



MEETING SUMMARY OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF TEXAS FLOODING TASK FORCE MEETING HELD ON July 23, 2020

Via Zoom

A meeting of the Charter Township of Texas Flooding Task Force was held on July 23, 2020, commencing electronically via Zoom at approximately 10:30 a.m.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor John Hinkle opened the meeting, thanking everyone for taking the time to attend. The following members of the Task Force were present:

- Engineer Tom Wheat, Prein & Newhof
- Engineer Tom Smith, Prein & Newhof
- Derek Haroldson, EGLE
- Kyle Alexander, EGLE
- Jeff VanBelle, Deputy Drain Commissioner
- Travis Bartholomew, RCKC Deputy Director
- Keshia Dickason, Senator McCann's Office
- Christine Morse, Kalamazoo County Commissioner
- Nick McLaughlin, Pine Island Lake
- John Casper, Bass Lake
- Andy Alspach, Kalamazoo County Emergency Management
- Amy Coon, Eagle Lake Association
- Jerry Robbins, N Eagle Lake Association
- Jim Roberts, Crooked Lake Association
- Russ Walters, Crooked Lake Association
- Len Bosma, Eagle Lake Association
- Marc Rose, Vineyards Development
- Texas Township Trustee Nick Loeks
- Texas Township Trustee Tim Brown
- Texas Township Superintendent Julie VanderWiere
- Texas Township Supervisor John Hinkle

2. FLOODING STATUS

Jim Roberts (Crooked Lake) reported that as of today, Crooked Lake is 11 inches above the high-water mark. The lake is down 26 inches total and the No Wake has been removed.

Amy Coon (Eagle Lake) reported that as of today, Eagle Lake is at 902.36. This is the lowest Eagle Lake has been since we started pumping.

Julie VanderWiere reported for Dian Latora (Pine Island Development) that Pine Island Development is down 1 ft from the highest point.

Marc Rose (Vineyards Development) reported that they are looking good and waiting for the Drain Office to complete the project.

Jerry Robbins (N Eagle Lake Drive) reported that N Eagle Lake Drive is doing well.

John Casper (Bass Lake) reported that Bass Lake is doing well. The results came back from the water quality study and it showed the water is in better shape than it was last year and the algae has started to dissipate.

Nick McLaughlin (Pine Island Lake) reported that the dry weather has been good to them. He can finally see the his tire swing which was under water at one point.



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Update on Draw Down Projections- Tom Smith, Prein & Newhof

Tom Smith explained the newest draw down projections for each lake. He explained that the lakes typically go down this time of year whether we are pumping or not. *It is important to remember that in 2019 we logged the highest ever rainfall amounts in a year since they have been recorded.* As a result, it is not surprising that we struggled to bring down the levels. He reported that NOAA is still projecting average rainfall for this area. If this is accurate, Crooked Lake will reach their target level in April 2021. Eagle Lake will continue to reduce but it won't get down to the target level during the permit period. Pine Island will also continue to drop but will definitely increase if the pumps are turned off before the permit levels are reached.

Jerry Robbins inquired if the pumps stopped where does that leave us.

Tom Smith responded that the long-term solution is a gravity outlet. It is not designed yet so he is not able to show the draw down on a graph. We will have continuous flow until the levels are reached. We will have boards that can be removed to control the amount of flow going downstream. The levels will be back to normal some time next year with average rainfall.

Jerry Robbins asked how ground water will impact it.

Tom Smith responded that the ground water will not impede the system.

Len Bosma inquired how the gravity flow controls the volume coming out.

Tom Smith answered by using a weir and boards. We can control the volume. The flow will be controlled by the boards. The boards can't be pulled at anytime and it will be very controlled.

3. STATUS OF EASEMENTS

Julie VanderWiere reported that letters had been sent out to the property owners that provided the temporary easements asking for an extension. She advised that we have received some responses from property owners that are willing to allow the extension, however, we were also notified that the property owner where the filtration equipment is located, is not willing to provide an extension. The Township, Engineers and Task Force members are working to determine if there is a feasible alternative.

Jerry Robbins stated that it is about "me" vs "we" and that we should send out letters to all of the property owners providing easements and thank them loudly for what they have done.

Amy Coon inquired from EGLE where the request for the permit extension is.

Derek Haroldson responded that it will be dependent on the lake levels at the time the permit expires. We don't find it to be an expedient decision at this time. They plan to continue to monitor this summer. It does not look like the levels will be reached during this permit.



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Jerry Robbins commented that he appreciated Derek's response and asked what the drop dead date would be.

Derek Haroldson responded that the permit expires September 30. EGLE has to let the Township know before that date. The main consideration will be if there are outstanding concerns. We won't wait to September 29th but later in August is a reasonable time frame. He would like to hear from the Township the status of the easement acquisitions and if there may be changes in the project due to the easements.

Kyle Alexander commented if you aren't able to get the easements it may change the scope of the project. There are some unknowns which is why we are not rushing to make a decision.

Amy Coon stated that the permit expires before the easements do, even getting an additional 1 ½ months will be helpful.

Kyle Alexander responded that they understand that as well.

Russ Walters asked Kyle if there was any reason they would not extend the permit.

Kyle Alexander responded unless something unforeseen happens we are in a good spot with the Township.

4. DRAIN COMMISSION UPDATE

Lake Level Study

Tom Wheat reported that the Lake Level Study was completed. The Drain Commission's Attorney provided the study to the Lake Associations and EGLE. They have received comments back from the Associations and EGLE. EGLE expressed concerns about the down stream impacts. Tom Wheat is reviewing the comments and starting conversations to determine what needs to be provided to respond to EGLE's concerns. Once these concerns are resolved, the Attorney will submit the petition to Circuit Court. This may take up to 45 days. He then advised that we are a little behind our initial timeline due to Covid-19, he has put together a new timeline but we are still looking at construction in 2021.

Kyle Alexander responded that they have not worked through a Part 307 request yet so he is relying on other State Staff. They need information on impacts now so they can support the lake level.

Jerry Robbins advised he had a question on the process. This project is going through the Drain Office, will they see it all the way through. If so, how will Jeff VanBelle leaving (if he is elected for Drain Commissioner in Cass County) impact the project.



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Jeff VanBelle responded that it would not have any effect as he is not going anywhere any time soon. If Jason Wiersma is elected, he will be able to take over right away. He advised that he has no concern about it. He advised that the Lake Associations have seen the Lake Study but it hasn't been released yet due to FOIA. Tom Wheat and Tom Smith are working directly with EGLE to get them the information they need to be comfortable with the project. Our Attorney is confident we can meet the 45 days. EGLE is asking for information because we have high water all over this state. We are not the only ones experiencing this type of flooding.

Christine Morse commented that earlier it was mentioned that the Lake Level Petition would have to go back before the County Commission, when and why?

Jeff VanBelle explained that it depends on how the statute is interpreted. The Attorney is reviewing the statute but does not believe it will need to go back to the County Commission. She will be advising soon.

Christine Morse responded that it is the Commissions' belief that they have already completed that action thru the proclamation.

5. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

None

The next Task Force Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday August 20, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Submitted by Superintendent Julie VanderWiere
July 27, 2020