

**THURSTON COUNTY
STORM AND SURFACE WATER ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**March 21st, 2024
Meeting Summary**

Representative	Representing	Present (P) Not Present (NP) Excused (E)
Britt Nederhood (Chair)	District 3	P
David Hartley (Vice Chair)	District 1	P
Edward O'Brien	At Large	P
Zahid Chaudhry	District 3	NP
Phyllis Farrell	District 5	P
Daniel Vlad	District 2	P

Staff/Commissioner

Larry Schaffner, Corey Bennett, Andrew Deffobis, Ashley Arai, Tye Menser

Guest

Tris Carlson, Nancy Winters

Introductions/Process/Correspondence (Brett Nederhood, Chair)

Introductions made.

No correspondence.

Public Comment

None.

Amendments to the Agenda

No amendments.

Meeting Summary

Page 4, at the end of first paragraph summarizing subcommittee reports: change fourth item to “create a strategy/mechanism to potentially piggyback on planned public or private stormwater improvement to also address lack of stormwater controls on nearby legacy developments.”

Page 2, under Proposed Direction and Role, third paragraph regarding SSWAB’s concern: change to “some SSWAB members” instead of implying all members.

Britt motions to accept minutes as amended.

Ed seconds.

Motion passes.

WRAB Transition – Membership Composition (*Andrew Deffobis & Larry Schaffner*)

Andrew reviews a concept proposal for WRAB membership composition and requests feedback from SSWAB members.

The feedback on WRAB Membership is as follows:

Ed suggests that under “Business”, seeking members with development interests may be more appropriate than forestry. Under “Topic area professionals”, consider members representing fisheries, Tribes, and shoreline owners. For shoreline owners: consider one fresh water and one salt water.

David notes that members of WRAB may have some overlapping areas of expertise. He asks what the total number of representatives being considered – the number is still up for discussion. Larry asks what does SSWAB consider the ideal number of members? Commissioner Menser shares that WRAB may benefit from having a larger membership to cover the various expertise, especially for more controversial topics. The discussion lands on nine to twelve members as the recommended range.

Will new members need to be certified in their areas of expertise or just aware of their topic?

Will membership extend beyond unincorporated Thurston County to include those within incorporated cities?

Regarding the concept of ad hoc members, Nancy notes that building trust between members takes time and bringing in permanent members would be more beneficial than temporary members.

Phyllis mentions an omission of proposed representation from an environmental advocacy group. In response to this, Ed suggests including representation with an ecological perspective.

Sub-Committee Shortlist Recommendations (*Subcommittees*)

Nancy introduces the three recommendations from the Stormwater Planning Committee: 1) expanding performance measures for tracking the progress of the stormwater program, 2) creating user-friendly GIS map of water quality monitoring, and 3) assessing/prioritizing the untreated stormwater outfalls.

Britt reviews the Outreach Subcommittee's recommendation: SSWAB members should be linked to Ecology and other partners to expand ideas for solutions to common problems.

Ed and David share the CIP Subcommittee's recommendations: 1) increase financial support for the Stormwater CIP program, and 2) monitor the effectiveness for capital improvement projects.

SSWAB members individually ranked the six recommendations. These were tabulated and resulted in the following ranking:

- 1st (22 points) – Assess and prioritize the untreated stormwater outfalls (Stormwater Planning #3)
- 2nd (21 points) – Increase financial support for Stormwater CIP Program (CIP #1)
- 3rd (18 points) – Link to Ecology and other partners to expand ideas (Outreach #1)
- 3rd (18 points) – Effectiveness monitoring for county stormwater retrofit CIP (CIP #2)
- 4th (16 points) – Expand performance measures for tracking progress of stormwater program (Stormwater Planning #1)
- 5th (10 points) – Create user-friendly GIS map of receiving water quality monitoring (Stormwater Planning #2)

Discussion followed with members agreeing to remove the Outreach recommendation from consideration since it pertains to a propose action for themselves rather than for staff or commissioners to consider.

Britt motions to send the remaining top four draft recommendations to for staff review and to the BoCC.

David seconded.

Motion passes.

Thurston 2045 Water Policy Concepts (*Ashley Arai*)

Ashley introduces the topic by reflecting that review of the existing Comprehensive Plan revealed gaps in goals and policies related to managing water quantity (i.e., availability). The Comprehensive Plan as it relates to water resources, focuses on watershed planning and requirements under the Growth Management Act (GMA), including how ties to water quantity.

The Comprehensive Plan also includes stormwater standards, domestic water availability, and natural water resource industries (e.g., farming and forestry). Some new policy areas introduced will address climate resiliency.

Ashley asks the SSWAB members for feedback on the three proposed policy directions: 1) consider lengthening planning horizons for water availability, 2) explore a variety of approaches to Water Banking and identify, and 3) study alternatives to permit-exempt drinking water wells.

The first policy proposal pertains to expanding water supply and demand horizons to evaluate long-term water needs and availability. Part of this would involve creating a methodology to assess those future needs.

Second proposal involves water banking to allow administration of water rights locally through collaboration. Some feedback cautions the reference to “banking” as it acknowledges that access to water rights requires money and implies that only those with money will succeed in water banking. Ashley notes that Ecology has purchased some water rights with the intent of selling them and making them more affordable.

The third proposal pertains to permit-exempt wells. The proposal explores alternatives to the current process and methods for permitting drinking water wells serving rural residential development. The feasibility studies reveal that more funding would be needed for develop and administer these processes.

Phyllis notes that when Thurston County put in a Class A water system required metering water usage, there was a lot of negative homeowner feedback. This would be something to anticipate with future proposed changes for water metering.

How does SSWAB’s input affect the role in shaping Comprehensive Plan policy? Ashley says that different advisory committees provide different areas of input, for example the Agricultural Advisory Committee provides feedback to the BoCC on agricultural resources chapter.

Nancy raises the concern about a process feedback loop, noting that providing feedback to respond to Ashley’s questions would require more details. Ashley notes that this initial discussion aims to begin clarifying details with the help of SSWAB.

Tris talks briefly about private well monitoring in water banking and the difficulty in assessing individual wells and funding levels for such a project. David mentions concerns that policies and programs increasing consumptive water use could further deplete stream flow in already stressed streams.

Conservation Futures Ranking Committee (*Andrew Deffobis*)

Andrew seeks a representative from SSWAB to serve on the County’s Conservation Futures Ranking Committee (CCFRC). The CCFRC is a land conservation program authorized through

the state legislature and funded through a property tax levy. This funding is used in the purchase of conservation easements on properties which have significant conservation value.

After a brief discussion, SSWAB appointed Daniel as the primary representative and Phyllis the alternate.

SSWAB General Discussion (SSWAB Members)

Britt inquired with Larry if the BoCC wants more members appointed to SSWAB until they know how things flesh out with the formation of WRAB. Larry says they expect to have formation of the WRAB sorted out by the May meeting.

Britt asks members if any outreach in the community took place. Daniel put on a class about stormwater management in his community of Union Hills with about 20-30 attendants. Daniel also mentions that some people expressed displeasure with having to pay an outside company to manage their community facilities.

David propose rescinding a previous statement about modifying the recommendation from the Outreach subcommittee committee and is open to sending along the recommendation if that's what SSWAB agrees to. There is discussion about adding a feature to SSWAB's website for community members to reach out. Larry mentions the existence of the utility's online forms. Should a decision be made to pursue this concept, a similar approach might be used to direct comments to SSWAB. There is a brief discussion on what that would look like – whether members of the public would reach out to SSWAB directly or to individual members depending on their topic. SSWAB decides to table this topic and revisit it another day.

Britt asks if there are topics to add to the May meeting? David requests updated recommendations that reflect staff comments. Phyllis wants to consider how SSWAB coordinates with some tree planting policies that are being considered. Larry notes that with the transition to WRAB, the process for identifying agenda topics may change.

Nancy notes she still doesn't have clarity on how the WRAB will be structured with the upcoming change. Larry says staff is still working with managers to make those determinations. Britt says he can communicate better to SSWAB members regarding WRAB updates.

Adjourn

Britt motions to adjourn.

Daniel seconds.

Motion approved.

Next meet is on May 16th, 2024.