
Revised Minutes

Kinni Corridor Project Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 2017

4-6:00 p.m.

City Hall – Training Room

The Kinni Corridor Committee met on December 7, 2017. Those in attendance included Dan Toland, Lisa Moody, Patricia LaRue, Rick Bowen, Jason Engstrom, Susan Reese, Gary Horvath, Rita Kozak, Amy Peterson, Chris Blasius, Julie Bergstrom, Adam Myszewski, Scot Simpson, Mary Zimmerman, Dave Fodroczi, Buddy Lucero, Angie Bond, Mike Stifter, Kevin Westhuis and Mark Lobermeier.

Buddy Lucero called the meeting to order.

Discussion Items

1. Meeting Minutes

The draft meeting minutes from the November 2nd, 2017 were reviewed approved. Patricia did not agree with the description in the minutes related to Green Power. She had sent an email clarification to the Committee on December 1st:

The committee agreed to amend the minutes as suggested by Patricia.

2. Public Comment

There were no comments for the public in attendance at the meeting.

3. Committee Member Check-in: Questions, comments, items for future agendas

There were no comments for the Committee members.

Buddy mentioned that the Committee is having its' 1st anniversary – the project's official kick-off was December 8, 2016.

4. Updates

Agency Roundtable

Mark summarized the agency roundtable meeting that was held at City Hall on November 15th (meeting minutes were sent to the committee prior to the meeting. Dave requested clarification of comments made by Cheryl Laatsch (WDNR) regarding who the lead agency would be. Mark clarified that Cheryl told the group that FERC is the lead agency in a dam removal scenario, and it would be up to FERC to decide if there was any jurisdictional change. He also asked amount remarks focused on FERC selling the license if the City surrenders it. Mark clarified that it is FERC's process to advertise the license if the City was to surrender.

Rick asked if the City could get the jurisdiction changed to the state and potentially apply for the municipal dam grant. Mark indicated that the WDNR advised that FERC would need to first decide to do that before the WDNR would consider such a request.

Gary asked if we could talk to Cheryl Laatsch about the jurisdiction question before the next meeting.

Scot asked if the agencies concurred that we are on the right path. Mark said they did.

Gary asked if we could provide the TRC report. The report is on the project website.

Michael Page (public) asked we were not looking at a scenario that he had forwarded to Mark on November 14 – that is – to surrender with the dams in place, consistent with TRC's option 4 in their 2014 report to the City. Mark indicated that it is being evaluated.

UAB Meeting

Adam summarized the meeting for the Committee. He indicated that Bob Kost made a brief presentation on November 20 focused on the corridor process. Mark will be presenting to the UAB again on December 18. Kevin mentioned that as we prepare for the December 18 meeting, he will keep the presentation and UAB's focus on the electric utility.

Communication

Patricia inquired about a second survey that had been on the project schedule. Buddy indicated that it has been decided to not pursue another survey at this time. Patricia mentioned that Councilmember and UAB Liaison Diane Odeen had inquired about the location, themes etc. of comments received. Lisa believed that it is important to make sure the input from taxpayers (resident) is heard and not lost in comments from those from outside the community.

Susan asked about the interest of committee members to discuss the project outside of the meeting. Mark and Buddy reminded the committee that we really want that dialogue to occur within the committee as much as possible.

5. Decision Matrix Preliminary Review

Mark provided a brief summary of the process to date. Ten of the 11 committee members completed a decision matrix to the best of their abilities. A summary of results was provided to the committee at the meeting.

Mark also provided a list of comments received from the committee regarding their thoughts about the matrix. He reviewed each of the 20 comments received which included comments regarding the lack of financial information, the need to consider the timing of actions along with the preferred scenario, and the validity of the methodology due to a lack of quantifiable metrics.

The Committee asked about community communication. Adam wondered how the public input received to date is being used. Rita addressed the comment about there being no discussion regarding utilization of public input, feeling that the matrix seemed to be a refinement of we have heard over the last year,

Gary would like to see a quantification of public input, a summary of concerns. Mark and Mary discussed the available information including the initial survey and comment cards. The Committee asked to synthesize the information.

Gary would like to see a weighing of the sheer volume of input. Dave agreed, repeating his previous comments about how best to use the results of the opening session (December 2016), etc., but admitting that it is not easy to quantify it.

Jason agreed and offered that we need to communicate the impact of the project/decision, a combination of costs coupled with a plan of how it will impact individuals.

Lisa observed that there may be 75 – 80 of the same people commenting, but that they are not residents of the City.

Mike observed that while the UAB is focused on the electrical business case, the Committee is starting to discuss things that the Council will be ultimately asked to address.

Mark observed that some committee members did not show a preference to any of the three scenarios. He asked the committee to discuss what they need to see to move off the fence. Chris pointed out that for her timing IS the question. She questioned the priorities for the corridor plan and what the timing would be. Susan agreed with Chris and questioned why we can't take actions while the dams are still in place. She believed that the Committee has asked good questions but gotten back poor answers about the Lake George strategy. She observed that a lot of residents seem complacent/apathetic, despite the communication efforts. She believes the past year has been interesting and frustrating at the same time.

Rick said that personally he struggled with the science and the quality of the river and temperature concerns, wondering where the river will be in 40 years. Gary shared that he was compelled to respond to a recent letter to the editor that had inaccurate information. He reiterated that the Kinni is good today, unique, and that although we've discussed the cost of physical improvements, no effort to estimate the cost of lost opportunity has been made.

Susan and Gary discussed the prioritization of stormwater versus dams. Gary observed that the stormwater issue simply clouds the issue, observing that the City needs to do more in the developed part of town. He indicated that Trout Unlimited would be sending a position statement to the committee.

Susan expressed her preference to keep operating the hydros until their useful life is over. Observing that the last utility billing statement showed how much more energy hydro provided compared to solar. Lisa asked Kevin if he knew the number of solar panels it would take to equal the output of the hydros.

Dave agreed that energy is important to conservationists too. He would like to hear about UAB's ideas regarding alternatives, included using less energy instead of just adding more solar. He does not believe it is insurmountable to replace the hydro production.

Patricia pointed out that we all benefit from the 2% of the total electrical usage that the hydros contribute, and that the past council decisions and City investments are important. She reminded the Committee that we're only talking about 0.7 mile of river, questioning how the recreational river-users will change the river in the future.

Dan agreed that the timing of preferred actions is the interesting question, questioning if the hydros could work a little longer and observing that it could be ten years before anything would happen. Susan asked if that would mean relicensing – Dan answered "yes" – relicense and use the hydros while we move forward with whatever we are going to do, Susan pointed out that all of the City's assets are important and there are a lot of projects in the annual budget and that the money to pay for them comes from the same spot. Her view is if the dams are working you don't just toss them out.

Scot asked a rhetorical question – "does there seem to be a consensus?" He observe that he was hearing that Lake George and stormwater improvements should happen, and that we would remove the dams eventually. He reinforced the role of the committee is to use the best information available today to advise the council. He reminded the committee that relicensing the dam doesn't guarantee 40 years of hydro operation, and that the City can relicense with stipulations.

6. Scenario Description and Preliminary Costs

Mark went to the white board to description the costs of what he identified as the base project costs. The base project includes capital costs and regulatory expenses for each of the three scenarios without consideration of reservoir restoration, stormwater improvements or recreational amenities imagined during the charrette.

Scenario 1 – keep both facilities has a cost of approximately \$1.0 million. This includes minor maintenance of Junction Falls, a capital improvement project at Powell Falls (dam, power house and generation equipment), relicensing and permitting. This also includes a 30% construction contingency and 30% for administrative and technical services.

Scenario 2 – remove both dams has a cost of about \$8.3 million. This cost is based heavily on the Friends of the Kinni feasibility report and includes license surrender and permitting. This also includes a 30% construction contingency and 30% for administrative and technical services.

Scenario 3 – keep Junction Falls and remove Powell Falls has a cost of around \$2.0 million. This includes minor maintenance of Junction Falls, the removal of the Powell Falls facility and restoration of the river between Powell Falls and Junction Falls. This also includes relicensing and permitting as well as a 30% construction contingency and 30% for administrative and technical services.

Mark also talked about other projects that may be considered including reservoir restoration and stormwater enhancements. Depending on the options, these costs could entail another \$15 million and would be similar regardless of the recommended scenario. These numbers presumed stormwater treatment in Lake Louise as depicted during the charrette.

The Committee asked Mark to prepare costs for implementing the Lake George Treatment Plan as imagined in the 2005 report.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at about 6:30 pm