

**-CITY OF BELLEVUE  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 5, 2009**

**Public Hearing 2009 Stormwater Management Program Verbatim Transcript**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chair Szablya, Vice-Chair Helland, Commissioners Carter, Mach, Mahon, Roberts

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Commissioner Swenson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Laurie Devereaux, Merwyn Haneberg, Scott Hardin, Kyle McLeod, Nav Ota, Bill and Elfi Rahr, DJ Sherrard, Phyllis Varner, Anne Weigle

**MINUTES TAKER:** Michelle Cash

---

*The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.*

*At 6:55 p.m.*

**Chair Szablya** The first on the list--or the only one right now, is Merwyn Haneberg again. Go ahead Merwyn.

**Mr. Haneberg** Yes. Do I get another three minutes? Thank you.

Then, maybe I'll just finish the presentation that I started.

**Ms. Ota** Does this pertain to this topic?

**Chair Szablya** One quick thing—does it pertain directly to the NPDES?

**Mr. Haneberg** I don't know. This pertains to water, water quality, I don't know. Is that not environmental--

**Chair Szablya** Go—go ahead.

**Mr. Haneberg** Thank you.

During some of these storm events and I'm going to repeat once again that these storm events are happening annually. They are not once every hundred years and they are bummers. And, the water quality in the lake is observed to be turbid quite often. And this may be due to the streets occasionally not being cleaned promptly or else water from the adjacent business parks and the sanitary landfill, which is next to Phantom Lake, is not filtered properly. And flooding of the surrounding properties introduces organic and other

materials into the lake proper.

And, for example, water lilies are allowed to profuse on the lake and they are not harvested and as they die in the fall that increases organic matter and that falls to the bottom of the lake. So, the lake is gradually—the bottom of the lake is gradually filling in. And in time, this will not be a lake. You see, if we allow organic matter to be washed into the lake and flooding of/around the lake to be swished into that lake, that lake is not going to be there forever.

And so, I think that the City needs to look at these kind of problems and see if we can't find ways of keeping the lake level at a uniform height so we don't have these, all of these bad events and increase the flood detention and make other improvements, which will benefit that lake.

And then we will, of course, be able to enhance the environment for the future of this—this is a great resource in the City actually. It's not a lake the size of Sammamish or any of these other lakes and I'm surprised nobody \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*).

**Chair Szablya** Thank you. Is there anyone else who would like to speak?

**Mrs. Rahr** Yes. I would like to.

**Chair Szablya** Okay. Please. Go ahead and—well, just your name is fine.

**Mrs. Rahr** Well, what Mr. Haneberg didn't emphasize is that lake biota has shifted to the point where in August all of the beneficial algae change into what they call a cyanobacteria, which is an algae but it isn't actually. It acts like an algae but it's not. It's a bacteria. And that, at time, can produce nerve toxins and recently I'm most alarmed because I see in August, generally it happens in August, the cyanobacteria increase to 98% at the expense of the beneficial algae. And they are not available to the fish population as a food source.

And what also happens at the same time that the zoo plankton, which is the bottom food chain, disappears to .04%. Those are the important bottom food chain—that's the food supply for the fry. It's not there. The whole system gets poisoned, including the ducks. When you walk up to a mallard and it just sits there and stares at you and doesn't move. That becomes frightening when you have a dog that is just covered with open sores, generally it happens every August—it takes three months for this dog to heal—walking into the water.

I mean, these are serious, serious problems and we need to address the Phantom Lake issue and the best way to do this is like I said, we have to pay greater attention to the detention facilities.

If you read the documents that I submitted, or the titles of them, then you realize that these systems are under designed. There's a master plan that was

developed in the 80s that gives precise cubic feet, seconds (19.7) for the run-off of detention pond—that's way, way over.

I mean, I hate to tell you but this is it. Better something be done about it. I mean, this isn't funny anymore. You know?

Anyway. Thank you for letting me speak again.

**Chair Szablya** Great. Thank you.

**Mrs. Rahr** I wish one of you would spend time with me because everything is recorded for the last 30 years. It took me a lot of effort, money, time, and it's all in photographs, descriptions, whatever it takes so you understand because the main problem is that we deal with glacial flour (silt) and that stays suspended for up to five years in the system. That's the problem \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*).

**Chair Szablya** Thank you very much. Is there anyone else who would like to speak?

**Mr. Rahr** When were you going to open the speaking for the hearing?

**Chair Szablya** This is it.

**Mr. Rahr** This is?

**Chair Szablya** This is the speaking for the hearing. Yes. Go ahead. Please—when you come up here state your name and address.

**Mr. Rahr** Hi. My name is Bill Rahr and I was here last month in front of you with one of my favorite subjects.

Phyllis, you've done a good job on this. I actually read through it (*referencing the Draft 2009 Stormwater Management Program Report*).

Perhaps you know by now, I am a real stickler on first line of defense in helping out with pollution control and that is the street systems. And furthermore, getting in the catch basin. So, I picked one little item out of this Plan that I would like to pursue for just a minute.

**Commissioner Roberts** What page are you on? Page number?

**Mr. Rahr** Okay. I'm on—I haven't started yet.

**Commissioner Roberts** Well, when you're going through something tells us the number please.

**Mr. Rahr** Sure. I will.

The—we cover a lot of things in here and as you've seen with the good presentation, we're trying to respond to the DOE permitting process. That's the first thing that has to be done. The second thing is, we responded correctly. I presume that this implies that we have made that response and it is correct. The third thing that I am worrying about is that it actually happened. And, that's a big statement. But, I've been around here in Bellevue for 53 years and that's why I made the statement. I would—I hope that it happens according to the plan.

Now, on page 7-3, we have a list of tasks that are under Pollution Prevention and \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) from Municipal Operations, maintenance work is involved in this. There's an item that I would like to call your attention to is: PPOM-7, which is annual inspection for all of the municipal storm flow control and runoff facilities. That includes the thing that I am most worried about. The first line of defense for all of our pollution problems is to catch the existing runoff of the thousands of miles of streets that we have and to help do that, we have, I think, an enormous number of catch basins, about 17,000.

**Ms. Varner** Closer to 20.

**Mr. Rahr** 20,000?

**Ms. Varner** Yes.

**Mr. Rahr** 20,000. Okay. Now, all of you that are on the Environmental Services Commission know the function of a catch basin, I hope. And its first line of defense is to get the heavy solids and it has a settling sediment basin in it. That catch basin is only as good as how clean that sediment catch basin is kept. If it fills up, the solids go right on down with the flow and on into the streams and lakes.

**Chair Szablya** You've got about 10 seconds left so if you could complete your thoughts.

**Mr. Rahr** Okay. What I am trying to say is we have, as Phyllis corrected me, it's worse than I thought. We have 20,000 catch basins that need maintenance, inspection, and maintenance. And if you consider the word maintenance, it means a vactor truck sucking. And I don't know how we can plan, and I hope somebody helps me out, with the three vactor trucks we get that we're going to be able to suck out 20,000 catch basins in the next year and establish our first line of defense against pollution.

Hopefully, we can figure something out.

Thank you.

**Chair Szablya** Is there anyone else who would like to speak?

Okay. So, I'm going to declare the hearing officially closed. Thank you Phyllis, it was a great presentation.

*The Public Hearing concluded at 7:07 p.m.*

*The meeting concluded at 8:14 p.m.*