

City of New Braunfels, Texas

550 Landa Street



Minutes

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

3:30 PM

City Hall - Tejas Room

Watershed Advisory Committee

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Watershed Advisory Committee Chair, Hank Crippen called this meeting to order at 3:32pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Watershed Advisory Committee members present: Aleta Meyer, Alexander Morvant, Hank Crippen, Craig Wilson, Gian Carlo Villarreal, and Toni Carter.

City Staff members present: Watershed Supervisor, Phillip Quast; River and Watershed Manager, Amy Niles; Watershed Inspector, Henry Beenenga; River Operations Specialist, Katie Johnson, Assistant City Engineer, Carly Farmer; and Assistant Capital Project Manager, Claudia O'Connell.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A)

Approval of Meeting Minutes for November 30, 2023 for the Watershed Advisory Committee meeting.

[Minutes18-Oct-2024-10-06-19](#)

The meeting minutes from the November 30, 2023, Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting, were motioned for approval by Craig Wilson and seconded by Gian Carlo Villarreal. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. CITIZENS' COMMUNICATIONS

This time is for citizens to address the Committee on issues and items of concerns not on this agenda. There will be no Committee action at this time.

There was no citizen's communication at this meeting.

5. STAFF REPORT

A)

Presentation of Drainage Area Master Plan

Staff from Freese and Nichols presented to the committee the Drainage Area Master Plan for the City of New Braunfels. Project Manager, Elliot Poduska, began the presentation with introductions and a brief outline of the project goals. Poduska went on to state the

deliverables of this project: a prioritized list of regional flood control projects, a floodplain study and remapping for 66 streams within the City's ETJ, to enhance public education and create web access to the floodplain information and create a preliminary study of watershed outside of the ETJ. Public outreach and utilizing the public to gather more information on floodplain issues are key elements of this plan. Poduska shared the online public solicitation platform where the public could add comments and notify Freese and Nichols staff of their concerns. Poduska stated they received about 40 comments, and it was a good exercise to do considering they received valuable information from the public. APM and Modeling Lead, Blaine Laechelin, discussed modeling and mapping of Task 1, Critical Streams like Alligator Creek and the Four Mile Creek, and Task 2, the 62 other streams within the ETJ – 18 of which are in coordination with the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority (GBRA). Laechelin then identified Task 3, the future studies outside of the ETJ, where they would identify flood hazards. Laechelin stated that they connected with the City of New Braunfels to see where flooding has affected certain areas and projects over the years. Poduska stated they want to be as transparent as possible and emphasized how important it is to do the public outreach. Watershed Advisory Committee Chair, Hank Crippen asked the guest speakers if they had any project examples they could talk about. Poduska replied that a current project example is the headwaters of Alligator Creek, and future projects could include constructing a pond in the upper third part of the watershed and looking at land that could be potential City parks. Assistant City Engineer, Carly Farmer, reiterated that these areas have not been confirmed to be parks, but are being looked at proactively to identify areas of concern. Committee member Alexander Morvant asked if there were additional projects that were not ponds. Poduska stated yes and explained that creeks could be widened and undeveloped land could be expanded to increase the flood zone. Senior Advisor, Kim Patak stated that now that they know the modeling and mapping, the next step is to understand why flooding is happening and what the ripple effects are.

Committee member Aleta Meyer asked the guest speakers if there are grants or if they offer financial assistance to the City for these projects. Poduska stated that they do help with funding and criterion types. Crippen asked how many residents were being affected by water surface elevation increase. Patak replied that they can only make assumptions right now and don't have the numbers yet. In conclusion, Crippen stated that he believes this is a great idea and a

proactive approach.

B)

Presentation of MS4 Permit and Stormwater Management Program Update

Watershed Supervisor, Phillip Quast presented to the committee a brief overview of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). The sewer system is designed to route stormwater away from developed areas and toward intended locations such as detention basins and natural waterways. Quast explained that as of the 2020 census New Braunfels is a Level 3 MS4 Operator. TCEQ is switching to a “Comprehensive General Permit” approach which means that there will be no longer be a Stormwater Management Plan submitted to TCEQ for approval, but a City-wide program that municipalities will be required to meet. This new permitting process has eight Minimum Control Measures: Public Education and Outreach, Public Involvement, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction Stormwater Management, Post-Construction Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment, Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations, Impaired Waters, and Construction Where MS4 is Site Operator. Quast explained that about 90% of what the City of New Braunfels has been doing can be transferred to the new permit, stating that the City is currently meeting the majority of the new requirements. Quast briefly explained each MCM and what TCEQ expected to see. Committee member Aleta Meyer stated that San Marcos has a watershed awareness week that she believes the City should look into as something the City of New Braunfels could implement as well. Quast added that the Regional Stormwater Conference would take place in New Braunfels on January 25th, 2025.

C)

Presentation of Dry Comal Creek and Comal River Watershed Protection Plan Update

Watershed Supervisor, Phillip Quast, presented to the committee an update on the Watershed Protection Plan (WPP). The WPP is a coordinated framework for implementing prioritized and integrated water quality protection and restoration strategies driven by environmental objectives. It is a 10-year implementation plan that began in 2018, with main focuses on outreach and education for residents as well as pilot programs for best management practices, waste reduction, and removal. Quast gave an update on the In-Pipe Filtration System Pilot Program, stating that this is the first time

something of this nature will be done and tested in the City of New Braunfels. The filtration program will be able to test the water going in and test the water going out to study the differences. Grant funding from TCEQ is funding this pilot program and in return will get water quality data that they can collect and study. Quast played a short clip of how the filtration system works. Committee member Craig Wilson asked what the life span was for one of these filters. Quast replied that they should last 6 months to a year since we do not get as much rain as other regions. Wilson also asked if private developers were implementing these filtration systems. Quast stated that they are not currently required to add them. Lastly, Quast explained the recent Watershed Protection Plan campaign that was active in the past river season, sharing that a video and other ads promoting water quality and bacteria reduction were played in the local movie theaters and on social media platforms.

6. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Drainage Area Master Plan for the City of New Braunfels Update

MS4 Update

WPP Update

Deer population survey and management proposal

7. ADJOURNMENT