

# **Pasco County**

## **Watershed Meeting for Flood Impacted Areas**

### **Port Richey Watershed**

**March 15, 2017 – Regency Park Library, 9701 Little Road, New Port Richey, Pasco County**

The following is a summary of the Port Richey Watershed meeting held on March 15, 2017.

#### **Introductions, Meeting Purpose and Background**

Ms. Cece McKiernan, the facilitator for the meeting, welcomed the group and reviewed the purpose of the meeting, the meeting format and the agenda. She noted the display boards with watershed maps located within the meeting room for use throughout the meeting. County, Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and consultant staff provided a brief self-introduction to the group.

The purpose of this Watershed Task Force meeting is to increase knowledge of the Port Richey Watershed and to allow County staff to work together with residents to improve stormwater management systems within the watershed. The County is seeking the involvement of residents in the development of potential solutions. The results of this effort will provide recommendations to the County Administrator for potential projects/solutions.

#### **Comments, Questions and Discussions**

A summary of discussions, noted issues, and responses, are part of this meeting summary. The contents of this summary do not represent direct quotes and may or may not represent the group's view as a whole. Resident questions and/or comments are noted in italic font.

#### **PowerPoint Presentation and General Discussion**

A PowerPoint presentation ([PowerPoint presentation](#)) was presented to attendees by Mr. David Sua (Stormwater Management).

The Port Richey Watershed covers 5.9 square miles and contains a unique coastal ridge. The following eleven areas were noted to have historical flooding concerns within this watershed:

- Suncoast Gateway Mobile Home Park (MHP)
- Magnolia Valley
- Holiday Hills Gainsboro Pump Station
- Dublin and Van Buren
- Aurora Drive
- New Port Richey Rec and Aquatic Center, Congress Crossing Shopping Center
- Pond South of Belah Drive and East of Medlar
- Corporate Way Area

- Shady Acres Blvd.
- Washington St.
- Massachusetts and Van Buren St.

Recent activities completed by the County to address the flooding concerns included repairs to the Magnolia Valley pumping facilities. The two electric pumps have been refurbished and parts have been ordered to refurbish the diesel pump. The County has also hired an engineering firm to design the upgrades at the pump house to bring it up to current building codes.

Pipe installations/replacements have been completed at Royal Crescent Court and at Betula Drive and Hollyridge Drive. The presentation included a photo showing the new culverts at Valley Court and Mr. Sua noted that the work to install hard pipes at Holiday Hills will be scheduled soon. The County has purchased one property in Holiday Hills and a second purchase is underway. These properties may be used to create additional stormwater storage areas.

County maintenance crews have been working to inspect the pipes in Magnolia Valley using Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) technology. One pipe under Sequoia Drive was inspected and found to be clean, with no obstructions to flow. There have been several repair and replacement projects completed in Magnolia Valley (See [PowerPoint](#)).

The County continues to seek additional funding opportunities for stormwater projects. A chart was presented showing projects that the County is seeking funding for through the Cooperative Funding Initiative program of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and via state and federal funding. The SWFWMD has a 50/50 matching funds program where half of the project is funded by the SWFWMD and the other half is funded by the County. The County is actively seeking funding for the following projects:

- Magnolia Valley Storage Excavation
- Port Richey Alternative Outfall
- Magnolia Valley Diesel Pump Refurbishment
- Holiday Hills Drainage Improvements
- Magnolia Valley Springs Restoration Study
- County-wide Debris Removal
- County-wide Culvert Reconditioning

For the Magnolia Valley Storage Excavation project, a conceptual plan was presented which depicted two new stormwater ponds at the old Magnolia Valley golf course site. The ponds would be utilized to store stormwater for controlled release based on set water depth operating limits. The two ponds, one approximately 80-acre and one approximately 10-acre, would be interconnected and would provide flood abatement.

*How deep are the ponds?*

The water level in the ponds would be about 7.5 feet below the control elevation to prevent the growth of nuisance vegetation such as cattails. Once the water level reaches the control set point, the pumps will kick on to maintain a set level. These “pump on and pump off” levels were set and permitted by the SWFWMD to reflect the historic operating levels when the golf course was operating.

*Will the pump start-up and shut-down be an automated process?*

Yes, an automated control system (SCADA) will be added inside the pump house.

*Has County thought about issues with water stagnation and water quality and is there a proposed maintenance plan?*

The depth of the water was selected to prevent the growth of nuisance vegetation. The operating set points will cycle the water cycle in and out of the pond which should prevent water stagnation issues. The intent will be to drop the water levels in the ponds in advance of a storm event so that additional storage volume is available. The County does have other ponds that it maintains and has a pond maintenance plan.

*How many gallons of storage volume would be created by the two ponds?*

Approximately 430 acre-feet which equals approximately 140 million gallons.

*What is the estimated project cost and how does that convert to a cost for each home owner?*

The anticipated cost for the pond project is \$12 million dollars. There is a potential that a portion of the project cost may be apportioned to residents benefitting from the project but this has yet to be determined. The cost of the project would need to be determined after the design has been completed and after the County looks for co-funding opportunities.

The County will have an opportunity to vote for whether the stormwater utility fee gets increased from \$57/Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) to \$95/ERU. The County is also looking at the potential to form a Stormwater Capital Utility which would allow for beneficial cost sharing across a larger population for capital improvement projects.

The Port Richey Alternative Outfall project will look at diverting stormwater to a different outfall location. The anticipated cost for that project is \$450,000 in engineering fees and \$3.25 million for construction. It was noted that the design cost estimates provided are for the design and permitting and are only estimates at this time.

*How far out is the timeline for the completion of these projects? Are we looking at 4 to 5 years from now?*

For the new pond project, the County can anticipate 2 years to complete design followed by 2 to 3 years to complete construction. For the new outfall project, the County can anticipate 1 year to complete design followed by 1 year to complete construction.

*Is the issue getting rid of all the dirt excavated for the pond?*

No, the issue is the number of trucks and trips that will be needed to move the large quantity of dirt.

*Has the construction at Timber Oaks been completed?*

The construction at Timber Oaks is just getting started.

*Is there currently an outfall under US 19?*

Yes, there are existing culverts under US 19. The Port Richey Alternative Outfall project will be evaluating outfall alternatives and look at the potential for sending flows west towards Millers Bayou and an existing outfall south of the US 19 and Siesta Lane intersection.

Commissioner Mariano noted that all these potential outfalls and issues will be studied. He urged residents to reach out to their representatives and other residents to get support for the proposed stormwater utility fee increase to \$95/ERU. The increase will help the County fund projects that can alleviate flooding concerns.

*Residents noted that the County needs to make sure that funds are spent wisely. There was a recent project in the Magnolia Valley area that has resulted in citizens receiving water quality notices.*

County staff was not aware of these notices and will follow-up with the City of New Port Richey regarding what issue created the need for the water quality notifications.

*What is the potential project timeline for the Magnolia Valley pond construction?*

County is seeking co-funding and hopes to award the design and permitting contract in October 2017. The design will likely take two years making the target completion date October of 2019. Construction may begin late in 2019 with an estimated completion in 2021.

*Are there any near-term solutions that could be implemented?*

The County cannot move stormwater to other locations that may create issues in other areas. There is a potential to allow stormwater to stage in the old golf course.

The Suncoast Gateway MHP is currently in a 5-year storm flood plain. It is not possible to get the MHP out of the flood plain but stormwater projects may be able to reduce the duration of the flooding. Regardless of whether the Magnolia Valley pumps are running or are not running, the MHP will experience flooding.

*Resident requested that the pumps keep running to at least keep the flood water elevations down.*

*Can stormwater be diverted to the 5-foot culvert under Rees Street and Springer Drive?*

Those culverts are already flowing full during storm events and would not help get water out of the area faster. The outfall study will help to determine potential outfall locations.

It would be ideal if the stormwater can be diverted before it reaches the MHP and reach the outfall more quickly. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has information for their existing outfall structures and the associated flows. This information will be reviewed as part of the outfall study.

There are two 36-inch outfall pipes located south of the Siesta Lane and US 19 intersection. The adequacy of these pipes to convey additional runoff will be studied along with the practicality of upsizing them.

*Is there a way to get the funding in place more quickly?*

The funding is not the hold-up as the County will still need the time required to design, permit and construct the proposed projects. Design is proposed to start in October of 2017.

*What is a watershed?*

It is defined as an area where all the rain that falls within the area boundary, stays within that area boundary.

*The ground water tables in the golf course area are only 1 to 2 feet below the ground surface. During a golf cart path construction project, some 20 years ago, a cement truck sank and disappeared completely in the muck. The truck was never recovered.*

There will be consideration for the conditions and soils in the golf course area and a geotechnical investigation will be part of the project design phase.

*How much storage volume will the ponds provide given the high ground water levels at the golf course?*

The depth of the pond was selected at 7.5 feet to prevent nuisance vegetation from growing. The anticipated storage volumes do take into consideration the existing ground water elevations and that additional storage volume is that portion above the ground water table. The County anticipates adding approximately 140 million gallons of storage volume. The storage volume will be able to hold the 100-year storm event within the new storage created.

*What was the result of the investigation for the City pumping into the golf course area?*

The County did investigate the reported pumping and there was no evidence found of others pumping into the golf course area.

Ms. Cece McKiernan thanked attendees for their time and input. The County will continue to follow-up on open investigations and projects. Future meetings will be scheduled at 6-month intervals but residents can always reach out to staff between meetings.