

**TUMWATER PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Michael Althausen and Angela Jefferson.

Excused: Chair Eileen Swarthout.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, Assistant City Attorney Davis Abbott, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Transportation and Engineering Director Brandon Hicks, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Assistant Transportation and Engineering Director Mary Heather Ames, Engineering Services Manager Bill Lindauer, Water Resources and Sustainability Program Manager Patrick Soderberg, Water Resources Specialist Grant Gilmore, and Administrative Assistant Bonnie Hale.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES: PUBLIC
WORKS
COMMITTEE,
MARCH 7, 2024:**

MOTION: Councilmember Jefferson moved, seconded by Councilmember Althausen, to approve the minutes of March 7, 2024, as published. A voice vote approved the motion.

**MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE CITY
OF TUMWATER AND
LOTT CLEAN
WATER ALLIANCE
REGARDING A
PURCHASE AND
SALE AGREEMENT
FOR PROPERTIES IN
THE DESCHUTES
VALLEY
AMENDMENT 1:**

Director Smith reported on the City's consideration to acquire some properties owned by LOTT Clean Water Alliance in the Deschutes Valley. The timeline for acquisition is short and staff is working with SCJ Alliance to complete a feasibility review of the properties. The initial memorandum of understanding with LOTT Clean Water Alliance anticipated a decision by March 31, 2024. SCJ Alliance completed the final draft of the report. Following review of the report by staff, the report will be presented to the Council for consideration for potential acquisition of the properties. The proposed amendment extends the timeline by two months ending May 31, 2024. Subsequently, the purchase and sale agreement decision has also been deferred from June 30, 2024 to December 31, 2024 affording some flexibility for negotiations with LOTT Clean Water Alliance and potential discussions with other parties for easement negotiations.

Director Smith requested the committee's consideration to recommend placement of the Memorandum of Understanding Between the City and LOTT regarding a purchase and sale agreement for properties in the Deschutes Valley Amendment No. 1 on the April 16, 2024, City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the amendment.

MOTION: Councilmember Jefferson moved, seconded by Councilmember Althausen, to recommend placement of the Memorandum of

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Understanding Between the City and LOTT regarding a purchase and sale agreement for properties in the Deschutes Valley Amendment No. 1 on the April 16, 2024, City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign. A voice vote approved the motion.

**2024 REGIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIP AND
WATER RESOURCES
& SUSTAINABILITY
OUTREACH
UPDATE:**

Specialist Gilmore updated members on the status of efforts in support of the 2024 Regional Environmental Education Partnership (REEP) and Water Resources & Sustainability (WRS) Outreach.

Specialist Gilmore shared a series of photographs of community members participating in activities in support of the program. REEP was formed to provide a mechanism for the partners (Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Thurston County) to collaborate in the development, implementation, and funding of stormwater education and outreach, messages, materials, activities, programs, and assessment tools for the public, businesses, and other target audiences as required by the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for education and outreach.

The partnership is based on population with the City of Tumwater representing 12% of the total partnership. The maximum annual cost is \$10,800 for the City of Tumwater.

Education and outreach are comprised of public education (classes, workshops, and community engagement), youth education (school presentations, field science trips, field education trips), pet waste reduction, business outreach (pollution prevention), and other outreach and events including hands-on science event participation by partners to interface with community members. A larger component of the REEP is the delivery of messaging through Stream Team and hands-on science events delivered by the Stream Team. The Stream Team has been in existence for approximately 35 years and has much community awareness.

In 2023, REEP sponsored 41 events with 1,644 participants for workshop trainings and lectures. Nature Sleuths was a program that was able to continue during the pandemic. Facebook followers increased significantly with page views increasing. REEP received 278 different posts and is available through Instagram with 199 average posts with over 1,000 page views. REEP video views totaled 149,000 with 229 subscribers on YouTube. Website and monthly emails are produced with information on stormwater pollution, engagement opportunities, and activities and events community member can support to improve water quality. The Stream Team produces a newsletter and a website PDF version. Following the winding down of the pandemic, the Stream Team newsletter was redesigned to resemble a scientific journal while still focused on reaching all demographics. Feedback on the last five versions of the newsletter has been very positive. The City of Tumwater's distribution of the newsletter is

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higher because the City established a close relationship with the Tumwater School District offering multiple programs REEP can engage with through the school district's Career and Technical Education Department and teachers.

Councilmember Jefferson asked about the extent of engagement with local colleges. Specialist Gilmore said he teaches at the University of Washington on Wetland Science and Management. Partners are initiating programs between high students and college students with several sites of focus. With the upcoming move of the Water Resources and Sustainability Department to South Puget Sound Community College campus, representation is possible on different pathways for middle school students, high school students, and community college students working toward a four-year degree. Those relationships should begin developing in future years. The goal is to showcase careers in the engineering sciences for middle school and connect high school students to college students with professionals within those industries.

The REEP offers an array of stewardship opportunities with a hands-on science focus for improving water quality and stream health. The opportunities highlight the importance of actions and how they impact waterways and the importance of practicing best practices.

Councilmember Althaus asked whether some of the REEP programs include recognition of the City's recent efforts to replace failing culverts to improve fish and stream health. Specialist Gilmore responded that the City of Tumwater has a direct connection to Capitol Lake Budd Inlet via Percival Creek, Fish Pond Creek, tributaries, and the Deschutes River. Currently, a TMDL (Total Daily Maximum Load) is imposed on Percival Creek that is associated with the Budd Inlet TMDL. The span of Percival Creek is shorter and provides an opportunity to view how urban development influences and affects the system. As the City owns several properties along the creek to include Sapp Road Park, it provides an opportunity to sponsor activities. A fish passage replacement project is planned at Sapp Road Park that will provide an opportunity for restoration efforts. The fish passage project is scheduled next year and will integrate opportunities for a series of educational activities for middle, high school, and graduate students. Today, six University of Washington students are conducting research at the site on how wetland restoration, fish habitat, stream organisms, and beaver habitat feed into the health of water systems.

Councilmember Jefferson commented that many in the community are unaware of the programs and opportunities. She asked about marketing efforts to reach community members. Specialist Gilmore responded that one reason for moving to technology is the ability to broadcast and reach a broader audience. Last year, he presented a four-part workshop on beaver management in the urban landscape. The presentation generated much

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attention resulting in many community members reading Stream Team newsletters. However, though not sufficient entirely to reach the community, the partners plan to increase outreach through an increase in the number of YouTube videos and Instagram posts. As the partners develop and generate more educational materials, they will explore different mechanisms to deliver more content to the community.

Councilmember Jefferson recommended the partners should take advantage of the venues offered by Experience Olympia and Beyond. During those venues, activities and events could be advertised to the community. Specialist Gilmore confirmed his intent to follow-up with the organization to seek more opportunities for outreaching to local communities.

Specialist Gilmore reviewed some results for hands-on science participation. Of the 23 events hosted last year, 871 individuals participated. An annual report was developed to quantify outcomes. Education and event participants totaled over 3,000 last year. Other activities included distribution of pet waste bags to pet owners, pet waste stations for homeowner associations and neighborhoods, working with Puget Sound Starts Here, a western regional partnership to leverage materials and volunteers, distribution of car wash tickets for car washing rather than in driveways, and educational materials for landscape companies and construction companies focused on stormwater best management practices. Giveaway items for children and students included stickers and pencils.

Councilmember Althausen shared that during his youth he participated in Stream Team as an elementary and middle school student. He has never forgotten the name of Stream Team, as it was one of the most informative environmental awareness events of his childhood when he participated in water quality testing and hatching salmon eggs in the classroom and releasing them in the stream. The opportunity was incredible and a remarkable educational opportunity.

Specialist Gilmore shared information on other organizations supporting efforts. South Sound Green is one example of efforts that have been recalibrated as the organization lacked a strong influence with the City in prior years. Today, the organization is well aligned with City efforts with the school district. Similarly, Pacific Shellfish Institute experienced problems connecting to the school district, which is no longer an issue. Today more opportunities outweigh capacity for delivering. A new relationship was initiated with Puget Sound Estuarium based in Olympia. The organization hosts a Marine program and collaborated with Stream Team's Marine Creature to increase capacity. His affiliation with the University of Washington as a professor provides many research students with the opportunity to conduct research across natural resource areas in Tumwater. This summer, more opportunities will be available to learn about the research.

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The REEP is ramping up partnerships and building capacity. A large component of those efforts include building a network of industry professionals in the natural resource sciences and engineering fields to participate in collaborative efforts with school districts to build career pathway programs for students. Tumwater School District's collaborative efforts are building career pathway programs for students. More interdepartmental collaboration within the City will help students learn about City and government jobs. Last year, a Forest and Stream Ecology Program was developed offering a 180-hour accredited program over a five-week period. Students were immersed in the world of natural sciences and engineering fields and were paired with an industry expert. Also developed, was the One Water Summer Program for middle school students, a one-week summer camp to conduct water quality sampling and to learn about the watershed. First Green hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department teamed up with REEP to deliver the water resources component to share information on how reclaimed water is used at the golf course and how contaminants would potentially affect the Deschutes River and other water bodies in the area.

Online access is increasing with an update on Nature Sleuths and other programs by incorporating a stormwater pollution message to the content of Nature Sleuths. Other programs located on the Stream Team website are robust and well developed.

Specialist Gilmore advised of his current efforts on Salmon Steward training to refine the program to afford participants with a certificate and to increase access across the county.

Careers and technical training continue to be of focus. REEP is the school district premier partner for natural resource areas. For the Forest and Ecology Program delivered in 2023, the program was recognized as one of the nation's top CTE program. The program was offered by the Tumwater School District. Many of the state's natural resource companies and agencies supported the students and provided facilities to enable students to learn about different trades and how the jobs significantly impact communities both in natural resources and economically. Many of the positions require no college degree with many of the volunteer experts beginning their career as interns in some of the companies.

Specialist Gilmore referred to a video presentation of the interaction between students and industry experts during the program last summer. The First Green video is available on YouTube and features a showcase on math and groundwater movement and watershed dynamics through a groundwater model used by the City.

Building on the momentum in 2024 is a goal as the groundwork was

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developed in 2023. The partners are assessing performance in 2023 through some exercises to identify what was or what was not effective. The partnership developed a 2024 workplan. A new addition to the career and technical education component is a Water Resource Management Program similar to the Forest and Stream Ecology Program. Specialist Gilmore reported he is collaborating with LOTT Clean Water Alliance staff to seek potential partnering opportunities with the Tumwater School District, Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Education (OSPI), and Pacific Education Institute (PEI) to develop a 180-hour accredited program to enable students to learn about water resource management, which has increased in focus because of climate change. Across the globe, reclassification of jobs in resource management is occurring in response to climate change. By developing the program, it places the region at the cutting edge of infusing more opportunities within the educational system. The program is currently under review by the OSPI for the accreditation program. Regardless, the Tumwater School District has committed to launching the program in summer 2024. The Forest and Stream Ecology Program has been funded in 2024. The partners plan to increase groundwater model demonstrations, refine online training opportunities, increase stewardship and volunteer restoration opportunities, and offer Salmon Steward online training with teachers seeking to integrate the training into educational curriculum to encourage students to serve as natural resource docents.

The committee thanked Specialist Gilmore for sharing information on the progress of the partnership. Councilmember Jefferson spoke to the City's leadership within the partnership. She acknowledged the efforts by staff.

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Swarthout adjourned the meeting at 8:50 a.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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