



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Tuesday, October 1, 2024 * 5:30 PM
MINUTES

Present was:

Mayor Nicholas Fouraker
District 4 Vice Mayor – Jason Carson
District 1 Commissioner – Frank Vertolli
District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell
District 6 Commissioner – Stan Smith
District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin

Absent was:

District 3 Commissioner – Danny Otterbacher

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum

Vice Mayor Carson called the workshop to order at 5:30 pm, and the Clerk confirmed quorum. City Manager Rick Rudometkin Chief Grimm, Public Works Director Phil Price, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were present.

Vice Mayor Carson announced that Comm Lowell would be attending via telephone conference.

CM Rudometkin asked that all speak into the microphones to provide the best sound for those viewing the meeting online and for the recording.

2. Discussion on Lake Levels and Protocol

City Manager Rudometkin introduced David Hamstra, Stormwater Department Manager and Consultant for Orange County.

Mayor Fouraker opened for Council discussion.

City Manager Rudometkin stated that the lake levels today are 85.6-85.7 and that no weir board was removed during the hurricane because Lake Conway was at normal level.

Comm Vertolli asked what is the average drain time for lowering the lake level before a Hurricane hits land; what is his position in the County and who is in charge of the Lake weir.

Mr. Hamstra said the modeling efforts have not been started. He will be able to provide an answer within 3-4 weeks after meeting the OC Commissioners. Mr. Hamstra said he has been working with the County since 1992 as a consultant and usually speaks on behalf of the County. Ever since Hurricane Ian, South Florida and St. Johns Water Management District have entered into an MOU and Orange County must coordinate with them to request to pull the weir boards.

CM Rudometkin asked how does the water from the Airport holds and releases water into the retention area. He heard that GOAA dictates the rule and release of the weir boards.

Mr. Hamstra said GOAA almost has the same restrictions as Orange County, with their permitted control structures protecting airport property. Mr. Hamstra stated that the quantity, and, equally important, the quality (nitrogen and phosphorous) of the water that is released are always taken into consideration when lowering the boards.

Comm Bobrowski said she heard that there is currently a study on establishing a procedure to prevent flooding at water levels. She asked how the City could be part of that study and added to the list.

Mr. Hamstra said they have been asked to create a rating curve to establish the quality and quantity of water elevations. Concurrently, Osceola County is creating a flood forecasting model, and OC consultant CDM is looking at measures to protect the structures. He has also been asked to memorialize OC monitoring schedule moving forward

to assist with lowering the boards. St. Johns Governing Board and South Florida are the leading players; Osceola and Orange County are secondary players, inserting opinions and GOAA. He noted that everyone is trying to do their part to prevent significant structural flooding. Comm Bobrowski said Belle Isle did have flooding during Jan. He asked that a list be submitted to him to add to their district report. Mr. Hamstra said Belle Isle was not on the original list for comments. However, he will ask the Board for consideration to add the City to the list for input on the conversation.

Mayor Fouraker asked why the City was being excluded.

Mr. Hamstra said this originally started with Orange County and the major flooding areas. He does not feel like the County will not have any objections; it was not a personal slant to the City they wanted to limit the audience to those most impacted.

Mayor Fouraker commented that he was made aware of discussions by OC to research whether the NAV Board is purely advisory. Belle Isle pays for 70% of the MSTU, stewardship, and water quality of the lake, and currently, there is no existing permit for the weir on Daetwyler. He spoke briefly of the storm water issues north of Hoffner and Judge and the lack of conclusion on concerns. Mayor Fouraker shared his concern that Belle Isle is not recognized as a stakeholder. Mr. Hamstra said they are reviewing concerns from an engineering point of view. He noted that there has been a major shift in coordination, and they will try to navigate moving forward.

In response to Comm Vertolli, Mr. Hamstra said that he believes the Governor appoints St Johns & Southern Florida Boards.

Comm Smith asked who is doing the water quality study.

Mr. Hamstra said OC Environmental Division is collecting the sampling. He can research that further and get back to the Council. He spoke briefly on the process and platforms for weighing technically and legally with the governing boards. Comm Smith spoke briefly about the water quality of the City of Apopka and the process of rectifying the lake pollution.

Comm Smith said he saw an aluminum sheathing at the weir facing west. He asked if it is to slow down the flow or to catch the trash from flowing into the canal. Mr. Price, Public Works Director said the sheathing is used as a skimmer to catch trash and debris from going into the canal. Mr. Hamstra said installing the sheathing incorrectly, it can cause an issue with the water flow.

Anthony Carugno, a Belle Isle resident, gave testimony that no one mentioned the jet fuel and motor oil collected from the south of the Airport. Our lakes are high causing erosion, however at the airport their lake and grass area are low and is not quite sure of the reason.

Mr. Hamstra said that in the past if the flow at the bottom was clear, it was not considered a quality issue. Now, they focus on the Best Management Practices quantity and extra pounds per year of nitrogen and phosphorus in the lake. The relationship with GOAA has always been positive and he does not know of any behind the scenes information.

Phil Price, Public Works Director asked about monitoring of the quality of the lake water coming from the Airport.

Mr. Hamstra said the water quality is not necessarily an issue now. The quality changes when the request is made to lower the weir elevation permanently.

Mr. Hamstra said GOAA has several different BMP Toolbox's (e.g., wet and dry ponds, water treatment and underground systems).

3. Adjournment

With no further business, Mayor Fouraker called for a motion to adjourn the workshop, which was unanimously approved at 6:20 p.m.