

WATER COMMITTEE
AUGUST 22, 2001
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Chuck Watkins, Chairman**
 Dr. George Patton, Vice Chairman
 Tony Parrott
 Chris Venice

NON-VOTING MEMBERS: **Jim Mallett**

ABSENT: **Chris Cofty**
 Bill McNally

STAFF PRESENT: **Russell Ray, Dennis Davenport, David Scarborough**

GUESTS: **Larry Turner, PTCWASA**
 Mike Thomas, Clayton County Water Authority

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chuck Watkins at 8:00 A.M.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON JULY 25, 2001.

Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton made the motion and Chris Venice seconded, to approve the minutes from the meeting on July 25, 2001. There was no opposition.

II. MIKE THOMAS TO SPEAK ON FLINT RIVER WATERSHED BASIN.

Mr. Parrott welcomed Mr. Thomas from Clayton County Water Authority. He explained that Fayette County and Clayton County participated together in the Watershed Assessment Plan. Mr. Thomas reported they have been working on this project with their consultant CH2MHILL for a couple of years. Since the Flint River is split by the Clayton and Fayette County line it made a lot of sense for us to work together in this process on the Flint River. There are many reasons that water utilities have to be involved in Watershed Management Plans. One big reason is to get increases in water withdrawals or permit wastewater discharges, the State tells us we need to do a Watershed Assessment. On the drinking water side there are some new regulations.

Mr. Thomas went on to say that when they started the Watershed Assessments, they characterized the watershed. They looked at the land use, took samples to determine the quality of the water, and did fish and insect sampling. They did some modeling looking at

current conditions, and tried to predict what would happen in the future as they continue to grow. Based on the results, they began developing a Watershed Protection Plan. A group including Clayton County businesses will meet to develop a plan that everyone can live with.

The State has classified many of the streams in the Flint River Basin as fishing streams. This means they are supposed to support a fishable population of fish. They had to evaluate the habitat that the fish and bugs live in. Consultants counted how many and what type of fish were in the streams to learn what the water quality was. They also did chemical testing.

Once they did the sampling, they then used the model. The model takes land use and rainfall to estimate the amount of runoff, the quality of that runoff and what it will do to our streams. This helps predict future conditions as we continue to grow. Mr. Thomas discussed turbidity in the streams. The higher concentrations in the Flint River Basin are around the airport. Further down in the basin, watersheds in Fayette County are not as impacted by turbidity. There are many impacts to stream habitat. Everywhere there is a significant amount of development, you get a lot of runoff. This tends to erode the stream bank, deposits sediment in the stream and leads to tough conditions for insects and fish to live in. The insect and fish sites were borderline, some were good, others were very poor. Most of the very poor sites were in the upper Flint below the airport, Highway 75 and Highway 85.

Mr. Thomas summarized that the greatest impact is from runoff that occurs from the paved surfaces. Every time it rains, you get more flow. It runs off faster and has a higher velocity. If it erodes the streams banks, it puts more sediment in the stream banks and makes it tough for fish and insects to live there. They saw some violations of water quality standards for metals and bacteria. In the long run, the State will come up with Total Maximum Daily Loads, and a watershed protection plan will have to be developed to improve the concentrations of metals and bacteria in our streams.

They then began developing the Management Plan. What are they going to do to protect the areas that are not already polluted? What are they going to do to improve those that are? They looked at County wide strategies such as zoning, green space programs, and public education; addressing the impacts of new development on water quantity and quality; and then going back to try to improve areas already impacted such as the upper Flint River. This includes a long term monitoring program to see how well they are doing throughout the process.

In Clayton County they are looking at land use and zoning, conservation zoning. Mr. Thomas stated this is probably not a big issue in the unincorporated Fayette, but in Clayton where they have much denser development, they are looking at a process that would allow the developer

to make his development a little bit denser, but then he has to set aside 50% of his property into a permanent green space. That allows him a little bit of flexibility. This has been controversial in Clayton County where they have denser development. The Board is still considering it. They are setting up a trust to accept land along streambanks. Some developers do not want the floodplain property. If they had some way they could give it to somebody to get it off their books, they would be glad to do it. They have already seen some success in this area. They have 32 acres donated to them on the Fayette Clayton County line at Highway 54 by the Jackson family. They will be able to permanently keep this as wetlands. They put a lot of emphasis on public education. It makes a lot of difference when they know what impacts our habitats on streams. If we over fertilize our yard, we can't dump motor oil in the storm drains. A lot of people do not know these things. They don't understand. Clayton County has an adopt-a-stream program. They teach anybody who wants to know how to sample the stream, and how to keep the streams in their backyard clean. They have hired somebody full time to work on those kinds of programs. They know it has an impact on future permits. They are having a Wetlands and Watershed Festival at their Wetland Center in September. They have had several public meetings to let the public know what they are doing.

Mr. Thomas went on to say they are trying to get the County to "beef up" their sediment and erosion control enforcement. The County is cross-training some of their staff. They previously had 3 personnel that did erosion and sediment inspections. Now, they are trying to get all their building inspectors cross-trained. They require engineers and developers doing work in the County to have a NEPDS permit certification. This means they know what kind of standards are required. The County is also willing to take ownership of storm water ponds in residential areas and provide permanent maintenance for those ponds.

In new development they are looking at trying to control the water quality and water quantity coming off those sites. In the past, they always looked at the velocity of water. Now they have to look at the quality of the water coming off of those sites. The Atlanta Regional Commission is developing a Statewide Manual to try to address that and to help make things more consistent throughout each local government. Clayton County will probably adopt that manual. They have developed a tool called the WISE model to apply to new development. It sets a standard for them to meet. It gives them some tools to figure out how to meet that standard.

When they looked at all the water sheds in Clayton County and determined if they are meeting the Total Suspended Solids, or turbidity standards, they found that about 40% of them were exceeding those standards. Clayton County told the State they would put into place plans to be sure it does not get any worse. They are not sure how well they can improve

on it, but they are going to make sure it doesn't get any worse. They determined this would require a new development criteria of 65 pounds per acre per year of Total Suspended Solids coming off of any new development site.

Mr. Thomas explained how the WISE models works. The developer looks at his proposed development. He determines how much impervious surface it is going to have, how much disturbed pervious (lawns, areas that are graded and then landscaped), undisturbed upland areas, and undisturbed stream buffers. The model will determine how much suspended solids can come off each of those types of land. It will calculate the Total Suspended Solid load. Clayton County is implementing this program. They have had people practicing with it. Beginning in September it will be required of all new developments greater than 5 acres.

Clayton County also has a program to address areas such as the upper Flint that have already been impacted. They are trying to determine which ones are the most impacted. Now, the consultants are walking the streams, seeing where the most damaged areas are. They are looking for areas where they might try to restore those natural stream conditions. The airport is building its fifth runway and piping a lot of stream. As part of the project they have to mitigate the stream piping. They are looking for about 6 miles of stream that they can go in and repair. Clayton County has been working with them with their consultants to get them to look in these areas that they know are already impacted. This means they will actually buy a section of stream and try to restore it back to a more natural condition.

Mr. Thomas stated that since the Water Authority is not part of the County government, they do not have the authority to implement these programs. They are working very close with the County to make sure they do. Clayton County Water Authority has set aside part of their water and sewer revenue for this kind of work. It is important not only to the quality of the water, but to future permits. They have set aside four cents out of every dollar of water and sewer revenue to go toward watershed protection and watershed improvement programs.

Consultants developed the WISE model and it is now available on the Water Authority and Clayton County web sites. A developer can download it from the web site. They have had one training class, and will have another if needed. It is very simple.

The committee discussed with Mr. Thomas parking lot restrictions. Clayton County plans to develop a Watershed Coordinating Committee to meet with the municipalities to go over what they are doing. Some of the cities do more than the county does. It depends on each local government.

Mr. Turner commented that this Watershed Assessment showed the same issues they found

when Peachtree City Water and Sewerage Authority did theirs. The issues are storm water runoff in regard to water quality. They found metals and high turbidity. It was worse on the upper end of the basin before it came into Peachtree City, than down below.

Mr. Parrott commented that the Source Water Assessment ties in with this. Fayette County will have a public meeting on October 16 at the Administrative Complex. Clayton County had their meeting last week.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON SEPTAGE.

Chris Venice reported that she received a call from Mr. Thiem last week. He is the only local septic tank pumper in the county. He let her know that Clayton County had informed him that their fees are going up again, doubling. This means they have gone, in the last year, from \$75.00 to \$185.00 (depending on the size of tank). Now it is going over \$200.00 to deposit a tank of septage. He is concerned that this appears to him that Clayton County is getting ready to encourage people like him to go somewhere else. He was inquiring what the county's plans are to handle this situation. It is getting to the point that if a hauler has Fayette County septage you cannot dump in Clayton.

Mr. Turner commented that Mr. Thiem also called him asking what their position is. Mr. Thiem expressed the same concerns. Peachtree City WASA plants are not large enough to accept septage. One load could knock out the whole plant. The biggest plant is 2 MGD. They are running, on an average, 1.3 to 1.4 MGD. They are expanding Rockaway to 4 MGD. That will be done in about two years. If some type of pretreatment could be constructed prior to, it is a possibility. It would have to be evaluated. Mr. Turner went on to say there are serious odor problems when you deal with septage. Not matter how you deal with it, there are serious odor controls that would have to be in place, if anything were done at Rockaway. They are closing Flat Creek, which has the same residential concerns. Line Creek is not being expanded. They plan to go to urban reuse at Planterra on the golf course. If proper pretreatment could be done, it might could be done at Flat Creek. He commented he would be glad to look into it.

Mr. Turner expressed concern about illegal dumping with the cost going up. They have a problem, particularly with grease haulers. They know when they dump a load of grease, because there will be a load of grease in the pump station from an illegal dump. Mrs. Venice commented that people who have failing septic systems who have to pump to keep them working, if their prices go up, they will come to see the Board. The ultimate problem is they have to walk away from the house.

Chairman Watkins commented that Fayette County is designed for septic systems. We keep approving them, and we need to have a way to take care of it ourselves. Mr. Parrott explained that the State is beginning to look at the discharge by the Water System. They are looking at how much is withdrawn from the stream, and how much is put back in. At some point in time, they will look at Fayette County, with the amount of septage we have, and we may have another regulation, because we are not returning enough.

Vice Chairman Dr. Patton stated that a “band-aid” approach is not the answer to this problem. Chairman Watkins agreed that we need a way to treat it. Mr. Turner commented that regulations to get permits are getting more stringent. They are about to spend \$15,000,000.00 to upgrade their treatment processes. The new permit will be much more stringent. They are concerned about taking anything that will take a chance on upsetting their process. If they knew they could treat it, and not have any process problems, there would not be an issue. Treatability is their only concern. They need to do some research to see what is available as a pretreatment process that they could feel comfortable with.

Chairman Watkins suggested that Mr. Parrott, Mr. Mallett and Mrs. Venice meet to gather information and then come back to the committee with a report.

IV. REPORT ON LAKE HORTON.

Mr. Parrott reported that Safe Dams are coming back next Wednesday for their inspection. We fertilized and hydroseeded the dam again. Discussion on Mr. Blalock’s property will be in two weeks.

V. DISCUSSION OF BIDDING MISCELLANEOUS FENCING.

Mr. Parrott explained the need for fencing at three locations, Porter Road, Ellis Road and the additional property at Brooks Creek. The Porter Road site is six acres. Construction on the Ellis Road tank will begin shortly. At the additional wetland site, we have purchased property several times since the original mitigation site was purchased. The part of the wetland that has been restored is fenced. We stopped the fence short of the existing wetlands, because you can’t hardly walk when you get down close to the Flint River. Mr. Parrott went on to say that the portion he would like to fence is between the additional property we purchased and the subdivision that has been subdivided on the adjoining property. He wants to fence the portion that is already zoned residential. Without a fence, if the Marshal gets a complaint it is hard to determine what is Water System property. We had a hunting problem a couple of years ago. The committee agreed to bid the Miscellaneous Fencing.

VI. DNR ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS.

Mr. Parrott explained that he was surprised by the Department of Natural Resources. When the water plant inspector came down to look at start up of the water plant, he wanted to know how we were going to staff it. He wanted to know if we were going to have a Class I Operator on each shift. We don't have enough Class I Operators for each shift. The inspector stated that is the rule. The plant qualifies as a plant that requires a Class I Operator. They talked about and decided that we need at least a Class I Operator in charge of that plant. We have always operated with Jarrott Johnson being the Plant Manager. He has a Class I license. He oversaw both the Crosstown plant and the Kelly Drive plant when we had both running. Mr. Parrott stated he did not see that it would be a problem for him to oversee two plants this way. They are not going to allow it. The inspector explained that we either have someone at the plant in charge as a Class I Operator or he will shut it down and fine us \$1,000.00 per day. Mr. Parrott stated that he talked to his boss. In the discussion he found out that the inspector could shut us down and fine us \$1,000.00 a day, because that is the rule.

Mr. Parrott went on to say that he has a proposal to Chris Cofty for Board review to add an additional person to the Water System. This would be an Assistant Plant Manager. This job would be at the South Fayette Water Treatment Plant. The State has given us 60 days to accomplish this. They don't understand the workings of local government. 60 days to create a position, get it approved and then staff it is probably not reasonable. He planned ahead in staffing the plant. We hired people to be operators more than a year and a half ago. They have been through the certification process. We have a certified operator on each shift anytime that plant is in service. You have to have two years experience to take the Class II exam, and three years experience to take the Class I exam. Unless you have a college degree. At that point, they don't require you to have three years experience. They will let you have less. The plant operators that we have hired are not even eligible to take the Class II exam. They can operate the plant. They can meet all the requirements. Including himself, there are seven employees that have a Class I license. We just don't have enough to have one on each shift at each plant around the clock. We are not able to staff that way.

INFORMATION FOR COMMITTEE

Mr. Parrott reported the water usage is 494,000 gallons a day less than it was last year. We have gotten some rain and the City of Fayetteville is still operating their plant. The South Fayette Water Plant is permitted for 6 MGD. We can do 4 to 4 1/2 with no trouble. Last Tuesday a week ago, we pumped more water out of the South Fayette Water Plant than we did Crosstown. We are balancing the flow between the two plants. Lake Horton is only about

a foot low.

HIGHWAY 314 AND 138 WATERLINE

Mr. Parrott explained that we bid the Highway 314 and 138 waterline job and then tried to get a permit from DOT. DOT would not give us a permit to put the waterline in on Hwy 138. Mr. Mallett and Mr. Jaegar both met with DOT about how to get the waterline in. Part of the job includes putting the waterline under a gas company valve pit.

Mr. Mallett added that they wanted a section of the waterline installed off the shoulder of the road down in the toe of slope. What DOT did was make the waterline cost almost prohibitive to put it down Hwy 138, the way they wanted to do it. We took that section out of the job, and just awarded the Hwy 314 portion of the job. Mr. Parrott stated we still had to make changes to Hwy 314, which raised the cost.

David Scarborough commented that for a couple of years the Fire Department withheld construction permits for a job on Commerce Drive. It was conditional on that waterline extension, eventually having water on Commerce. Conditional to that, they allowed that building to be built. It has been finalized and occupied for some time. Mr. Scarborough did not realize the problem had surfaced with DOT. He now has a request for another building to be added onto on Commerce. For the same reasons they did not want to see anymore commercial development without the waterline infrastructure available for fire protection, they would deny and oppose any construction until we have the fire protection (water issue) settled. He has a situation across the street that was done conditional to this waterline improvement. It has not been completed and now he has a new building. He feels like we are in a precarious position. Mr. Scarborough referred to the Auto Zone building that was denied water from Clayton County. The Fire Department required Auto Zone to put in a sprinkler system with their own water holding tank in the back, in order to build that building. He does not know that this is going to be a practical solution for the new building or the fact that we still have one that was conditional to the waterline extension. He is not sure, legally, where we stand. He knows they are going to want to go forward with the project. He stated he wants to let the Committee know that the Fire Department feels like this is something that needs to be dealt with. The commitment was made, and now he is not sure how we are going to follow through with it.

Mr. Parrott commented that we did not know how to put the waterline in, because the toe of slope would mean we would be off the right-of-way in order to put the waterline in. This meant we would have to get construction easements from the property owners. Mr. Scarborough asked if there is a possibility of getting an easement from the owner on the back side to run the

waterline. Mr. Parrott commented that the right-of-way is substandard. It appears there are no shoulders. In order to do waterline work, we would have to do deed searches on the roads.

Mrs. Venice pointed out that these properties are all zoned land use commercial. This came up because we did not want to lose those properties to Clayton County. We said we would provide them with water. They have a 2" waterline from Clayton County right now for drinking water. There is not enough pressure for fire. You have to have fire protection in order to get a commercial permit. We issued one permit, planning to run a waterline.

The committee tabled this item until the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Parrott made a motion and Vice Chairman Dr. Patton seconded to adjourn to executive session for discussion of one item of real estate.

Chairman Watkins discussed one item of real estate with the committee. Mr. Parrott made a motion and Vice Chairman Dr. Patton seconded for Chairman Watkins to proceed on this item. There was no opposition.

There being no further business, Chairman Chuck Watkins adjourned the meeting at 9:30 A.M.

Chuck Watkins

The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 12th day of September, 2001.

Lisa Gillis