

## Meeting Minutes for Steering Committee Meeting

January 21, 2016 3:00-4:30

### 3:00 Call to Order and Introduction (Dr. Rick Scott)

- Introductions were made around the room

### 3:05 Wetland Management Plan (Greg Phillips)

- Currently the plan is a very rough draft, what we have accomplished to date is what has gone into the draft
- Greg created PowerPoint presentation to help guide everyone
- WMP slide
  - Contents of WMP; a lot of research and time have gone into the first 11 sections
  - 12<sup>th</sup> section, the conclusion section, is where the SCM can really help through participation and discussion.
  - 12<sup>th</sup> section should contain the action items, what we do with all the information, and the recommended management measures.
- Mission Statement slide
  - Remind everyone of why we are here before we discuss how to move forward; the mission statement was created by SCM, by some of the people in this room
- Goal and Objective slide
  - Three main goals of the WMP: encourage and guide wise development; manage, protect and enhance wetlands; and provide opportunities for public education and recreation
  - Good to remember that this written WMP is not a law but a plan for the city to use; these ideas are going to be used as a guide to improve situation
  - Ken Grunewald commented that ecotourism is big right now, we need to think progressively – out of the box, need to think about how aesthetics is good for economic growth
  - Question on how mitigation bank process is developing. Is the ANRC still on board to help with developing the bank and is that the best option? Greg comments if the landowners want to be compensated with cash, yes the mitigation bank is the best way to go instead of through a land trust. ANRC is on board if the appraisal process is successful. Currently, we have people working on the first properties getting appraised.
- Wetland Functions and Values slide
  - Remind everyone of functions important to wetlands in WOB
- Recommended Management Measures (aka 12<sup>th</sup> Section) slide
  - Approximately 70% of WMP is education, research, data collection. Last chapter is where we go from here with help from SC
  - List of concepts on slide that will help manage the wetland in the White Oak Bayou. SC members will help brainstorm on additional management measures put on list.
  - Some concepts are already in the process of being developed. Examples are mitigation bank, general permit, and priority map. First properties have been assessed and

currently being appraised for mitigation bank. Outline of general permit has been sent to Corps and should have something in the next year.

- Dr. Rick Scott mentioned that the top three concepts on the list are critical, “a make it or break it” level of importance.
- Questions/comments slide
  - Grunewald mentioned cultural resources section 106 could also add protection to area. Greg – yes it would and part of the requirement to receive a permit from Corps of Engineers is to have approval from the State Historic Preservation Office (office that preserves historic areas in AR)
  - What is the time frame for settling up with landowners? Having the bank set up by 2016 is the goal but it depends on the appraisal and ANRC. Once bank is started, whoever wants to donate land can.
  - Need to reach back out to developers, just as much a part of SC as everyone here. Call them and personally invite them to the next SCM.
  - When is the next EPA grant deadline? 2017 not 2016
  - Bike trails could provide ecotourism, will need two cities to commit to building

#### 4:05 Wetland Priority Map (Greg Phillips)

- Low priority wetlands are associated with the general permit. General Permit will allow developers to more quickly acquire permits to fill the low priority wetlands
- Medium/high priority wetlands are not addressed by general permit, thus will require the typical permit process from Corps of Engineers.
- Corps of Engineers has to ultimately give permission to use this map, and they have advised on its creation.
- Question on how low priority is scored. Many factors such as not being connected or continuous, not being within the 5 yr. floodplain, or not being close to the main WOB channel. Eric Holloway commented that some wetlands can develop by not putting in the correct ditch size or drainage for an area. One can come back five years after building a road/building and there be a wetland because of improper drainage.
- Naming wetlands Priority vs Quality. Different wetland scientist will have different opinions on what is high or low quality. The word priorities takes opinion out of the ranking and bases the wetlands off of an established scoring system focused on importance to project.
- Beaver management could be implemented to improve water levels in the ponded areas.
- Mayor Watson commented that Lake Willastein drainage area should be added to the map due to the area flowing into the WOB.

#### 4:20 Raffle (Emily Edwards)

*Trees of Arkansas* by Dwight Moore won by Eric Holloway