



City Council Agenda Bill

20248

Bill Number

Subject: Report from the December 2, 2013 Lake Whatcom Policy Group meeting.

Summary Statement: The Lake Whatcom Policy Group, consisting of representatives from the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, the Whatcom County Council, and the Bellingham City Council, meets regularly to discuss policy issues regarding Lake Whatcom. The Lake Whatcom and Natural Resources Committee chair will provide a briefing on the discussion and recommendations from the December 2, 2013 Policy Group meeting.

Previous Council Action: n/a

Fiscal Impact: None.

Funding Source:

Attachments: 1. Lake Whatcom Policy Group, Brief Digest of Presentations and Discussion, December 2, 2013 meeting.

Meeting Activity	Meeting Date	Staff Recommendation	Presented By	Time
Committee Briefing Information Only	16-Dec-2013	Information Only	Cathy Lehman	5 mins.

Council Committee:

Lake Whatcom Reservoir & Natural Resources

Cathy Lehman, Chair
Michael Lilliquist; Stan Snapp

Committee Actions:

Council Action:

Agenda Bill Contact:

Mark Gardner, 778-8204

Reviewed By	Initials	Date
Seth Fleetwood Cl. Pres.	SMF	12/11/13
Cathy Lehman, LW Nat. Rs. Cmte	CL BYJEW	12/11/13
Legal	PAK	12-10-13
Mayor	KL/DA	12/10/13



**Lake Whatcom Policy Group
December 2, 2013 Meeting
Brief Digest of Presentations and Discussion**

1. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program modification proposal.

City and County staff held work sessions with County and City Councils in November. Staff have refined proposed modifications to the 2014 AIS program, taking into account feedback received at the Council meetings. Highlights of the proposed changes are:

- The program will be expanded to cover most watercraft, to include hand-carried boats such as canoes, kayaks, and rowboats, and will also cover small motorized and non-motorized trailered boats less than 20 feet long not required to be registered by the state. Paddleboards and inflatable boats under 10' will continue to be exempt.
- Smaller watercraft will be required to pay a \$10 fee for an annual pass, or possibly, \$5 for a 3-day pass. Emphasis will be on education for the small craft for 2014.
- The base fee for larger boats will remain at \$50 per year, and \$20 for a 3-day pass.
- A countywide on-line boater education program will be set up, and boaters who complete the education program will receive a card and a discount of \$10 (per boat) against any required program fees.
- The fee structure will be kept in place for 2014 and staff will evaluate participation and revenues resulting from the schedule, in the context of an expanded program.
- Staff will examine the water chemistry of other lakes in the County to develop a risk assessment for possible infestation by aquatic invasive species, and will make recommendations for future program changes after the assessment is completed.
- Inspection and enforcement capacity at Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish will be expanded.

Policy makers and staff discussed what the net revenue impacts would be from adding smaller boats simultaneously with providing a \$10 fee reduction for completing the on-line course. With this, small boats could pay no fee at all. Staff believed that not all people would do the on-line course and therefore would not receive a discount. Staff will monitor net revenue impacts of the changes. Staff also noted that the City and County ordinances will need to be revised early in 2014 to accommodate some of these program changes.

Policy Group members expressed general support for the revisions proposed by staff and agreed that amended ordinances should be brought back to Councils in late January.

2. Lake Whatcom Policy Group Strategic Planning for 2014

The Policy Group affirmed operating principles identified earlier in the year. These include a prioritization of topics with budget and policy issues. The group will strive for consensus on fundamental principles on policy or budget issues. Group members also agreed to report out to their respective legislative bodies regarding the activities or deliberations of the Policy Group on a regular basis.

Staff presented some strategic action items for 2014, and Policy Group members generally

affirmed starting with these. Staff and some members of the Policy Group will get together before the end of the year to flesh out the ideas presented thus far and will develop a draft strategic plan for 2014, to be distributed electronically.

Strategic priorities identified for the Policy Group for 2014 include:

- Staff will provide a full program overview early in the year to ensure that the Policy Group, especially new members, understands how the different pieces fit together.
- Staff will present their best estimates of a total phosphorus-reduction budget, to include identification of areas of major investment, and quantification of associated costs for each investment area.
- Clarification of policy principles for capital facilities investment across all jurisdictions.
- Presentation and discussion of Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP) policy issues, and creation of a funding plan for program maintenance and expansion.
- Sudden Valley stormwater management improvement program/integration with other plans.
- Policy Group to define a process for review and approval of the 2015-19 work plan, which will include the TMDL implementation plan.

One proposed item for 2014 is a re-write of the Lake Whatcom Interlocal Agreement between the participating jurisdictions. Policy Group members thought revision may be useful to reflect changed realities but agreed this was premature given that some basic planning procedures and roles of the various jurisdictions still need to be defined or developed. Discussion ensued regarding the role of Sudden Valley (SV) and whether it should be added to the interlocal and also to the Policy Group. Sudden Valley is involved in a number of stormwater and other projects that affect the lake, but most activities are not coordinated with other jurisdictions. Members generally agreed that adding Sudden Valley would be a good thing, but staff should complete due diligence to see if there are any unanticipated issues. Capital investment plans of the City and County could impact SV and there are a number of issues regarding whether capital investment assistance can be given to SV. However, this is not something that the Policy Group needs to be concerned about since it is a discussion and recommending body and does not make the final decisions on these issues.

The Group also discussed how to improve the annual meeting. One of the purposes of the meeting is to review the annual work plan, but this is less necessary now that there is a 5 year work plan in place. Another purpose is to report out to the public on goals and annual progress. The Policy Group will take up planning for this meeting, and ideas for its improvement, at the February meeting.

Staff presented some ideas for scheduling the Policy Group meetings for 2014, but since the timing of some of the Committee meetings of the respective legislative bodies have not yet been set, it was not possible to set the annual meeting schedule. However, it was decided that there would be no meeting in January since the County Council reorganization meeting, which identifies representatives to the Policy Group, will not occur until mid-January, and there is also a holiday the following week. The first Policy Group meeting of the year was set and will be held on February 3, 2014 at 9:30 AM.