986 should be added to the new report and included in the list of projects.

In summary, the financing package does not make it clear what is the final monthly fee that all citizens will be faced with. Is the base \$7.25 monthly which presently has a monthly \$3.00 Surcharge be continued as the base, so that we will be paying a \$5.00 surcharge over the base monthly fee resulting in an amount of \$12.25 per month? And the proposed \$2000 fee for new residences is exactly contrary to the problem of low income housing that is constantly in the newspaper. The local politicians make it a point to raise this issue. And the solution is to reduce fees and expedite review of new projects...not to increase fees for development.

Finally for this report, the Rainier Stormwater project listed as the No. 1 priority is of special benefit to the Area 15 community that should be financed by a Local Improvement District, similar to the City of Port Townsend LID NO. 1 (the first in the history of the City) that was constructed in 1991, and the financing provided by the benefited properties. The City could provide a portion of the cost based on a pro-rata share of the base storm water fee as the area of Basin 15 relates to the overall City area.

In conclusion, this stormwater report needs further study by the citizens now that it is in final form. Please do not approve it as submitted. As we can all observe, there is no eminent storm water problem in Port Townsend. We are the beneficiary of the topographic features of the Chinese Gardens and the Kai Tai ponds that provide control and treatment to protect the natural waters surrounding Port Townsend now known as the Salish Sea.