



MEETING SUMMARY OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF TEXAS FLOODING TASK FORCE MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 21, 2019

A meeting of the Charter Township of Texas Flooding Task Force was held on November 21, 2019, commencing at approximately 10:30 a.m. at the Texas Charter Township Hall.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Hinkle opened the meeting thanking everyone for taking the time to attend. He explained why the Task Force was created and that this flooding situation is awful, and it is being compounded by so many factors. He iterated that we need to get through this by focusing on the status and the solution. We must maintain civility and discuss ideas. This has been an emotional rollercoaster and is a terrible situation for everyone impacted. Reminder to focus on the solutions so we can keep moving forward. He then invited the Task Force members to introduce themselves. The following members of the Task Force were present:

- Engineer Tom Wheat, Prein & Newhof
- Kyle Alexander, EGLE
- Travis Bartholomew, RCKC Deputy Director
- Jeff VanBelle, Kalamazoo Deputy Drain Commissioner
- Jack Levy, Sen McCann District Manager
- Kalamazoo County Commissioner Christine Morse
- Phil Deyoung, Eagle Lake Association
- Nate Henschel, Congressman Upton's Office
- Senator Sean McCann
- Dan Moyle
- John Casper, Bass Lake Representative
- Jim Roberts, Crooked Lake Association
- Russ Walters, Crooked Lake Association
- Len Bosma, Eagle Lake Association
- Dian Latora, Pine Island Development Representative
- Mark Rose, Vineyards Representative
- Larry Pawloski, Kalamazoo County Road Commissioner
- Texas Township Trustee Tim Brown
- Texas Township Trustee Nick Loeks
- Texas Township Supervisor, John Hinkle
- Texas Township Superintendent Julie VanderWiere

2. FLOODING STATUS

Jim Roberts (Crooked Lake) advised that Crooked Lake is 22.38 inches above the high-water mark. The water level has been at 22 inches since October with no real movement.

Mark Rose (Vineyards Development) reported that they are about the same as last meeting. Currently, the pumps are running every 2 minutes and they were down to running every 6 minutes.

Dian Latora (Pine Island Development) reported that people are still pumping into the street, which drain right to her backyard. The water in her backyard is higher than this time last year.

Len Bosma (Eagle Lake) reported that there is no change. He advised that he is deferring to Prein & Newhof for the exact measurements.



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Nick McLaughlin (Pine Island Lake) reported that the water level recession has ceased. He is afraid more people will be forced out of their homes if the pumping rate is not increased soon.

Christine Morse reported that she spoke with Julie Rogers (Kalamazoo County Commission Chair) about the petition drive for the legal lake level. She advised that the County Commission will not entertain a hypothetical issue. Should Crooked Lake not get their signatures they should come to her to discuss how the County Board can support moving forward. May need to hear a lot of voices of why this is important to overcome the challenges.

Jeff VanBelle responded that he agreed with Christine. They could present signatures that are collected. We will keep moving but this may slow us down if the 66% petition signatures are not collected for Crooked Lake.

Russ Walters (Crooked Lake) asked please don't assume Crooked Lake won't have the signatures. He is wondering if we are gaining ground or losing ground and he asked where we are at compared to where we have been. He would like more data.

Len Bosma stated that he agrees we should be more civil. CLTA, ELTA and the adjacent sister neighborhoods wrote a letter to Governor Whitmer on November 6, 2019. He read a portion of the letter and stated that he is concerned that the lack of results will put the long-term solution in jeopardy. 20 Acres of wetland is being considered over 1000+ acres of wetland. He has contacted the Governors Constituent Relations person and asked 1) When will she respond 2) Will she come to Texas Township to get firsthand knowledge of our situation 3) Can we send a group of people to meet with her. We have asked for the Governor to intervene.

Kyle Alexander (EGLE) responded that he spoke to the Governor about the letter and we were advised that they are working on a response.

Len Bosma replied that they will continue to follow up with the Governors' Office.

3. Flood Mitigation Project Update

Al Sabo Monitoring Wells

Tom Wheat reported that we are working with EGLE to increase the pumping rate to 1200 gpm. We had to install two ground water monitors that use transducers to take four readings a day. One of the wells is pretty consistent and one well is showing some fluctuation which indicates that there may be issues with ice. We will need to look at this.

Kyle Alexander asked about the pump and the problems as it relates to the spread sheet data. He did not feel it was being accurately recorded. The data needs to be accurate because they are using this data to determine any changes in the pumping rates.



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Tom Wheat responded that Balkema has had some problems with the pump/river screen. They are working on installing an alarm to notify when the pump has gone off unexpectedly. Their main concern is the pump getting damaged from freezing if it were to be off for an extended amount of time.

Permit Change of Pumping Rate

Len Bosma asked what would change the rate?

Kyle Alexander responded that they are looking at the ground water. The monitoring wells need accurate information.

Nick McLaughlin asked if there has been a correlation between surface water elevation and the pumping rate.

Kyle Alexander responded yes; we believe there is.

Nick McLaughlin asked if Kyle would be willing to share the statistics that show the correlation.

Kyle Alexander responded that they are using the google drive that everyone is inputting data into.

Russ Walters commented that he was not aware that we were having mechanical problems with the pump.

Tom Wheat responded that there haven't been mechanical problems. The issues are power surges on Eagle Lake causing the pump to shut down. We have also had issues with the River Screen due to the unexpected cold temperatures.

Jim Roberts asked if Kyle could say why the rate was decreased.

Kyle Alexander advised it was based on GEI reports and Wetland Staff observations. They did not see the wetland drying out like other like wetlands did this summer. We need to have stable ground water elevations for the hibernating animals to keep them alive.

Jim Roberts commented that he has built homes on Lake Templane and he knows that they reduce the lake level every winter to kill the weeds.

Kyle Alexander responded that they have to work with DNR to show that they will not adversely impact the wildlife before they are allowed to reduce the level.

Jim Roberts asked, how they are allowed to fluctuate 3 ft and we are only allowed inches.

Kyle Alexander responded that they are two separate systems, and both require reporting.

Jim Roberts also inquired if EGLE issue a permit for the Morrow Lake Dam repairs.

Kyle Alexander responded that they did.



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Russ Walters commented that we were pumping at 2000 gpm and now 1000 gpm. Now you are using that as a standard. Why was it reduced in the first place?

Kyle Alexander responded that they did not have all the baseline data to begin with. We can not have a dramatic increase. He advised that he does not think we are wasting our time asking for an increase. The monitoring wells will help us understand the changes.

Russ Walters asked if there was any chance, we could get back to 2000 gpm.

Nick McLaughlin responded only if there is no increase in the WSE

Len Bosma asked if EGLE was worried about the wetlands in general. Why then are you not worried about all our wetlands? Pine Island is a large wetland that is being adversely impacted by the flooding.

Kyle Alexander responded that he is not a wetland expert. Wetlands upstream are different than the wetlands downstream. They can handle more water. The permit focuses on the downstream wetlands.

Nick McLaughlin commented that he had a question about the permit language. The permit states that "Adverse Impact on wetland can reduce the gpm" What is an adverse impact?

Kyle Alexander responded EGLE does not use invasive species. The white paper was looking at impact in whole from the GEI reports.

Nick McLaughlin stated that it feels like justification by 50%, now 40% and there are no reasons given as to why, no citations for adverse impact. He asked would you be willing to offer the rationale of the reduction from 2000 gpm to 1000 gpm?

Kyle Alexander responded that based on reports from GEI showing impacts. Our experts confirmed the impacts. We allowed the Township to keep pumping at the max for a long time. Maybe we shouldn't have allowed that. We wanted the drawdown too. We started to see the impacts in July but did not make a change until September.

Nick McLaughlin stated for the record, we are not seeing a decrease. Residents are now skeptical it will reduce.

Kyle Alexander responded that we did get a large amount of rain right after the pump rate was reduced and that did not help.

Tim Brown advised that he was contacted by residents that wanted their story told. They provided history about Pine Island Lake and about the hundreds of trees falling and dying. The wrote a letter explaining one property owners' observations. The Township is doing everything they can to help with the flooding.

Jeff VanBelle stated now that the monitoring wells are in, are they being looked at to determine if it is possible to increase the pumping rate.



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4. UPDATE FROM LONG TERM SOLUTION SUBCOMMITTEE

Len Bosma explained that the committee has not met in a while. They have been working on circulating the petitions for signatures. The biggest issue is the pumping rate reduction. It is jeopardizing the long-term plan. This shows the urgency of the pumping rate. Most of the Task Force members are in favor of raising the current rate. The only relief we are going to have is to have the rate increased. We need to do more.

Russ Walters estimated that we can get a total of 256 signatures. We have 100+ currently and only have 21 no's which is 8%. We are struggling with apathy because there are not as many homes impacted on Crooked Lake as there are on Eagle Lake. There is uncertainty about the cost and a lack of trust. We will continue to work to get our signatures.

Jeff VanBelle commented that he appreciated the effort. He knows it is hard but also that this should not be an easy task.

Jim Roberts stated that he is confident that they will meet their goal.

Christine Morse commented that she hopes the residents will buy into this because it is important even for Crooked Lake.

Nick McLaughlin offered to help have conversations with those people that are undecided, because he has been out of his home since May.

Jim Roberts responded that if they are at 60%, they will ask for his help.

Nick McLaughlin stated it is for the greater good. He will help people understand.

Len Bosma stated that he is asking fellow Task Force members for input and support to go to Lansing or meet with Governor Whitmer. He asked that people send him ideas and or help him figure out how we can get the decision overturned. 20 Acres of Wetland vs. 1000 people and 1000 acres.

5. FEMA GRANT APPLICATION/HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Superintendent VanderWiere explained that the Township Board approved Prein & Newhof drafting a Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Township and apply for the FEMA Mitigation Grant this is expected to cost approximately \$26,000. The FEMA Flood Mitigation Grant requires an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan to be eligible to apply for the grant. Kalamazoo County's Hazard Mitigation Plan is expired. They are working to update their plan, but it will not be completed in the time frame that we need in order to get the FEMA Grant application submitted in time. We are working on a very short time frame to get both the plan approved and the grant submitted by Jan 31st. If we come to you and ask for your help with either, please help as quickly as possible as time is of the essence.



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6. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Jim Roberts thanked the Board for stepping up.

John Casper shared that Bass Lake has been holding its level since the culvert has been replaced.

Travis Bartholomew shared that RCKC will have to make some changes with pumping over the winter. The RC pumps on Treasure Island will have to shut down when they freeze over the winter. They have notified the residents they feel will be impacted. He appreciates the Treasure Island residents who are working together to come up with another option.

Russ Walters shared that there are petitions at the Township Office for both lakes that people can sign for the Legal Lake Level.

Jim Roberts commented that in October Crooked Lake had lost 20 inches, now we are at 15 inches because of the rain and the reduction in the pumping rate.

Tim Brown commented that he liked what Len said. Impacts to upstream should outweigh impacts downstream. If the rate does not change, we are not going to make it.

Mark Rose asked what the next step is as this is not working. We are going to be back where we were. What are our options? He doesn't think this is going to work, there has to be another solution even if it is expensive.

Dian Latora commented that they feel the same way. We are not seeing relief.

Christine Morse commented that she hopes Governor Whitmer will have communication with the Task Force members. It is important. The wetlands are impacted on both sides which makes it hard to understand. She hopes there is some consideration given.

Jeff VanBelle shared that we do continue to look at other solutions. We are working on it. We are preparing contingency plans, but we have to work within the parameters of the law. We need to seriously look at changing the development rules.

Nate Henschel (Congressman Upton's' Office) shared that they continue to work with the insurance issue with FEMA. He also offered to help with the FEMA Grant as well.

The next Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 10:30am.

Submitted by Superintendent Julie VanderWiere