

VALLEY FLOOD COMMITTEE (VFC) Meeting 01/23/2014

Helena Valley Growth Policy Briefing and Flood Plan Update

Attendees

Archie Harper, Raymond Read, Harold Begger, Patty Davidson, Jeannene Maas, George Theborge, Eric Griffin, Roger Lavoie, Skeeter Baertsch.

Objective/Purpose:

1. To describe details about the Helena Valley Growth Policy to the VFC. Presentation provided by Director of L&C County Community Development and Planning Department.
2. Update VFC on progress toward implementing expanded McHugh ditch and cemetery diversion.

Discussion

- Meeting began with Archie taking roll call. The sign-in sheet method for roll call was replaced with a member check-off list maintained by the committee coordinator; no longer will members/guests need to sign-in to our meetings. Guests' names attending VFC meeting were noted in lieu of signing a paper form.
- **George Theborge** (Community Development and Planning Director) provided background information and explained some basic ideas about the Growth Policy in the context of population and development trends in Lewis & Clark County.
- According to the 2010 census, Helena's population is ca. 28,000; East Helena's population is ca. 2,000; and the Helena Valley population is ca. 24,000. Hence, our valley population is essentially a 2nd moderate sized community like the city of Helena.
- From 2000-2010 the valley experienced >5000 new homes built plus 1,000 platted lots!
- Currently about 98% of all development in the county occurs in the Helena Valley.
- Projections indicate this level of development and growth will continue through 2020—80% of growth expected outside of the cities.
- Current Helena Valley Growth Policy focuses on four key issues: 1) water supply, 2) wastewater disposal, 3) roads, and 4) fire protection.
- Valley citizens are strongly encouraged to get involved in the planning process.
- **Archie** responded on behalf of the VFC that the current growth policy misses an important issue: *valley flooding, particularly in the Tenmile and Silver Creek study areas*. He stressed that the Flood Mitigation Master Plan must be integral to the growth policy for the Helena Valley.

- **Eric Griffin** updated VFC about MDT's plan for reconfiguring the Forestvale-McHugh Intersection and Forestvale entrance for improving safety.
- County will coordinate with MDT for improvements at this intersection to include a new ditch crossing structure. Three 43" x 26" squash pipes won't meet requirements; hope is for an expanded box culvert under Forestvale at current intersection.
- An engineer will be hired to work out details of crossing design.
- Utility companies in planning stages poised for relocating utilities this spring/summer.
- Ground breaking activities for construction of the McHugh to cemetery leg of flood conveyance infrastructure expected this year. Work will progress from north to south along westside of McHugh.
- Questions at end of discussion circulated around funding available for implementing flood mitigation projects. This topic deferred for future meetings as time ran out.

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 27th, 2014, Moose Lodge

- The next meeting is proposed for March instead of February as VFC coordinator will be out of town to attend a public meeting the evening of February 27th.
- VFC members are welcome to set a meeting February 27th in the absence of the committee's chair at their choosing.

Archie Harper
VFC Coordinator
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VFC Jan. 2014 Minutes