

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
VIDA COMMUNITY CENTER
VIDA, OREGON
OCTOBER 23, 2007
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners present: Mel Menegat, John Simpson, Ron Farmer, and John Brown. Commissioner Patrick Lanning was excused.

Others present: Randy Berggren, Marty Douglas, and Debra Smith of the EWEB staff; and Kimberly Young, City of Eugene Minutes Recorder.

President Menegat called the Special Meeting of the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) to order; noting the purpose of the meeting was for the Board to take public input in regard to the location of a boat landing. He reviewed the order of the proceedings.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Affairs Manager Marty Douglass noted the public outreach that led to the identification of three possible boat landing sites, Ikes Landing, Indian Creek, and Goodpasture Island. He reported that subsequently, EWEB hired OBEC Consulting Engineers to evaluate the sites. The list was expanded at the suggestion of residents to include the Old Hatchery and Lloyd Knox Water Board Park sites. A second public meeting was held to review the OBEC evaluation, and public input indicated a desire for EWEB and OBEC to do further analysis of the sites with a focus on traffic safety; that analysis was now underway.

Mr. Douglass reported that the public input received by the Board was posted on the Web site, and the minutes of the meeting would also be posted. He said EWEB would continue to gather public input to assist the Board in making its decision. He noted that EWEB was working with Lindholm and Associates on a survey of McKenzie Valley residents. The Board would review the questions prior to the survey. He said EWEB had asked the presidents of the McKenzie River Guides and McKenzie Flyfishers to poll their members of their preferred sites. Mr. Douglass said he received a call from a recreational organization in Eugene requesting the Board to hold a public hearing in Eugene due to the many river users who lived in Eugene.

Mr. Douglass reported that the Federal Energy Regulatory Agency (FERC) had been provided with OBEC's initial analysis and would be provided with any further analyses.

President Menegat noted the Board's tour of the five proposed sites prior to the meeting. He said that the Board also reviewed the initial feasibility report, which included criteria for locating a boat landing.

Commissioner Farmer thanked those in attendance and said he would like to hear testimony directed at the question of why EWEB should build on a particular site given the FERC mandate to EWEB. He asked speakers to discuss the relative merits of specific sites and to consider why the landing was being built, which was for the enhanced use of the river.

Commissioner Simpson also thanked those in attendance and encouraged all testimony. He said that those in attendance could review the minutes when they were posted to the Web site. He encouraged the public to review the minutes and to contact board members if they were concerned their testimony was not reflected accurately.

Commissioner Brown thanked those in attendance and said he would be considering, not in any particular order, issues of safety, the environment, the utility of the site, its perceived impact on adjacent users, its functionality, and its cost.

President Menegat opened the public hearing.

John Bennett, Lea Shore Drive, submitted written testimony. He acknowledged the need for a new boat landing. He said any new boat landing should have safe ingress and egress to the McKenzie Highway, it should have minimal impact on high-use side roads, it should be designed and sited to serve the most users, the total cost for the landing should be commensurate with its use, the landing should have the potential of being expanded, the site should not unduly impact the use or appearance of the lake, and the landing should be sensitive to natural areas.

Mr. Bennett shared a schematic representation of a new proposed boat landing mounted on the meeting room wall to be located across from the Old Fish Hatchery. He used the graphic representation to identify the location of the road, the entrance, the location of the boardwalk, the parking, and the put-in and take-out.

Judith Olson asked Commissioners to ensure that they saw each site personally. She suggested the Board visit the area again and allot more time to the visit. Ms. Olson acknowledged she wanted to protect the pristine area of Lloyd Knox Water Board Park and spoke to the safety issue she perceived in regard to access across the dam. She said that if another turn lane was installed, it would affect an unstable hill. There were already visibility problems at the dam, as well as periodic dam closures. She said that the park was created for recreational uses such as picnicking and boating. She suggested that the Board improve the two landings already in place rather than affect designated areas for family recreation. Ms. Olson believed there were other solutions than the ones offered by the OBEC analysis.

David Jensen, 47818 McKenzie Highway, a member of the guides association, believed that all the sites in question had pluses and minuses. He considered the new site at Lloyd Knox Water Board Park dangerous because of traffic generated by fishermen. He did not think the park could accommodate the amount of trailers he anticipated. He said that at times, trailers were backed out on Highway 126. He favored the Goodpasture Island site. He believed the parking and rest room facilities could be located in a way that could be screened from those living across the river.

Arthur Newcombe, 45414 McKenzie Highway, distributed information to the Board taken from a study done in 1999 by Michael Wisher, an engineer who concluded that the site distances for the Goodpasture Island site were not adequate. He secured accident information from the Oregon Department of Transportation that indicated in the period between March 1997 and January 2006 there were 31 accidents between milepost 25 and 26; 14 were rear-end collisions. He recalled a 1999 meeting with the Board of County Commissioners about the same topic at which he expressed the same concerns. Environmental Manager Steve Newcomb thought the site being proposed by Mr. Bennett was likely to be the safest because of its access and because it would serve the entire community. Most of those who boat on Leaburg Lake put in by the end; the Goodpasture Island site would serve only those boaters and floaters who did not want to row another three-quarters of a mile to pull out into the lake.

Kurt Cox, 45181 McKenzie Highway, a resident living directly across from the Goodpasture Island site, agreed with Mr. Newcombe's comments about traffic safety. He said that his driveway was treacherous and he heard tire squeals all the time. Mr. Cox spoke of the riparian area near the Goodpasture Island site, which slowed down the woody debris that went down the river. He thought it served as a buffer to the dam. He shared some diagrams showing what would happen on the road and adjacent area in the event of a flood, noting that he had provided copies to Mr. Douglass. Mr. Cox recommended the Board consider the Old Hatchery site.

Mary Cox, 45181 McKenzie Highway, discussed traffic safety in the vicinity of her house. She said she frequently encountered traffic as she attempted to leave her driveway. That required her to pull off on the shoulder to avoid being hit. The road was very busy in the summer and weekends, and motorists frequently traveled at speeds in excess of the speed limit. She was glad to know EWEB was going to look at safety issues. Ms. Cox noted the large number of accidents that occurred between the bridge and her house and hoped that stretch of the road would be looked at. She believed that tourists and visitors as well as river users would appreciate the Old Hatchery site.

Steve Shaffers, 47685 McKenzie Highway, president of the McKenzie River Guides Association, emphasized the need for another boat landing on the river. He believed the large majority of his association's members supported the Goodpasture Island site, which would take pressure off Helfrige Landing, which lacked adequate parking. He said the Goodpasture Island site was the only site that could provide a needed "walk and wade" fishery for those without boats. He suggested the Board consider what option provided the most benefit for the most people. He thought the traffic issues related to the site could be addressed, including the sight distances.

Don Ablett, Lea Shore Drive, recommended that the Board poll the community, not merely the guides. He said that the community had been dealing with the Goodpasture Island site option for some time, which was discarded because it was not safe. The stone wall along the road would have to be removed for the site to be used, and no one knew what was behind the stone wall. He maintained that the Goodpasture Island site would "provide a convenient takeout for a select

group who make a living on the river.” He maintained that EWEB was obligated by FERC to replace a boat landing because it had intended to raise the dam 18 inches, which would have taken out Ike’s Landing. That would not happen now. He supported Lloyd Knox Water Board Park. Mr. Ablett believed that would satisfy EWEB’s FERC obligation. He said that EWEB owned the park and could make the minimal improvements needed. He did not think the dam crossing was an issue and if it was, EWEB could install a signal system on the bridge. He also thought a left turn lane could be installed on Highway 126, enhancing access to the dam. Mr. Ablett concurred that a landing was needed. He said he had talked to users of small craft with small motors who thought they would have a difficult time reaching Goodpasture after they floated down to the dam where the fish were stocked.

Frank Armadarius, Oregon River Sports, provided written testimony. He supported the use of the Goodpasture Island site as a safe, efficient, and ecologically sound option. He thought the speed limit could be reduced along that stretch of the highway. He said that the community had many boaters and he anticipated that the numbers would increase. He asked the Board to consider not just the impact of the landing today but the growth in the industry and the community’s enthusiasm for boating. He said Helfrich Landing was overused and noted that it served many put-ins. It was very heavily used in the summer and he believed that use needed to be spread out along the river. He said a site located closer to town would reduce gasoline use. He did not think that Lloyd Knox Water Board Park was the solution. He asked that similar meetings be held in the metropolitan area, where the boating public lived.

Gloria Gardner, McKenzie Highway resident who lived near the Goodpasture Island site, questioned why the site was being revisited given that nothing had changed since the discussion in 1999. She said that the safety issues remained the same. She called attention to a report commissioned by the residents from Access Engineering, which indicated the site was not viable. She said the Board had the information provided about sight distance shortages and noted the difficulty she had in entering and exiting her property because of traffic along the highway. She called attention to a 1999 letter from attorney Mike Sherlock to former County Commissioner Cindy Weeldreyer, which discussed the State’s land use goals as they related to the site and its habitat values and location in the flood zone. Ms. Gardner believed that information argued against the site’s use for a boat landing.

Gary Hatfield, objected to the time limits imposed on speakers. He said in his experience, one did not locate such a facility in the “backyard of a residential area.” He objected to the fact that the river guides were interested in bringing boaters into the area and the fact that Mr. Armadarius believed metropolitan residents should be asked their opinion. He suggested that the guides pay his taxes. He did not want to be told how to live his life by other people because he “happened to be that NIMBY next door.” He had had a fatal traffic accident take place on his property. Mr. Hatfield believed the Board was not giving the public an opportunity for public discussion when it foreclosed the option of no boat landing. He said the option proposed by Mr. Bennett would give people the opportunity to enjoy the lake in a safe area. He said that a good part of the lake was open to public access, and while people fished on all parts of the river,

he did not think it appropriate to put an unsafe facility in the backyard of the neighbors. He asked what made people think that Goodpasture would not be outgrown given its limited size. He thought it was a short-term option, not a long-term option.

Cathy Lazaro, Goodpasture Island Road, opposed the Goodpasture Island option. She supported the option shared with the board by Mr. Bennett. It could serve many people and they could fish off the board walk. The disabled community could access the site more readily than existing sites, which were often unsafe. She said there no one knew what was going on behind the wall leading to the site.

Mel Lazaro, Goodpasture Island Road, questioned why the area needed another boat landing, particularly one built at tax payers' expense. He was tired of the discussion. He said that he already had to clean up garage discarded by river users near his home.

Ken Helfrich, 42091 McKenzie Highway, a river guide, maintained that the area needed another boat landing to enhance access in the stretch of the river between the lake and the Vida landing. He said the location of the landing should be where it made the most sense; it was intended to facilitate down river floaters. Mr. Helfrich said the boat landing would not be for the guides' use alone. It was intended for all river users. The guides simply wanted to see it placed in the right location. He thought a landing in the location identified by Mr. Bennett would mean a lot of rowing, and that was challenging in the wind. He favored the Goodpasture Island site, pointing out it was off the highway behind a large grove of trees, isolated from public view. He did not think there would be much noise, pointing out the site was only used six months of the year.

Steve Burstovic maintained that safety was the main issue of concern. He said that ODOT had sent a different message in 1999 about the appropriate sight distances. He recalled an effort to designate McKenzie Highway as a truck route, which failed for safety reasons. He said that the road was a truck route anyway. He said when he pulled off Goodpasture Bridge he immediately saw bumpers in his rear view mirror, forcing him to accelerate or pull over. He pointed out that EWEB owned Lloyd Knox Water Board Park and the landing could be installed at that site at a lower cost; the Goodpasture Island site would need to be rezoned, and any needed road modifications could only be done at great cost. The park served families and provided many recreational opportunities, including fishing. He called for a reduction in the speed limit on McKenzie Highway.

Jake Risely, Eugene, hoped the Board conducted a similar meeting in Eugene, which had many residents who used the river. He said more than just guides used the river, noting he took youths to the river through the Eugene Outdoor Recreation Program. Mr. Risely noted his participation on the team who evaluated landing sites in 1999. The team included many professionals, including ODOT employees, hydrologists, and botanists, who supported the Goodpasture Island site because of its river access and minimal riparian damage that would result from the construction of the landing. The plans on file at Lane County showed a boat ramp that

would work at the site. The Public Works engineering staff determined with ODOT that the site could be accessed safely. He maintained that it was the best site.

Bob Grafton, Lea Shore Drive, opposed a boat landing at the Goodpasture Island site because it was not safe. He said the Board of County Commissioners wanted the site but would not accept it if it could not be made safe. Subsequently, ODOT determined it could not be made safe and no left turn lane could be added to the highway to access the site. He had opposed the site in 1999 and continued to oppose it. He believed the community favored a boat landing, as evidenced by the proposal reviewed by Mr. Bennett. He said that it provided recreational access to a public part of the lake and could be expanded in the future. He said the discussion of a destination park alarmed him as a homeowner. He anticipated such a park would be more than a boat landing in the future. He wanted a boat landing only. He thought that something at the Old Hatchery site or at Lloyd Knox Water Board Park would provide the most benefit for the most users. Mr. Grafton believed that FERC had wanted EWEB to find consensus on the location, and asked EWEB to work with the residents to that end. He called for a 20-year plan that provided recreation for everyone on the river. He thought the residents and EWEB could build consensus around the Old Hatchery site.

Kelsey Helfrich, 42091 McKenzie Highway, a member of the Guides Association, observed that the feasibility report ranked the Goodpasture Island site highest in terms of safety. She acknowledged safety was a big issue, but suggested another issue was what EWEB could offer the public and future generation in terms of recreation. She said the river economy was fragile and dependent on recreation, and she thought it necessary to provide the best opportunity. For that reason, she supported the Goodpasture Island site. The area was beautiful for both the boater and the casual visitor. She agreed it was important to spread out the visitors to the river. Ms. Helfrich acknowledged residents who wished to protect the beauty of the area, but suggested that the community could give up "one little piece of land" for town dwellers that wished to enjoy what nature had to offer on the river.

Dana Burwell, 44387 McKenzie Highway, identified himself as a former river guide and current volunteer fire fighter. He said that there were many accidents at both Goodpasture Island Road and the dam. There were right turn lanes, but no left turn lanes, leading to many rear-end collisions. He agreed that it was a serious concern. However, the landing at Ike's, which many deemed dangerous, had about one accident to every ten at Goodpasture. He thought the Goodpasture Island site could be made safe even if the wall was not removed. There was more sight access there than at Ike's Landing. Mr. Burwell said he had worked with others to examine different landing sites in the past and acknowledged residents' concern about the impact of a landing on their properties. He said that a landing was needed further up the lake if possible. Mr. Burwell liked the concept presented by Mr. Bennett, but pointed out that it was across from another landing. He suggested a landing at the other end would be more beneficial. If the Goodpasture option was not viable, he would support the option at the Old Hatchery.

Mr. Burwell doubted the Lloyd Knox Water Board Park site was feasible for a boat landing

because it was heavily used already and people were already backed up on the highway attempting to access the park. There were too many people trying to get across the dam and not enough space to get off the highway.

A member of the audience requested the Board to allow time for additional presentations from those who had already spoken. President Menegat asked those individuals to fill out "Request to Speak" forms.

Kathy Jensen, 47818 McKenzie Highway, indicated she had no strong feelings about the site of the boat landing. However, as a frequent user of the highway, traffic safety was a concern for her. She said that it appeared the major concern about Lloyd Knox Water Board Park was the one-lane bridge, which people often did not realize was so limited in width. There was a considerable amount of traffic crossing the bridge. She suggested that if EWEB was to select that option, the bridge be widened to two lanes to improve safety. She noted the ratings assigned to the sites in terms of highway access and maintained that Lloyd Knox Water Board Park should not have been ranked "neutral."

John Bennett reiterated the suggestion for improved access across the dam at Lloyd Knox Water Board Park or alternatively, for a signal system. He finished his overview of the proposal for a landing at the Old Fish Hatchery using the schematic mounted on the wall. He did not think it was that much further for boaters to go for a site that would serve so many people. The avoided costs of the road improvements could be put toward the facility or toward improved dam access.

Joanne Calavan, Lea Shore Drive, informed the river guides they were not the only business on the river. She said the issue was not about the guides. It was about all the community, and all residents' businesses. She asserted she was present as a business woman who operated a small business from her home and shipped materials all over the world. She traveled to and from her home to the post office and she did not think the highway was safe.

Don Ablett asked EWEB to come up with something that served all residents. He recommended that the guides use electric motors to access the proposed landing. He said that maybe it was not the "macho" thing to do, but he did it. Mr. Ablett saw no problem having something at both ends of the boardwalk, as that would serve everyone. Having something at the east end would only require the guides to row a few hundred yards more to Ike's. Families who wished to put into the lake could do so safely at the west. He urged the Board to improve the facilities at the lake to "put it on the map."

Mr. Ablett recalled that the Goodpasture Island site was ranked #4 rather than #1 during the 1999 task force evaluation.

Speaking to the issue of relieving pressure at Helfrich Landing, Mr. Ablett asked “what does FERC have to do with that?” He questioned whether EWEB would be involved with locating a boat landing for that purpose if it was raising the lake. He did not think so. The guides would continue to use Ike’s Landing.

Mr. Ablett suggested that the Board would be able to take advantage of grant sources to build the proposed landing. He further suggested the community center could rent boats out at the landing.

Frank Armadarius suggested that McKenzie area residents should realize they did not own the McKenzie River.

President Menegat closed the public comment portion of the meeting and called on the Board for comments.

Commissioner Farmer thanked those in attendance and said he looked forward to hearing more about the hatchery site. He said that Board members’ contact numbers were posted on the EWEB Web site. He asked that the input address the objections raised in the engineering report.

Commissioner Simpson also thanked those who participated and invited them to contact him. He expressed appreciation for the landing proposal offered by residents.

Commissioner Brown thanked residents and said it was not a “done deal” that a boat landing would be built. He said if the community had consensus it wanted a boat ramp, he suggested that it engage EWEB as the party that could pull it off, given the regulatory processes involved. He recommended that if residents believed there was a traffic safety problem to be solved, they contact the Board of County Commissioners and ODOT and hold another community meeting to pressure them for a solution, independent of the boat landing issue.

In answer to the question of why another boat landing was needed, Commissioner Farmer said that it was a requirement of FERC; he would prefer that EWEB not be involved in the issue. EWEB was not present because it wanted to build a boat landing. A member of the audience asked if EWEB could appeal the decision. Commissioner Farmer said that EWEB had attempted to do so without success. General Manager Randy Berggren indicated it was unclear that the landing had to be within the project boundaries. He further indicated, in response to a question, that the time line for the selection of a site was unclear, and that EWEB had no likely partner for building such a landing given the mandate from FERC.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Assistant Secretary

President