



**DRAYTON HARBOR SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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**MEETING SUMMARY**

Date: October 15, 2003  
Time: 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Blaine Harbor Meeting Room, Marine Drive

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**AGENDA**

1.	4:00	Public Comment Period
2.	4:05	Review Agenda and September Meeting Summary
3.	4:10	Update on Special Shellfish Fund - Project List/Contractor Selection (Ami Stillings)
4.	4:25	New Seagrass Development on Spit Proposal
5.	4:55	Shellfish District Open House
6.	5:10	Update on MRC Project in Blaine Harbor (Ami Stillings)
7.	5:25	[Tentative] Update on Blaine Wastewater Planning – Next Steps (Steve Banham)
8.	5:45	Update on Sampling Program – Frequency (Geoff Menzies)
9.	5:50	New Business
10.	5:55	Next Meeting's Agenda

**MEETING ATTENDANCE**

Committee Members

Bob Williams  
Geoff Menzies  
Jan Hansen  
Bjorn Hrutfiord  
Kathy Cullen  
Charles Hawkins  
Jon Paul Shannahan

Public

Alan Birdsall – Port of Bellingham  
Stephen Banham – City of Blaine Public Works  
Hilary Culverwell – Puget Sound Action Team  
Ami Stillings – Whatcom County Water Resources  
Sharon Roy – Whatcom County Council  
Bonnie Onyon – Blaine City Council  
Susan Thompson – Anvil Corporation

**DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED**

- 10/15/03 Drayton Harbor AC Agenda
- 9/17/03 Drayton Harbor AC Meeting Summary
- 10/16/03 Seagrass Cottages Proposal

**MEETING CONTENTS**

1. Public Comment Period  
Hilary Culverwell brought new shellfish brochures for distribution.
2. Review Agenda and September Meeting Summary  
Geoff Menzies asked to change the order of the agenda so Steve Banham could present information on City of Blaine's projects and have time afterward to discuss the Seagrass proposal development. Committee members agreed to reorganize the agenda. (Please



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note that the summary organization reflects the original agenda to avoid confusion. Items added to the agenda appear under New Business.)

The latest version of the 9/17/03 meeting summary was sent out via e-mail on Tuesday, 10/14/03. The summary went through several iterations because of some communication issues and because some committee members submitted comments electronically.

Committee members reviewed the latest version of the summary and approved it as Final.

- *Action:* Anvil will incorporate revisions to the 9/17/03 IFA Meeting Summary and distribute it as Final.

On a procedural note, Ami Stillings suggested that committee members hold their comments until the following meeting, rather than sending their comments directly to Anvil Corporation. She explained that Anvil develops a draft meeting summary, which Geoff Menzies and Ami review. Anvil then sends out the revised summary for the committee's review and approval during the following meeting.

Ami noted that soon, she will no longer work for the county. The person who will fill Ami's role on the committee, including draft meeting summary review, has not yet been selected; however, Katie Callahan is the most likely candidate.

### 3. Update on Special Shellfish Fund – Project List/Contractor Selection

The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) went out and seven Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) were received. Of those seven SOQs, three possible contractors were chosen. Phone interviews were conducted with all three of the contractors. They are now in a holding pattern until it is determined how to move forward and if adequate resources are available to manage the contracts.

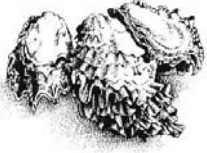
The following projects were included in the RFQ:

- Circulation monitoring
- Stormwater sampling
- Transect monitoring
- Depth sampling

Stormwater sampling and circulation monitoring are considered the two most important projects. Ami spoke with Frank Merriwether at the Department of Health (DOH), who suggested that depth sampling should be included as a component of the circulation monitoring and stormwater sampling projects. All sampling would be in the commercial part of the marina.

Funding is available for the projects; however, someone in the county needs to manage the contracts. Ami noted that if a manager is not assigned to the project, funding could be lost.

- *Action:* Sharon Roy will make phone calls to try and resolve the project manager issue.



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The project manager issue should be resolved by the end of October. Although work does not need to start by that time, the contracts need to be in place by the end of the year to secure funding.

#### 4. New Seagrass Development on Spit Proposal

The Committee has two weeks to comment on the second round proposal that has been submitted to the City of Blaine. Geoff presented a document titled "Issues for the Shellfish Committee to consider in its comments to Blaine," which outlines the main issues and frames recommendations the committee could consider submitting to the city. Committee members went through the issues and raised the following major discussion points.

##### 1) The proposed 40% impervious surface is very high.

Some members noted that the percentage of impervious surface proposed in the second development proposal is the same as in the first proposal, which is about 40% impervious surface. Geoff presented Department of Ecology aerial photos and expressed that the amount of existing impervious surface in the developed portion of the spit is already high; and adding additional impervious cover could be detrimental to water quality.

There is also no existing requirement for developers or small municipalities like Blaine to control fecal coliform (FC) in stormwater runoff. The most recent Ecology stormwater manual does not address FC in runoff. Geoff presented a literature review from the Puget Sound Action Team that reviews all literature on urbanization and shellfish. This literature review concludes that as impervious cover reaches the 10-20% range, shellfish classification is threatened.

Geoff contacted John Syre prior to the meeting to determine whether he might consider selling the land to a local land trust. John indicated that with minimal investment, the land would provide a major return to the developer and it would be very expensive to purchase the property.

Even if the developer uses all available good development practices on the spit (e.g., LID), the committee has concerns about hydrologic connection to nearby marine waters. Some members suggested that the developer should be required to find out how water moves through the system. Some members suggested going above and beyond Ecology's stormwater manual because of sensitive areas and shellfish resources.

Hilary Culverwell noted that the Puget Sound Management Plan calls on cities and counties to come up with a comprehensive stormwater program to protect shellfish resources. The committee could recommend that Blaine adopt the management plan that already exists for cities and counties.

- Action: Hilary will provide Geoff with the Puget Sound Management Plan language.

Some members suggested that the developer should go beyond standard erosion control procedures and should consider using Whatcom County Title 20 as a reference.



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Certain techniques are not appropriate, but there are certain appropriate low impact development techniques. The developer could be required to show what site-specific low impact development alternatives exist.

- 2) Are the 1984 Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) still valid?  
Conditions have changed considerably since 1984; some of those changed conditions are noted in the handout.

Committee members asked the following questions:

- What about the changing salmon Endangered Species (ES) listings since the original EIS in 1984?
- At what point do they determine if an EIS is needed?
- When does Ecology review the project?

The city told Geoff that they plan to require the developer to get a third party / independent review of the original master plan and 1984 EIS to if they are still valid.

In response to the Audubon Society's designation of Drayton Harbor and Semiahmoo Spit as Important Bird Areas, Sharon Roy noted that Blaine will focus on birding as a major development thrust in the future to encourage the birding community to visit Blaine and see the harbor.

- 3) Response in the SEPA checklist to whether the spit is an "environmentally sensitive site" is glaringly weak.

The SEPA checklist states that the area is not an environmentally sensitive site; however, Blaine critical area maps show shellfishing areas on both sides of the spit. Blaine has no specific regulations in place to protect this resource.

Hilary Culverwell noted that Blaine's 2004 Comprehensive Plan update will be required to include environmental ordinances.

Geoff noted that in Whatcom County, there are ordinances and regulations addressing stormwater. The city should be encouraged to review what has been done in Whatcom County. The new county stormwater guidelines and land clearing guidelines for Drayton Harbor actually implement several recommendations that were in the 1995 Drayton Harbor Watershed Action Plan.

The Whatcom County Environmental Resources Report Series describes Drayton Harbor as having significant wildlife areas and identifies the presence of peregrine falcon and marbled murrelets; however, these species are not mentioned in the SEPA document. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) identifies the area as a Priority Habitat.



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### 4) Response to "Utilities" section of SEPA

The SEPA document does not mention the current situation of the wastewater treatment plant or explain how it will meet new development needs.

Several members did not feel that this issue should be raised in the committee's comments on the Seagrass Proposal.

One member asked if an EIS could prevent the development project from moving forward. Other members responded that it is possible but unlikely.

- Action: Geoff will communicate to the city that the Drayton Harbor committee's primary recommendation is to require a new EIS to be completed for the project.
- Action: Item 9 from the Possible Recommendations/Comments will be deleted. Committee members will contact Geoff by email if they have any other comments or recommendations. Geoff will develop a formal recommendation by Monday, 10/20/03.
- Action: Geoff will contact Brian Williams at WDFW.
- Action: Hilary will contact work colleagues and Hugh Shipman at Ecology to ask if they know of development activities on similar spit landforms.

### 5. Shellfish District Open House

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) sent Jon Paul Shannahan to hear the Drayton Harbor committee's needs and to offer financial assistance and volunteer help for the Drayton Harbor Shellfish District open house.

It was noted that the Open House has been very popular in the past and is always a very positive experience.

Geoff noted that a lot of work goes into the Open House. In the past, the committee has sought outside funding and all of the shellfish has been donated. If the committee wants to hold an Open House in 2004, they will need to start planning it right away since it happens in January.

One member raised a question regarding the Shuckin' on the Spit Festival. Geoff mentioned that Trillium Corporation and Resort Semiahmoo previously subsidized the event primarily. The resort may assist with the event in 2004, but their involvement is contingent upon the successful re-opening of shellfish harvest in Drayton Harbor.

Some members suggested that the Open House and Shuckin' on the Spit festival be combined. Geoff noted that the Puget Sound Restoration Fund has submitted a proposal to the PSAT PIE program for funds to help PSRF organize the event. The combined event would occur in May or June 2004 to coincide with harvest of the Community Oyster Farm beds. The event should be a community celebration focused around shellfish harvesting. It will be known by January or February if the beds will be reopened.

- Action: The Shellfish Open House and Shuckin' on the Spit events will be combined and held in May or June 2004.



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### 6. Update on MRC Project in Blaine Harbor

Committee members agreed to discuss this item at their next meeting.

### 7. Presentation on Blaine Wastewater Planning – Next Steps

An advisory committee has been working since May 2003 to come up with the best, long-term solution for Blaine's wastewater treatment. Steve Banham gave a PowerPoint presentation on the advisory committee's work.

#### Background

The Citizens Wastewater Advisory Committee convened in May. Blaine successfully ensured that a representative selection of community members sat on the committee. Geoff Menzies, Bonnie Onyon, and Jan Hrutfiord were all on the committee. An Ecology liaison was also on the committee. A Lummi Nation representative joined the group midway through the process. Seven sessions were held. The goal was to provide recommendations to the Blaine City Council. The committee presented recommendations to the Council on 10/6/03 and held a community open house at the new fire station on 10/8/03. More than 30 people attended the open house. Steve felt it was successful and provided good interaction with the community.

Steve anticipates the need for at least one more wrap-up session with the advisory committee to look at conditions on the recommended alternatives and to talk about community feed back since the presentation and open house.

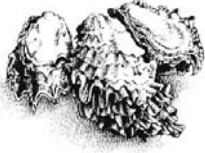
#### Process

The advisory committee identified 5 major objectives that should be considered in identifying a solution for treatment:

- 1) Safeguard marine waters
- 2) Enhance community livability
- 3) Meet non-technical objectives
- 4) Meet growth requirements
- 5) Provide an implementable solution.

Points were assigned to each of the 5 objectives. Cost was considered as an entirely separate item. From a non-monetary standpoint, safeguarding marine waters (1) emerged as the most important criterion.

The advisory committee looked at a total of 14 options covering a diverse range of alternatives. A spreadsheet with annualized costs was developed for each alternative. The committee used worksheets to evaluate and eventually rank each alternative. Each individual scored the alternatives. A statistician was present at the meeting and ran all the numbers for each alternative for each individual. If a wide discrepancy in the outcomes was discovered, a roundtable discussion ensued to discuss the alternative. After considering each alternative, the committee narrowed down the list to the three that seemed to best fit the major objectives and cost considerations for the city.



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### CWAC Recommended Alternatives

- 1) Build a new plant on Marine Drive and new plant in west Blaine [No specific site identified] (Alternative 2).
- 2) Convey all wastewater to Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) through the municipality of Surrey (Alternative 10)
- 3) Convey East Blaine wastewater to GVRD and construct a new plant somewhere in West Blaine (Alternative 14). No specific site was identified.

The committee did not rank the final three choices since they were all identified as good alternatives. Alternative 2 is more costly with not as much benefit but the committee felt it was important to have an alternative that did not include connecting with Canada.

The committee was quite concerned about conveyance of untreated sewage via underwater pipes either across the entrance to Drayton Harbor or across the freshwater creeks due to the potential for leaks.. Steve noted that there are technologies that would make it safe. It would also be necessary to have buy-in from the DOH Shellfish Program and Ecology in order to convince the community it was safe.

### Costs

Alternative 2: \$22 million

Alternative 10 (GVRD with storage): \$18 million plus

Alternative 10 (GVRD without storage): \$13 million

Alternative 14: \$24 million

GVRD could possibly require storage if they wanted to attenuate the peaks. Steve does not anticipate that this will be the case, however.

The \$5 million difference between the GVRD with storage and without storage is not all explained by storage. Blaine has already met with Surrey and GVRD to discuss these options and Surrey has actually completed an engineering study to determine what it would take to connect to the City of Blaine. Alternative 14, GVRD plus a west side plant, is considered a split solution.

Steve met with the council on Monday, 10/13/03 to determine if these alternatives could be financed assuming different grant and loan scenarios.

Financing the alternatives would require increases in connection fees and monthly rate increase. A 15.5% increase in monthly rates would bring the city up to Ecology's hardship rate and the city would therefore be eligible for grant funding. It would be challenging to present the increases to the community. Increases would be enacted a year before construction starts. Financing assumptions also include a 2.5% community growth and 40 to 50 new Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs) coming online each year. That number was derived from the most recent growth analysis done by the planners.

Geoff Menzies noted that the alternatives involving GVRD seemed to be the most attractive; however, the amount GVRD will charge Blaine for treatment is not included in the cost



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estimate. Steve indicated that initial estimates of GVRD's costs for treating wastewater through their system is actually less than Blaine's.

### Funding

The programs for grants are highly competitive. Six million dollars from grants is included in the cost projections. The City of Blaine has about \$1 million of capital funds to contribute and a grant commitment from Rural Development for \$700,000 in grants and \$1.5 million in loans, left over from the previous plant expansion project. Rural Development's loan criteria have shifted; new grant loan money is based on the 2000 census and the community's median income. In order to get Rural Development grant money, the community needs to be at 80% of the 2000 census median income. Blaine's median income was \$36,800, the median income to qualify for a loan is \$36,200 and to qualify for grants the median income would have to be at 80% of \$36,200.

Steve noted that Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) loans are a very viable source of funding (up to \$10 million). Steve has already met with PWTF and feels confident that Blaine could get a PWTF loan. The cost projections do not assume any federal money. Federal and state money may be possible to get. Steve's presentation shows a pragmatic view of what Blaine could realistically accomplish. Any additions would only improve cost numbers.

Some members raised concern regarding continued use of the existing outfall. Alternatives 2 and 14 depend on using the existing outfall. The west Blaine plant would be a reuse quality plant where the water could be used on areas such as the golf course. If the water were reused, a discharge permit would be required even if the water were injected into the soil.

### Issues/Next Steps

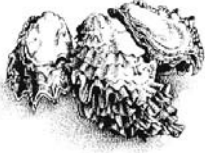
The goal is to select a preferred alternative within the next week.

The City of Blaine will need to look into the feasibility of a reliable pipe versus a west side plant. A 14-inch ductile iron segmented pipe currently runs under the harbor. With east side treatment, Blaine might be able to sleeve a continuous pipe inside the existing 14-inch pipe and alleviate concerns about the ductile iron pipe. The ductile iron pipe has never failed, however. Blaine will need to explore technical options. There is also an abandoned 14-inch water pipe under the harbor; a new pipe might be sleeved inside this as well.

The potential building site on Marine Drive used to be a landfill, so there are associated environmental risks. This may, however, bring additional funding through Brownfield's Redevelopment funding.

If Blaine decides to go with one of the GVRD options, the city will need to get a letter of commitment from GVRD early on. The ultimate agreement will have to go through provincial, local, and the federal Canadian government.

All alternatives assume a 4 to 5year time frame.



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Once the final selection is made, the city can wrap up its general sewer plan and submit it to Ecology for approval.

### Questions

Are there any other communities with a similar situation along the border? Steve noted that the City of Sumas is connected to Fraser Valley Regional District and that there are a number of other places along the US/Canadian boarder with similar types of agreements.

Is the standard of treatment in Canada the same as in the U.S.? GVRD's permit is a 45/45 and the U.S. permit standard is 30/30 (45/45 and 30/30 refers to the Biological Oxygen Demand [BOD] and Total Suspended Solids [TSS] limitations in effluent). The Annacis Island plant is exceeding the U.S. standards but is not regulated to that standard. Daily averages in 2001 were 11mg/L for BOD and 10 mg/L for TSS.

Where is GVRD's outfall? It discharges into the Fraser River and ultimately into the Strait of Georgia.

What type of plant is it? It is a trickling filter type plant.

Specific siting of a new plant in West Blaine was not discussed. Is it possible to set the plant outside of city boundaries or in the Birch Bay service area rather than the Blaine service area? Yes, that is possible. Blaine will continue to discuss the situation with Birch Bay. The difficulty is finding a site, deciding where the outfall would be, and who would manage it. The thought is to create something that is essentially odorless and invisible through blending or trying to make a feature out of it. Examples are a plant in Vancouver, WA, and downtown Edmonds. Steve has also toured an Anacortes plant in close proximity to a residential area.

Will the public have another chance to have input on the process? The facility planning process will be another chance for public input.

Is there information available on the other alternatives that were not chosen? Information on how the other alternatives scored is available on the City of Blaine's Web site.

### 8. Update on the Drayton Harbor Water Quality Sampling Program – Frequency

Sampling will be done twice a month now through April and is funded partially by a \$300 donation from the Pew Marine Fellows. The Marine Fellows group will get a tour of Drayton Harbor this Friday, 10/17/03. They are essentially providing the boat fuel for the project. They are currently trying to get money from the Semiahmoo Ladies Club to support the sampling effort as well. PSRF has also submitted a PIE proposal to the Puget Sound Action Team to do three things:

- 1) Support the harbor monitoring program with volunteers from January through April 2004
- 2) Give tours to the oyster beds targeting planning commissioners, city council, county council, MRC, and upper watershed residents (to get people to see what the bay can produce and to see the beds before they are harvested)
- 3) Organize the third Shuckin' on the Spit Festival.



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### 9. New Business

#### Video and Dye Study Discussion

Committee members were shown a video of diving footage from a dye test on the Wastewater Treatment Plant's outfall pipe. It was apparent from the video that the effluent is not exiting from the engineered diffuser, it is coming out approximately 100 feet upstream of the diffuser.

A total break of about 4 feet has occurred in the pipe, which most likely resulted from an anchor being dragged across it (i.e., it was not a material failure). Steve noted that the outfall extends 2,200 feet into the harbor.

In the past, when Hay and Co. modeled the harbor, the plant's outfall did not even register FC; however, that was based on the assumption that the diffuser was working.

As a next step, the diver was asked to make preliminary contact with the permitting agencies. Steve will meet with the Blaine Planning Department on 10/16/03 to determine what type of permits will be required for repairing the line. The diver gave a rough estimate of \$40,000 to repair the break.

The discharge permit requires an outfall evaluation in the first two years; however, because of the importance of the outfall in planning wastewater treatment options, it was decided to do the evaluation right away.

The initial 1997 dive survey of the outfall detected an unexpected low flow coming out of the diffuser.

Some members noted that if this type of accident and break could happen once, it could happen again and wondered what was to prevent it from reoccurring. One committee member suggested that signs marking the location of the line be placed on the shore to warn boaters of the pipeline.

### 10. Next Meeting's Agenda

The next meeting's agenda was not discussed.