

TOWN BOARD MEETING May 28, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

PRESENT: Chair Pfeiffer, Supervisor Jay Damkoehler, Supervisor Eric Olson, Supervisor Doug Larsson and Clerk/Treasurer Maria Hougan.

OTHERS PRESENT: Audra Dalsoren, Mark Wendt, Dan Dettmers, Melanie Miller, Dale Beske, Mark Hale, Allan Collins, Mike Bailey, Dale Hanson, Dave Bursack, Lynn Rundle, John Bolthoof, Dan Denk, Bebe Bryons, Rich Galvolick, Jim & Terri Curtis, along with several other participants.

ABSENT: Supervisor Janiece Bolender

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pfeiffer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He announced the objective to tonight's meeting is to provide an opportunity for residents to weigh in on this project the City of Stoughton is proposing for a water park, which may have an impact on the water levels for the Yahara River. He stated the project is in progress. The City did not give an opportunity for input from the town. They found out from the newspaper and other sources. He and a few other residents started attending Stoughton's steering committee meetings to find out more information. Stoughton is still proceeding with its plans to move forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Many residents spoke during the public comment period, below are most of the comments from resident's who spoke. Due to the meeting being held virtually, it was difficult at times to capture everyone's comments.

Allan Collins, 1721 Oakview Dr., He has concerns regarding the project and spoke in opposition. Most of the money being spent on the project was DNR money. Spoke to Stoughton officials regarding the project. He is a kayaker, and feels the impact on the river will result in a small stream. This will affect the wildlife in the area to include pelicans, swans, osprey, eagles, ducks, geese and fish. Will the city make up the value of the decrease in property values? He moved to the area due to the river, and has lived there for 23 years.

Rick Gavolic, 2692 Cty Hwy B- Has some questions he wants answered, when did the city start planning this project? Why were they not notified earlier? What is the environmental impact statement? Are there any alternatives to the plan? He is in opposition.

Chair Pfeiffer stated there will be another meeting next Thursday, he will invite a representative from the City of Stoughton.

Dan Dettmers asked about the level of the river, the effects on the wildlife, and commented on the City of Stoughton will be making money while the value of resident's homes will be lowered. He is in opposition of the plan.

Mike Bailey, 2106 Yahara Dr., Contact the City of Stoughton, referred to a previous property in Milwaukee area where a lot of money was lost due to the same type of

situation, he sued. He wondered what the DNR's plan was for dredging and if anyone had any information. He is in opposition.

Chair Pfeiffer said another concern was if the dredging. There needs to be coordination. There are areas that need attention.

Dave Bursack, 1797 Lunde Cir., likes to walk at Viking Park, if dam goes away, what would the river and Viking Park look like? He spoke in opposition.

Chair Pfeiffer stated that is one of the concerns. Stoughton hired a hydrologist, however the study ended at the rail road bridge and did not include the Pleasant Springs areas. The study claims the lowering of mill pond will reduce the river levels .7 ft. He wonders what all went into the analysis and what were the starting levels of the water at the time of the study.

Bebe Bryons, 1725 Oakview Dr., Did they do an environmental impact study? Will they need to do one? Spoke in opposition.

Dan Denk, no address given, what are the true facts for the water levels? .7 ft but was told maybe one inch. Spoke in opposition.

Allan Collins-20 years ago they forgot to open the dam, the dog park was totally exposed, it was swamp and muck. There will be just a little stream left. Spoke in opposition.

Mike Bailey-Noted the osprey nests north of Stoughton, water will be reduced to a small channel, rest would be barely one inch of mud, will not be able to get to Stoughton on a boat. Spoke in opposition.

Mark Hale-has questions on the water levels Stoughton provided for several areas. Spoke in opposition.

Rob Speath, 2759 Yahara Rd., his home town is Merrill, same situation happened there. Spoke in opposition.

There were several others who spoke but I did not get their name, address, and comments due to a phone call came into the office.

Terri & Jim Curtis, 2110 Yahara Dr., Has the same concerns regarding the wildlife and water levels. He said that now more than ever with the social distancing, he has seen more people and families on the river. It would be a travesty to lose this. There are a lot of fish being caught. Muskies, northern, he is a fisherman and would hate to lose this. He has a nephew that caught a 46" muskie. If this happens, they will lose a lot of the shoreline. He has lived in the area 20 years and has seen the river very low, there was a lot of algae, it smelled horrible. He has seen hundreds of kayakers and the fishing has become great. Can we have both? Who is trying to take the dam out, and what is the agenda? He is in opposition.

Ed Schultz, 2707 Yahara Dr. There will be a major impact on the river if they drain mill pond. The water is receding from the shoreline, he watches the water levels.

Stoughton is not aware of how many people are using the river. Every day they see many people enjoying the river. This will ruin the playground on the river. Diverse biological system, there are pelicans, birders, etc. we cannot lose this. He is against the removal of the dam; the initial plan was to not remove the dam. He is in opposition.

Chair Pfeiffer stated he understands the water feature is it becomes an opening for kayakers, he has concerns with the design of the plan.

Ed Schultz-if they draw the water level down, there won't be a canoe race anymore.

Mike Bailey-if water levels go down, can they bring in weed cutters? No way the weed cutter will make it and the weeds will come up very bad.

Chair Pfeiffer-the weed cutters were brought in to increase the flow of the river to help drain the lake system.

Bebe Bryans-What power do we have to have our concerns heard?

Chair Pfeiffer stated the city owns the dam and they are spending the funds. Steps need to be taken. DNR approves the removal of the dam. These are things we need to look into. Residents can attend city meetings.

Jim Curtis-a representative from the city came out and spoke with him, he told him the river would drop 6 inches. He could not have any say as he could not vote on this. As tax payers for the county, should we be able to have a say?

The full impact analysis should not be just for the city.

Mark Hale-the cost for the dam removal is \$567,000. The city changed the project due to the 1st plan was denied by the DNR. It would cost \$400,000 for removal of the dam which the DNR would cover, if the DNR approves, the city would need to come up with the remaining \$167,000. Mid-June is the date the DNR will notify the city on their perspective. He wants the board to lobby and correspond as an entity to the DNR and make the message heard they don't want this.

Al Collins-How would the park work without a mill pond?

Dave Reese, 1612 Tower Dr. The US Core of Army Engineers is the entity which actually issues the permits. The DNR plays a role. He called them and asked questions. The man he talked to said he received an incomplete application from the city for dam removal. There currently have been no permits issued or study. He recommends to talk to the Army Core of Engineers, invite the man he talked to to the next meeting. Spoke in opposition.

Dave Bursack- Invite John Reemer from Dane County Lane & Water resources to the next meeting.

John Keeting, 1700 Pauli Ct. Lives across from the river and has lived there 34 years. He spoke in opposition and believe the DNR is giving the money to Stoughton. Tax dollars pay DNR, this needs to be studied prior to removal of the dam. Need to invite the Army Core of Engineers.

Chair Pfeiffer stated he lives on the river as well. The Town Board will be considering what action they can take. He asked for anyone interested to form a group. The Town Board supports the entire town. The group would be able to speak to other entities w/out going through the Town Board. The bay area north of B is more of a lake than a river. Natural resources call them wild rivers. Yahara is not a wild river, it is a dammed river, that is also working against us. The reassuring thing is removal of the dam does not automatically empty the river. Depends on the flow rates. The concern is from what level are they talking about? What is the starting point? No sufficient study on impact.

Al Collins-do people realize we will be losing a gem? The river is heavily used by duck hunters, there are \$10,000 carp boats out there. This is like the phrase in the song "they paved over paradise and put up a parking lot".

Supervisor Doug Larsson supports inviting the Army Core of Engineers. They should talk to the Friends of Yahara River Coalition. Cannot afford attorney fee's etc. Has been working for local government for over 40 years. Cities will not listen unless we

come in with weight and knowledge. How about a petition and would that have any effect?

Audra Dalsoren, Plan Commission Chair, residents do not feel their opposition is being felt. Should pair up.

Mark Hale, he is very concerned because time is of the essence. He is not opposed of forming a group, but that takes time and may miss the opportunity to communicate to the DNR. He brought up the same situations in Mazonmanie, Lake Marion, Stebbonsville Dam. He is requesting the Board expedite communication to the DNR, City of Stoughton, and County. There is substantial concern over damage and great impact to the river. Expedite communication from the Town Board.

Tom McGinnis, 2749 Tracy Lane, spoke of a petition, may not get much response from the city. He said not to discount calling the press especially after watching what happened with the previous flood coverage. Make it know no study was done.

Chair Pfeiffer stated we are voters, should contact the County, petition to DNR and County. This will be on the next town board agenda and for future meetings as they will continue to gather information regarding the project on behalf of the residents.

Supervisor Eric Olson stated there is a lack of study in the other direction with the Dunkirk Dam. Agrees correspondence should be sent to DNR and County.

Bree McLain suggested calling the media, she offered to contact the media. She stated this would bring attention to the subject. She spoke in opposition.

Chair Pfeiffer suggested the group form a sub-committee instead of this being handled through the Town Board, however, the Town board would be very supportive.

Steve & Lisa Jackson, 2697 Rolling View, suggested to contact the Friends of Yahara Group (DeForest). He reached out to them and they will share information and attend meetings. They spoke in opposition.

Rock River Coalition was also mentioned as a contact. They are an active entity that deals with environments and wild life, and monitor lake levels.

Planning Chair Audra Dalsoren reiterated the meeting schedules for the Town as well as the City of Stoughton meeting schedules. They will most likely be a continuing agenda item.

Further discussion followed regarding setting up an ad hoc committee.

BUSINESS

Discussion and possible action regarding the Stoughton Water Park Public Meeting.

Discussion took place between members of the public, Town Board members, and Plan Commission members regarding Stoughton's Proposed water park and dam. No action was taken. This was an opportunity to hear from residents. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 4 @ 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Plan Commission Chair Dalsoren, second by Supervisor Olson, to adjourn at 7:18 p.m. All in favor.

Respectively Submitted,

Maria Hougan
Clerk/Treasurer

*Note: These minutes are not considered official until acted upon at a future meeting:
therefore, are subject to revision.*