

OPEQUON CREEK PROJECT TEAM, INC.
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
March 05, 2008

Meeting held at: James Rumsey Technical Institute, Hedgesville, WV
Facilitator: Alana Hartman, Potomac Basin Coord., WV Dept. of Environmental Protection

Present: Sandra Bernardi, Mary Beth Bennett, George Snider, Jason Lucey, John Jacko,
Curtis Keller, Ron Gunderson, Bonnie Stubblefield, Chris Eurice, Calvert Estill,
Clifton Browning, Mary Palmer

6:00 Introductions: Meeting opened by Alana Hartman

Financial Report: None

Minutes of the Meeting: Two corrections were made to the February Minutes, one to the chronological order of Upcoming Events and one to strike the War Memorial Park planting as listed to occur on March 17, 2008. Ron Gunderson made a motion to accept and approve the Minutes with these two changes, Bonnie Stubblefield seconded the motion; all members present voted to pass the motion. Alana Hartman distributed an edited copy of the February Minutes of the presentation Mike Kanehl gave. Mike edited his speech to reflect what he meant to say rather than what the minutes stated he said. His changes were minor, but did clarify his position and statements made during the meeting.

Upcoming Events:

04/02/08	Regular meeting
05/07/08	Regular meeting

New Business:

1. Curtis Keller from Berkeley County Public Sewer Service District (PSSD) gave a presentation on Sewer Treatment Plants in Berkeley County. He stated power to the new North Berkeley sewer treatment plant was connected today and the contractor will begin to run equipment tests in preparation of the plant being operational by the end of March. This plant will remove approximately 1,000 septic systems from use and replace 6 smaller treatment plants in the area. It will serve the Spring Mills, Hammond Mill, etc. area and have 1,000,000 gallon per day flow capacity with room for 50% expansion. It will serve approximately 2,000 customers with the closest customers to the system being hooked up first. He stated State Law requires septic tank owners within 300' of the new lines having gravity feed to hook up to the system. PSSD does intend to inspect homeowner's septic tanks to make sure they have been de-commissioned properly (filled in or crushed).

Curtis stated the contractor/owner of a treatment plant does have to make sure the system is functioning to specification standards prior to PSSD taking control which includes meeting discharge bacteria limits as set by WVDEP for the individual plant.

He reported the North Berkeley Treatment Plant (nor any of the county plants) does not meet the EPA Clean Water Act nutrient standard levels prior to its out-flow entering Opequon Creek. The plant design was engineered to adapt to these standards (equipment costs more much than the costs of what was installed) at a later date if funds become available. He did state that the higher efficiency design of the new plant and those upgraded/retrofitted should reduce nutrient levels.

There is some concern at PSSD that more water saving devices installed in homes has lowered the amount of in-flow entering the plant system causing a situation that can be as difficult to manage at a treatment plant as too much effluent. A team member mentioned that the 2007 drought conditions might have also contributed to the lower amount of in-flow due to private well water owners' conservation efforts.

There was discussion about whether a lengthy pipe carrying effluent such as Spring Mill's 3 mile line was causing bacteria to build up within the pipe before it entered the creek (effluent simply sitting too long in the line), however, Clifton Browning (also PSSD employee), reported the pipe is being chlorinated at the pump station so this should not be a point source of additional bacteria. In addition, this is one of the plants that will be off-line once the North Berkeley plant is working.

Curtis reported that 50-60 Leyland cypress trees are to be planted on the street sides of North Berkeley Treatment Plant.

Curtis reported that upgrades and retrofits to the Inwood and Baker Heights treatment plants are progressing which will double both their capacities. Both plants have a new chemical feed building, incorporate higher efficiency filtering devices and ultraviolet light cleaning methods and utilize a 4-basin system that allows the ability to switch things around for repairs. The Inwood plant upgrades are 98% complete (1.5 million gallons per day capacity). The Baker Heights plant (1.8 million gallons per day capacity) construction should be finished in April. Curtis noted developmental impact fees Jefferson County levied against new construction funded all the costs of the Baker Heights plant upgrades.

Curtis stated the Opequon-Hedgesville Treatment Plant on Eagle Road (discharges to Eagle Run) is under a WVDEP consent order to repair/upgrade the plant. He reported that although this plant has the most violations, it is operational and does meet specifications, but does not manage over-loads properly. He said the plant was built around 1986/1987 and PSSD is currently in litigation against the engineer and contractor involved in the re-design and construction done in 2001. PSSD is seeking damages in the 8 figures for improper design and construction (trial date April 2009). PSSD is to begin work at the plant this fall regardless of the trial outcome.

Curtis reported the main issues, or concerns, PSSD has are the increased customer load needs of treatment plants and lack of funding to add/modify/upgrade to meet stricter requirements. He stated there was a lack of funding for PSSD to adequately monitor manholes and a Storm Water Utility was expected to form and be responsible for storm water drainage systems and lines. PSSD currently charges \$42.10 per month (the minimum charge) for sewer customers without public water hookup.

Curtis stated PSSD is required to notify DEP of any spills or leaks of public health concern.

A team member discussed concerns of suspended solids (sedimentation) in creek water and questioned Curtis about clear-cut construction methods when installing

new lines and PSSD responsibility to re-vegetate disturbed earth areas to reduce the sediments. Curtis replied PSSD could make a better effort and consider requiring the contractor to plant more than grass seed. He did state PSSD does not maintain their easements unless it is used to access a pump station or treatment plant so the native vegetation does have the ability to re-establish in some areas.

When answering the question, “What can PSSD do to protect the watershed?” Curtis responded PSSD could step up their efforts to educate the public. He handed out 2 brochures; information on correct disposal of household items and a general household plumbing guide. He said PSSD is installing close circuit cameras at some of the 150-175 pump stations in the county to deter improper use. He also stated West Virginia citizens need to consider reusing water in the future.

2. A water monitor test result discussion with Doug Chambers (water quality specialist) will be held on a night (date to be determined) that is not a regularly scheduled OCPT meeting night. Water monitors are to meet at the Rt. 11 bridge (Morgan Park just north of Runnymede Road) in Bunker Hill on Sunday, March 9, at 4:30 pm for a training session with Jim Lawrence.
3. After discussion, it was determined that OCPT needs to add a bylaw amendment to state “OCPT will not sell or exchange our donor list (contributions) with any other organizations”. The president will submit an amendment to the bylaws at the next regular meeting for membership vote.
4. Mary Palmer reported the Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce’s ‘Welcome to Neighborhood’ program has offered to include OCPT informational literature in their packages to new residents. They deliver approximately 100 packages containing local information per month in the county. Alana stated she would provide the first batch of rain barrel flyers to include with the OCPT brochures for distribution. Chris stated Staples folds for 2 cents a copy.

Old Business:

1. The president reported that on February 11, 2008, a request was sent from OCPT for pro bono legal assistance from the WV State Bar Environmental Committee regarding liability exposure resulting from our events and activities. We received a response stating that we will be contacted directly if there is a lawyer who is interested in providing the assistance the Team has requested. Arndt McBee Insurance Company states the cost of liability insurance is \$500-\$700 per event and is asking their board of directors if the cost of insurance for an OCPT event could be a donation. Several members reported their personal homeowners insurance does not cover their participation in a volunteer capacity.
2. The Baltimore and Randolph Street Rain Garden is waiting for the project engineers, (VIEW), to provide a plant selection list.
3. Alana Harman reported the Mill Creek Watershed Based Plan is still in progress and

she would appreciate comments emailed to her. The Shepherd University intern did produce a useful map showing erosion sites on the creek that we've been using for that part of the Plan.

4. There was a reminder for team members to suggest OCPT fund raising ideas.
5. The president's "2008 State of The Opequon" final draft was emailed to members and will be shortened/condensed before mailing to legislators. Alana suggested the report include a reference to receiving Stream Partners Grant funds so the legislatures will continue to vote for these funds to be available.

Project Updates, (OCPT projects in bold print):

1. 03/08/08 9:00am – 1:00pm, Berkeley Community Pride paper drive at Quad Graphics. (Phone books are accepted).
- 03/20/08 Tentative planting date for War Memorial Park, (Parks and Rec), (5 trees and 37 shrubs) to be planted in the rocks that were installed for the stream bank restoration project.
- 03/29/08 10:00am, Jefferson County Riparian Field Day at Morgan's Grove Park, Shepherdstown (1500 trees). Volunteers needed.
- 04/05/08 10:00am, **Rain Barrel Workshop**, Kilmer Springs Water Treatment Plant, Baltimore Street, OCPT volunteers needed.
- 04/12/08 9:00am, **Opequon at Stone Bridge Cleanup** – PVAS (FLOW program 4th graders) and Boy Scout Troop 137 to participate. OCPT volunteers needed. Lunch and water provided. This is also a part of Alice Ferguson's annual Potomac Clean Up and WV's "Make it Shine" program. Volunteers needed.
- 04/17-04/18 Eastern Panhandle Conservation District Tree Sale, Berkeley County Youth Fairgrounds, Volunteers needed to help sort and pack.
- 04/19/08 Berkeley Community Pride Roadside Cleanup. Volunteers needed.
- 04/19 and 04/26 **Mill Creek Buffer Planting** – 8:30-2:00pm, both days at Dave & Rhonda Webber's property, Dominion Dr., Gerrardstown, OCPT volunteers needed.
- 05/03/08 **Judicial Center Rain Garden**, section 2, native plant installation.
- 05/17/08 **Baltimore and Randolph Street Rain Garden** plant installation.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Minutes of the Meeting prepared by Mary Palmer, Secretary, OCPT, Inc.

Minutes posted at: <http://www.opequoncreek.org>

