

FINAL MINUTES

**FLOOD CONTROL BOARD
CORTE MADERA TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

SEPTEMBER 13, 2010

Boardmembers Robert Bundy, Chair
Present: Stephanie Bennett
Bill Carlson
Vaso Medigovich
Barry Trailer

Staff Present: Public Works Director/Town Engineer Dan Ring

1. Call to Order

Chair Bundy opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

2. Open Forum for Public Expression

Public Works Director Ring expressed his condolences on the passing of Sanford Zeller. Chair Bundy stated Mr. Zeller would be missed on a personal and professional level.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes (July 12, 2010)

M/s, Medigovich-Bennett, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of July 12, 2010 as submitted.

4. Old Business

A. Update on repair of the Clemente Pump Station discharge manifold

Public Works Director Ring reported that the pipe manifold was installed, tested, and is functioning well. There was a full time inspector both on-site and during the fabrication, coating, and cathodic protection process. The inspector submitted a report to staff that would serve as a record regarding the work. He noted staff expects the new manifold to last for quite some time. The landscaping needs to be done and staff is having discussions with the property owners. He noted the cost for the work was in excess of \$200,000. Inspections were expensive but staff felt the need to go to extremes to make sure the job was done right. Boardmember Trailer asked about the cost for inspections. Public Works Director Ring stated he did not have the invoices but guessed the inspections were about 20% of the total cost.

Boardmember Bennett asked about the age of the unit. Public Works Director Ring stated it was 25 years old. Boardmember Bennett asked how long the new unit would last. Public Works Director Ring stated it would last at least 50 years. The cathodic protection systems and test stations are easier to locate. He noted the corrosion occurred inside of the pipe.

Chair Bundy stated a full-time inspector seemed like overkill and he asked if the Corte Madera Building Inspector also performed any inspections. Public Works Director Ring stated “not really” and he noted the inspector was an independent contractor. Ideally inspections would be done by a member of the Public Works Department but they do not have enough manpower to cover that work.

Boardmember Carlson referred to the recent event that occurred in San Bruno and asked what steps were being taken by the Town to make sure a similar disaster does not occur in Corte Madera. Public Works Director Ring stated PG&E has been asked by State regulators to check all their main transmission lines. He is not sure about the methods that would be used. He noted there were very few transmission lines in Marin County that are of similar size to the one in San Bruno.

B. Update on revisions to Chapter 16.10 of the Corte Madera Municipal Code (Flood Damage Prevention)

Public Works Director Ring presented a brief staff report. He stated the Town Attorney is reviewing the draft. At the last meeting the Board had considered removing the reference to the one-foot of freeboard. He stated the Town had to go through a re-certification process and is required to check off a list of credits. One of the credits is that they use standards that are higher than the minimum standards with respect to freeboard. That particular activity is worth 133 points, and 100 points is due to the fact that they added one foot of freeboard (one hundred points per one foot of freeboard). The Town has close to 2,000 points in credits through the Community Rating System (CRS). This corresponds to a Class 7. This gives everybody in Town a 15% discount on their flood insurance rates. They are about 100 points away from an additional 5% discount. Submission of the AN West Report would put them over the top. Removal of the one foot of freeboard would cause them to lose the 100 points of credit and bring them back down to Class 7. There could be other ways to recoup the 100 points. The CRS Coordinator mentioned that they like to have the one-foot of freeboard as a safety factor. The one-foot also gives people a sense of well being. He noted it has always been one foot in the code and the Board was considering removing it.

Boardmember Trailer asked if it was one foot above the 500-year flood. Public Works Director Ring stated it referred to the 100-year flood. Chair Bundy stated the additional one foot gets them closer to the 500-year flood. Public Works Director Ring stated the FEMA flood plain is a 100-year flood plain. Design of facilities such as a pump station is for a 25 or 50-year flood depending on its location. Boardmember Trailer asked if the difference between a 100 and 500-year flood were exponential. Public Works Director Ring stated “no” and what it describes is the chance of an occurrence in a certain number of years (100-year flood is a 1% chance in any given year). It would be very rare to design a facility for a 500-year flood. Boardmember Trailer stated he thought the one-foot freeboard related to a 500-year flood. Chair Bundy asked if the one-foot got them to the 500-year event. Public Works Director Ring stated “no” and the one-foot is always just freeboard above the base flood elevation. Boardmember Medigovich referred to Section 430-3, #4, the bottom paragraph, and the reference to the 500-year flood. Public Works Director Ring reiterated that the base flood elevation is based on a 100-year storm. The one-foot freeboard is just a safety factor. Boardmember Trailer asked if they get credit for the one foot. Public Works Director Ring stated “yes”. Boardmember Trailer stated the code specifies “any horizontal structure” and he asked if this would include ductwork, etc. Public Works Director Ring stated “no”. He added it refers to just the first floor. He reiterated that these are things that are above and beyond the normal standards. Boardmember Bennett noted the freeboard issue is only triggered when someone does some construction to his or her home that exceed 50% of the valuation of the home. Public Works Director Ring stated that was correct. Boardmember Bennett asked if that was rare. Public Works Director Ring stated “somewhat” but it is also triggered when someone wants to raise the level of his or her home. Boardmember Bennett stated that was a more common occurrence in her neighborhood (Mariner Cove).

Public Works Director Ring stated there were ways they could pick up some additional points including submitting the report from AN West. Staff has asked Marin Map to create a new layer on the GIS map that would show the elevation certificates for all properties in Town. If they lost the 100 points due to the freeboard issue they could probably find a way to get it back but it could delay implementation of the 20% discount.

Boardmember Trailer noted flood insurance is mandatory in his neighborhood and he pays about \$1,000 per year. Boardmember Bennett stated that seemed like a huge expense for leveling one’s home. Public Works Director Ring stated the cost differential is probably not as great as one would think and he noted there was a visual and community impact issue to consider. Public Works Director Ring stated if they lose the 100 points and the 20% discount then there is an opportunity cost that is lost by the Town. To get into Class 6 (Class 1 is the best) they need an additional 100 points and an additional 500 points to get to Class 5. Getting 500 more points would be difficult. Boardmember Bennett asked if there was a Website with information on how to get points and move from one class to another. Public Works Director Ring stated there is some communication between jurisdictions.

Boardmember Medigovich asked if this was a new approach and whether or not it makes sense to stay with the extra foot and not do the lower level stuff (duct work, etc.). Public Works Director Ring reiterated they would get 100 points by having the one-foot. Chair Bundy asked if the ductwork included moving the joists to a certain level. Public Works Director Ring stated if the joists are in that area then they have to be made of a material that could withstand being submerged in water (pressure treated, etc.). Boardmember Medigovich stated he was having a difficult time with this since he does not have flood insurance and he could not relate to the financial aspect. In addition, all of this is very theoretical. The best thing to do would be to say they would stay with the extra foot but never make anybody raise his or her house by calculating the 50% valuation in favor of the property owner. He referred to 50 Lakeside and stated there was no public benefit by making them build the house to 6 feet. The chance of water getting into their garage at 2 ½ feet is low. Public Works Director Ring stated FEMA has certain requirements for membership in the National Flood Insurance Program. Boardmember Medigovich stated they should go with the base flood elevation based on the character of the neighborhood. Boardmember Bennett stated she understood his point but aesthetics really depended on the design. Public Works Director Ring stated FEMA would love everyone to raise his or her homes by placing fill on the lot. They allow this other elevation technique because they realize this cannot be done in every situation. Many of the FEMA requirements do not really apply to Marin County.

Boardmember Medigovich stated another strategy would be to absolutely minimize flood insurance because nobody in Corte Madera will benefit from it. Chair Bundy stated the infrastructure in Corte Madera was very complicated but the problems with runoff have been somewhat resolved. He stated people who were taking the steps to raise their homes and flood proof their garages still have to get flood insurance. He is not sure if anybody can “get off the hook”. Public Works Director Ring stated a premium of \$1,000 per year could get reduced to about \$200 per year if a home is elevated. The only way to “get off the hook” (out of the flood plain) would be to build the home on a mound of dirt.

Boardmember Carlson asked about the percentage of homes in Corte Madera that need to have flood insurance. Public Works Director Ring stated he has a list of the homes that have flood insurance but has not added them up. He would guess the percentage to be about 20%

Chair Bundy stated he was in favor of leaving it at the base flood elevation because of aesthetics. He was concerned about the loss of “curb appeal” and the visual aspects in the neighborhood. In the long run these homes might need to be leveled and raised again due to additional settlement. He would support requiring utilities to be at the same level, especially if it would get them more points. He stated they do want to encourage people near the bay to get up to at least 6 NGVD for reasonable long-term protection.

Boardmember Bennett agreed that the extra foot of freeboard should not be a requirement even though they would lose the points. She asked if they would still be implementing the FEMA minimum requirements. Public Works Director Ring stated “yes”.

Boardmember Trailer agreed and stated adding the one-foot could be considered overkill considering the flooding likelihood and capacity and would put an unnecessary burden on people who are raising their homes. He would prefer to skip the extra foot and look for extra points elsewhere.

Boardmember Trailer asked if there would be any way to funnel this money to a potential tidal barrier project. Public Works Director Ring stated he thought the money goes to a gigantic pool at FEMA and it is not done on a regional basis. It serves as an insurance fund as opposed to a capital improvement fund. There could be other sources for the floodwall project.

Boardmember Carlson asked if there was a contact person for FEMA. Public Works Director Ring stated the CRS Coordinator reviews the documentation. A group of jurisdictions in the Ross Valley are getting together with FEMA in an attempt to re-map certain areas and there will be a FEMA presence in Marin County working on this project. Boardmember Carlson asked if some effective lobbying could happen to achieve the Town’s goals. Public Works Director Ring stated that was a good question and at one time the Town was lobbying FEMA and the Army Corp. of Engineers for funding for a tidal barrier. There are funds available to achieve some of their goals but it is very competitive.

Public Works Director Ring stated he would look at other ways to get more points.

C. Update on conceptual designs for the Marquart Lagoon Pump Station

Public Works Director Ring presented a brief staff report. He explained the history behind the project and stated its intent was to pump out the water from the lagoon into the High Canal in advance of a storm. It would allow the lagoon to serve as a detention basin.

Boardmember Trailer asked if this was the existing pump station on the High Canal. Public Works Director Ring stated "yes". Boardmember Trailer asked if the cost to rebuild it would be \$200,000. Public Works Director Ring stated "yes" and noted the bids could come in lower. Boardmember Trailer noted the majority of the cost was attributed to rebuilding the structure.

Chair Bundy had questions about the watershed area that is serviced by the lagoon. Boardmember Medigovich pointed it out on the map and noted it was not a large watershed.

Public Works Director Ring stated staff looked at alternatives including moving the pump station to the other side. They also looked at taking the level down even further to allow for more storage and asked AN West to look at this as an alternative. AN West looked at this using different types of pumps including horizontal propeller pumps, vertical propeller pumps, and submersible centrifugal pumps. In each case they were concerned about building something at the edge of the lagoon and what it would look like. In addition, they would need to build something to house the pump and this could cost a significant amount of money. There were issues regarding the depth of water in the area, submergence of the pumps intake, etc. AN West was able to find pumps that would work. The cost estimates for all the pump station alternatives turned out to be around \$200,000. Boardmember Bennett stated the discounted price for the building was \$95,000 which seemed very high.

Boardmember Trailer asked about the budgeted amount for this project. Public Works Director Ring stated it was \$175,000.

Public Works Director Ring stated the current location did not bother anybody and had easy access for the Public Works Department staff. Moving it to the other side would place it between houses and access would be more difficult. The current location was the best alternative. He has plans and specs ready to go out to bid at any time.

Boardmember Carlson asked about the worst scenario if they decided not to go forward and they experience another 1982 flood. Public Works Director Ring stated the small pump is not used a lot to lower the level of the lagoon. Staff could open up a gate on the High Canal side and it would flow in by gravity. The pump station would be used when the water surface in the High Canal is higher than the surface in the lagoon due to heavy rains and high tides. The pump drains the water from the lagoon to the High Canal.

Boardmember Trailer stated he was concerned about the cost because houses are not threatened when the lagoon fills up. The threat would be to side yards, lawns, etc. Public Works Director Ring agreed. AN West is of the opinion that some sort of pump is needed to cover the extreme scenario.

Chair Bundy asked if they are upgrading the station and also putting in a bigger pump. Public Works Director Ring stated "yes" and stated the bigger pump was the size that would be needed given the worst-case scenario. Chair Bundy asked about the size of the current pump. Public Works Director Ring stated he thought it was a 2 1/2 horsepower. Chair Bundy asked about the amount of rainfall necessary to overwhelm the current pump. Public Works Director Ring it would be a 50-year storm. Chair Bundy referred to the cost/benefit aspect and stated he could understand the expense if the pump were at the end of its life expectancy or has failed. Public Works Director Ring stated most facilities are designed to be as "bullet-proof" as possible and to last as long as possible. They certainly could replace the small pump with

a slightly bigger one at a much lower cost. Chair Bundy noted the risk associate with failure does not appear to be that great. Public Works Director Ring stated that was probably true.

Boardmember Trailer suggested they continue this item and get more information. Public Works Director Ring stated the project is ready to go and would be easy to implement.

Chair Bundy asked if a staff member could meet the Board at the site. Public Works Director Ring stated he would a member of the Public Works Department crew to meet the Board on site for an explanation of how the station works.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of bid process for the Golden Hind Storm Drain & Pump Station project

Public Works Director Ring presented a brief staff report. He stated the bid opening occurred on August 23rd and they got a good response (seven bids). There were two prices given- the base bid (the project as it would be constructed) and an “add alternate” (for an additional storm drain line that would run behind the San Clemente School). The engineer’s estimate for the total base bid (including a 10% contingency) was \$658,000. The lowest bidder was Bay Pacific Pipeline which came in at \$563,000. The next two bidders were around \$615,000. The Council should award the bid at the first Council meeting in October. The work would probably begin in November or December. The majority of the work is tearing up curbs and gutters and building trench drains, which can be done during the rainy season. He stated they could design another section and hold it in reserve depending on how the work was coming along. Boardmember Bennett has questions about how the bid was awarded by the Council.

Boardmember Bennett asked if the Town has to pick the lowest bidder. Public Works Director Ring stated “yes” unless they can find a reason not to such as a technicality, etc. However, the Town can reject all of the bids for no reason.

Chair Bundy stated the problems that occur in this area are due to heavy rainfalls that happen several times a year. He acknowledged that this project was costly but he noted it would give them a big “bang for the buck”. It is also a necessary step towards justification for a floodwall.

Chair Bundy noted the engineering estimate had \$50,000 for traffic control and he asked if this was a generic expense. Public Works Director Ring stated “yes”. Boardmember Bennett mentioned there was a school in the immediate vicinity that generates a lot of traffic. Boardmember Trailer asked if the company would need to show receipts relative to the activity. Public Works Director Ring stated “no” but they do need to submit a plan.

Mr. Harry Schriebman asked if AN West performed the design work. Public Works Director Ring stated “yes”. Mr. Schriebman asked if they would need to re-engineer the vault that was put in last summer. Public Works Director Ring stated “no” and noted it was designed to work with the new project. Mr. Schriebman stated there were a lot of leaves that get caught up in the French drains. Public Works Director Ring agreed and stated it would be a maintenance and street/sweeping issue. Boardmember Bennett asked if there were screens that could be placed under the drains. Public Works Director Ring stated screens would provide another place for the leaves to collect. Boardmember Bennett asked if the street sweeper would be effective on the new slotted drains. Public Works Director Ring stated “yes” but it would take a bit of adjustment in terms of the maintenance in that area. Chair Bundy stated the street sweeping efforts are very good and part of the problem is that some people leave their cars permanently parked in the street. Public Works Director Ring stated the schedule was posted on the Website.

Boardmember Bennett asked about safety regulations with respect to water and gas lines. Public Works Director Ring stated gas lines are broken all the time and they do not typically blow up. Contractors are required to call Underground Service Alert (USA), which is a consortium of all the utility companies who come out and mark the streets.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. in memory of Sanford “Skip” Zeller