

Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative (SBCI) Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) Workgroup

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Call To Order:

The workgroup was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

Those present were:

Laura Ogar, Bay County Environmental Affairs & Community Development; Pete Ostlund, MDEQ; William (Bill) Kaiser, City of Bay City; and Cyndi Gaul, Bay County Environmental Affairs & Community Development.

Laura Ogar provided everyone with Draft Notes from the June 25, 2009 SBCI CSO Workgroup Meeting for review and comment. Laura would like to get any comments back to her as soon as possible. Laura will provide a copy of the June 25th meeting notes at the August Meeting.

October Public Meeting:

Laura Ogar gave a re-cap of the last meeting, again placing an emphasis on having some cost estimates available so that the public knows what it will cost to alleviate or eliminate discharges. It's important for the public to know what they are looking at as far as costs. There are some people that feel any amount of discharge is too much, and they need to be made aware of the costs involved with eliminating discharges and if that's even possible. Pete Ostlund spoke with different people at the State and is working on putting together some sort of cost estimate for the Public Meeting. Sewer separation costs more than any other method and can't guarantee a zero discharge and retention basins would have to be twice their current size. It's hard because you have to design to a specific event and try to take in all possibilities. Bill Kaiser pointed out that in the last year alone we've experienced a "100 year storm" and that it's very difficult to prepare for such a storm. Laura Ogar thinks that if we put together some costs and factors that are reflective and designed for a 100 year storm that will give the public an idea of the sort of price involved. We may want to conduct some sort of risk assessment to determine what people are willing to live with in regards to discharge.

Bill Kaiser can put together some cost estimates, he just needs to know if we are going to show a design for capture and treatment or for a separate sewer system. Laura Ogar said she'd like to see the cost for both in order to show the public the difference in price. Laura thinks that when designing the systems we should use the 100 year storm event as our level of design. Pete Ostlund thinks it important for people to understand what size storm constitutes a 100 year storm event. Laura Ogar pointed out that we tend to get 100 year storm event a few times in the average year. Planning for such an event costs money and it's important to let the public know what that cost would be so they can understand the cost increase to, for example, their taxes. What can the public expect to pay should we move forward with the elimination of discharges. Pete Ostlund again reiterated that he would work on getting some costs together for the public meeting. Laura reminded him to go big and give costs that are accurate and reflect the work required. Bill Kaiser mentioned that when coming up with costs it's important to remember that the WWTP would need to be upgraded and made larger to accommodate the proposed changes. Once people are made aware of the costs, there may be a shift in perceptions. As a regulator, the DEQ should make a presentation at the Public Meeting. It's also important to get the Health Department on board to make a presentation about public safety and what levels are acceptable for human contact and why these levels are considered acceptable or safe.

Power Point Presentation:

Pete Ostlund plans to add to the DEQ Power Point Presentation in order to create a smoother "traveling show" format that can be presented to various groups in order to get the information out to the public. He'd like to make presentations to groups like the Yacht Club, SOS, Kawawlin River Group and the

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Walleye Club. Pete would also like to get a video prepared rather than using an actual Power Point Presentation. Laura Ogar thinks Pete should stick with the Power Point Presentation for now since a video might be too slick and part of the presentation is about changing attitudes and images. If the presentation is too big or too refined it might not get the information or message across to the public and instead tune them out.

Development of Communication Strategy:

Laura Ogar will work on the development of a communication strategy. In this way the group will be better prepared and will better understand what the workgroup wants to convey. It's important that we are clear and understand our message in order for us to share this message with the public. Pete Ostlund feels that it's important to understand what and why people have the beliefs they do in order to better communicate with them.

Draft Outline:

Laura Ogar will prepare a draft outline for the public meeting. Pete Ostlund will provide Laura with some cost estimates for the creation of a system that will have zero discharge designed for a 100 year storm event. Bill Kaiser would like to have shown what amount of discharge would be spared and at what cost to better bring home the idea of where funding is needed and if it will make a strong enough impact to warrant such costs. Laura will draft the outline and have something ready for the group to review at the August meeting.

Open House at Waste Water Treatment Plant:

Laura Ogar thinks that we should host an Open House at the WWTP in order to allow the public to see the work that has been done. It's important that the public understands that the WWTP is designed for the treatment of daily flow of the population plus and extra safety factor. There's a question of when the WWTP Open House should take place and it was suggested around the same time as the Public Meeting.

Historical Graph:

Pete Ostlund will work on a historical graph which can show the changes in how we handle discharges throughout the past fifty years. Pete feels that there will always be some storm or event that will come up that will challenge a system, and the public should be aware that changes for the better have taken place even if we aren't at zero discharge. Bill Kaiser would also like to work on the historical graph to help show where we've been, where we are now and where we're going. Pete would like to make sure the public understands the sources of pollution in the river and that while 30% is from RTBs, there's still 70% that's from non-point sources.

DEQ Form & Verbiage Changes:

Pete Ostlund received approval from his managers to change the DEQ Reporting Forms in order to better reflect what is taking place during discharge events. Pete Ostlund also mentioned that the Annual MDEQ CSO & SSO Report was almost complete. Pete is going to go back and change the language so that it has better verbiage to reflect the events taking place.

EPA and Other Reporting:

Pete spoke with Ken Miller about the use of SSO verbiage and Ken said he has done what the group has asked, but needs to have support for what is being done. The EPA is trying to push through enforcement, not policy. There needs to be open dialogue about how water gets to the treatment plant and that there should be authorized discharges which would not fall under the "CSO or SSO" event

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reporting. Laura Ogar mentioned that Tertiary treatments are acceptable for water quality standards for under Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL). Bacteria is removed during the secondary treatment. Bill Kaiser said that if that were taken out of the reporting mix then amounts would be a lot smaller. Bill pointed out that it's important to remove the suspended solids. Bill Kaiser said that the EPA is allowing a blending of load levels, but isn't clear about rain water which dilutes discharges. There are times when the rain may dilute the discharge so much that the water is actual up to standards. Bill will look into the cost of preventing any discharge up to a 100 year storm event.

Urban Run-Off:

Laura thought it would be good if we could somehow show the Urban run-off from storm events. There must be other reports similar to what we're looking for in similar climates like Ohio, Indiana or Illinois. Bill Kaiser said that he would find out the industry standards for municipal WWTP in urban areas. Pete Ostlund would like to see us compare other standards for illicit discharge as they can greatly vary depending on the factors or location. Bill Kaiser would like to present information from the workgroup at township meetings. Laura Ogar felt it was important to make sure these verbiage changes appear on our websites. She would like to make changes to the Bay County website that would address storm water and CSO Event issues and direct people to the right organizations for clarification.

Items Working On:

1. Changing DEQ Reporting Forms for discharge events. – (Pete Ostlund)
2. Cost Estimate for Public Meeting – (Pete Ostlund)
3. Cost Estimate for Bay City to prevent discharge during 100 year storm – (Bill Kaiser)
4. Historical Graph – (Pete Ostlund and Bill Kaiser)
5. Create a Draft Outline for Public Meeting based on our meetings - (Laura Ogar)
6. WWTP Open House – (Bill Kaiser)
7. Find Industry Standards for Municipal WWTP in Urban Areas – (Bill Kaiser)
8. Change County Website to address storm water and CSO issues – (Laura Ogar)
9. Get a copy of the MUCK Report – (Pete Ostlund)
10. Ask DEQ to make a presentation at the Public Meeting – (Pete Ostlund)
11. Get contact information for MWEA - (Laura Ogar)
12. Determine the Action Needed – (SBCI CSO Work Group - ALL)

Other Groups:

Laura Ogar would like to see other groups involved with the Public Meeting so it's not just another government meeting. It was mentioned that the group should contact the Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA). Laura will talk to Jeanette to see who the contact person is for MWEA. We should think about other protection groups that would be good to contact.

Adjournment:

The July 23, 2009 meeting of the SBCI CSO Workgroup was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Next Meeting:

SBCI CSO Workgroup Meetings take place on the 4th Thursday of the month. The next meeting is Thursday, August 27, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the MDEQ Office located at 401 Ketchum Street, Bay City, Michigan 48708.