

White Oak Bayou Steering Committee

Minutes for February 18, 2010

Call to order/Introductions

- around the table introductions were conducted

Rules and etiquette for Steering Committee meetings

Chairman Rick Scott

- discussed rules and etiquette primarily requesting that participants not question the motives of others and that he will try to keep the meeting on task

Scott Owen

- discussed the differences between wetland protection plans and wetland management plans
- discussed the hope for better mitigation to replace lost functions

Review of first year goals

Scott Owen discussed the goals:

- goal: develop a mission statement
- goal: public outreach to gather input
- goal: develop educational goals
- goal: identify other user groups or participants
- goal: secure additional funding

Scott Owen discussed funding and stated that funding has been secured to cover the first year goals and there will likely be some funding from EPA to fund future project efforts. However, EPA would like to see other funding opportunities utilized as well.

By request Scott Owen gave a brief history of funding and progression of the project.

By request Scott Owen gave a short description of the hydrogeomorphic (HGM) wetland assessment process that will be used for evaluating wetlands in the watershed.

Mayor Watson gave a description of things that Maumelle would like to get out of the Wetland Management Plan. They included using the plan and maps as a tool to aid in planning for things such as buffers around wetlands, canoe access points, trails, etc. The Mayor explained that the city owns over 400 acres of wetlands and wants to be good stewards.

Chairman Scott mentioned that he had heard wetlands can actually be inexpensive property to purchase in some instances and the idea that determining where the low functioning wetlands occur may help to aid in smart growth.

Mayor Watson discussed examples of created wetlands that can serve certain functions and possibly be used for education and other purposes.

Scott Owen mentioned the use of constructed wetlands for stormwater treatment.

Brainstorm ideas for a mission statement

Marion Scott provided a draft of a mission statement she had written which was then copied onto a whiteboard and discussed by the committee. It was agreed that the committee would work on reworking the mission statement via e-mails so as to have a revised draft by the next steering committee meeting.

By request, Scott Owen gave some reasons why he thought EPA liked the White Oak Bayou project. Reasons included the existing HGM Guidance documents, development pressure within the watershed, a large acreage of wetlands, and that this had the potential to serve as a model for other communities in Arkansas and surrounding states.

The Mayor and Sara Owen discussed incorporating wetlands into development as an asset by providing additional green space which is attractive to homeowners.

David Haas provided ideas to add to the mission statement and the thought that maybe instead of a mission statement we need something more broad reaching such as a vision statement and providing a model for other communities.

Discuss education outreach methods for distributing newsletter

Sara Owen mentioned the need to get the monthly newsletter out to the general public. Ken Brazil talked about the idea of getting kids involved to hand out newsletters at local businesses.

Other ideas discussed included leaving copies at the library (hardcopy and/or electronic copy on a computer), Maumelle senior center, and the Jess Odom Community Center. Contacting the Maumelle Monitor for advertising or running a piece on the project was also discussed.

Plan a date for a public forum/workshop; plan a date for a field trip

Discussions were held cautioning against getting too much information out to the public before the Steering Committee has a chance to conduct more planning efforts. It was agreed more discussion would occur prior to setting a public forum/workshop date.

It was agreed that a field trip for the Steering Committee to visit wetlands in the watershed would be good and an e-mail will be sent out with several dates to see what would work best for everyone.

Discuss grant opportunities

Scott Owen gave a brief recap of funding including the benefit of involving a non-profit, a US Fish and Wildlife grant for improving bird habitat that may tie in well with the project, and that the wetland development grant application through EPA was due by the end of April for 2009 and would likely require a similar timeline in 2010.

Meeting adjourned