

SKAGIT RIVER IMPACT PARTNERSHIP – STEERING COMMITTEE  
Minutes from March 15, 2007

Present: Jon Aarstad, Chal Martin, Kevin Rogerson, Esco Bell, John Schultz, Dave Olson, Dan O'Donnell, Daryl Hamburg, Rick Blair, Kate Moser (Skagit Valley Herald), Chuck Bennett, Larry Kunzler, Jana Hanson, Bud Norris, Scott Thomas.

**Call to order:**

**Jon Aarstad** called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. in the Burlington City Hall Conference Room.

**Jon Aarstad** stated that COE maps of the City of Burlington area had arrived yesterday. The maps are dated 2-10-07 and are labeled "draft". The maps indicate the proposed new FEMA flood elevations.

1.0 **Chal Martin** noted that following the meeting February 27 with the COE, he has concerns relating to the GI Study and data used. He suggested that SRIP could address the issues through a Resolution (from each member entity). If nothing else, it would request a placeholder in the plan process. He offered as resolution template that could be used by all members of SRIP. **Bud Norris** asked when would the clock start ticking for this process. **Martin** indicated it would be when FEMA formally issues its preliminary maps, which rumor has it may be in May. At that point, affected entities have 90 days to file an appeal **Martin** noted that the County seems to be accepting of the COE hydrology so that the GI process will move along rather than making sure the GI is based on accurate data, which might slow the process. **Norris** suggested that all members of the steering committee should attend a Board of County Commissioners meeting to address some of questions raised.

Members discussed the results of the meeting with elected officials (County Commissioners, Mayors and Dike District Commissioners) which was held February 27, 2007 at Skagit Valley College. The consensus was that there is a need to move forward as a community for flood protection.

**Martin** reviewed the 2/10/07 COE maps, noting that there is an eight foot increase to elevation in the City of Burlington. He discussed other changes to the maps. He noted that these maps are not from FEMA but rather from COE.

**Kevin Rogerson** stated that to date COE has ignored his request for information made in October 2006 through the Federal Freedom of Information Act. He suggested the possibility of taking bolder action if a response is not received soon. He discussed various records request options. Aarstad suggested a motion be

presented. **Rogerson** suggested submitting a discovery request to COE and also sending a letter to FEMA objecting to the new flood maps until review of the cities' and dike districts' substantive concerns about the historic unrecorded flood estimates are addressed. A motion was made by **Bennett/Norris** that the cities and dike districts would each make a request to FEMA regarding public disclosure of records. All agreed. Motion carried. **Rogerson** will draft a letter for each city and dike district.

- 2.0 **Martin** noted that Burlington is moving forward with forensic studies of the Smith House in Hamilton. He may look at another Hamilton structure for additional historical/forensic data. Some folks have suggested that the Skagit River ran another route in the early 1900's, but Mr. Albert Liou was able to provide a 1911 COE map which indicates the Skagit River near Hamilton ran nearly the same route in 1911 as it does today. **Martin** suggested additional, more detailed hydraulic modeling study be done of the Hamilton Reach area through a partnership of jurisdictions, in order to add information about whether the river had greater capacity in the Hamilton vicinity around the turn of the last century, which might have enabled huge floods to be conveyed past Hamilton with no flooding. **Norris** suggested setting aside funds for this effort. He noted that there is a levee system near Hamilton, from Shangri-La to Muddy Creek. **Larry Kunzler** noted that the depth of the river today is the same as in 1918; it does not appear that silt is filling the riverbed.
- 3.0 **Martin** noted that the Board of County Commissioners will be briefed on preliminary information for the NHC study at their March 27, 2007 meeting.
- 4.0
- 4.1 **Daryl Hamburg** indicated that a project within his district will be to set-back the dikes to protect I-5.
- 4.2 **Martin** suggested that engineering work be done so that viable projects can be identified. Even if funds are earmarked for property purchase and construction – projects can not be completed without engineering work being done. **Hamburg** indicated Dike 17 focus will be between the railroad bridge and the Old 99 Bridge as these are the most critical as well as the most expensive. He noted that Earmark funding is for projects to move forward and not for studies. He offered to bring back additional information following a meeting he will attend 3/22/07 with DOT and Skagit County PW.
- 5.0 **Martin** indicated that he has not yet spoken to Dr. Hromadka.
- 6.0 **Bennett** stated that Dike District 12 will move forward with projects to protect life and property within the City of Burlington. **Martin** indicated that he has requested dam safety documents relating to the Baker Dam. If he is successful and is granted access to these documents, he and Mike Harmon will be able to view the documents, but not allowed to discuss the information in the documents with other parties. **Dave Olson** indicated Dike District 3 is continuing to work on

small projects. **Hamburg** indicated that we need COE to run projects for us as the process moves along much faster – COE is not required to go through the same permitting process as local jurisdictions. The process for local jurisdictions takes much longer and is more costly in the long run. Regarding the lack of funding relating to the declared disaster event (November 2006 flood), he suggests that we contact the other 13 counties in Washington that were also declared disasters for the same event and encourage them to also contact U.S. Senator Murray (appropriations committee) to put pressure on the Washington D.C. delegation to come up with COE funding to repair damages from the disaster. **Aarstad** indicated that they will present a letter and resolution regarding this issue for council consideration at the 3/22/07 city council meeting. **Norris** indicated that the City of Mount Vernon is moving forward with the waterfront redevelopment project.

**Aarstad** asked about the outcome of the meeting of elected officials held on 2/27/07 at Skagit Valley College. **Norris** noted that small projects will continue to move forward and the County will move forward with the COE process. They agreed that all should move forward with affordable projects within their jurisdictions. They all agreed to not stand in the way of each other's projects and look at ways to support each other. **Martin** stated that he had heard feedback from the County that elected officials from the Cities and Dike Districts had agreed to accept the COE hydrology. **Norris** and **Hamburg** both stated that was not correct – rather, there was only an acknowledgment that each entity would move forward with its own projects and try to support the other entity if possible. There was no agreement, informal or formal, regarding the future use of the COE hydrology  
Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.