



PDC INC. ENGINEERS

Transforming Challenges into Solutions

**Anchorage
Fairbanks**

MEETING MINUTES

Location:	North Pole City Hall	Meeting Date:	January 16, 2008
Attendees:	Karen Brady, PDC Kristi McLean, PDC Ron Gebhart, PDC Keith Hanneman, PDC Deanna Latham, PDC Doug Isaacson, City of North Pole Mayor Bill Butler, City of North Pole, Director of City Services	PDC #	F07080
		Client # Name:	City of North Pole
Subject:	Baker and North Star Subdivisions Water and Sewer Project – Public Meeting	Minutes Prepared:	Kristi McLean January 17, 2008

PDC staff and City officials were available beginning at 5:30 for project related questions on an informal basis. Residents were met at the entrance and asked to sign an attendance sheet. Copies of the project newsletter, comment sheets, presentation slides, and refreshments were provided. Five boards were on display at the meeting: the project area showing the preliminary water and sewer line routes, typical section for the divided roads, typical section for the undivided roads, overview of the environmental evaluation process, and a summary of the public comments received thus far with groundwater contamination references. Approximately 30 – 40 people were in attendance. Some people joined the meeting during the presentation and didn't sign the attendance sheet.

Mayor Doug Isaacson introduced the project and gave a brief background of the project's history and the purpose and need. Bill Butler followed with a brief overview of the meeting's purpose: to gather and document public input and provide information on the project. Karen Brady, Project Manager for PDC, began the formal presentation and provided engineering details for the proposed water and sewer project, construction impacts and anticipated costs. Kristi McLean of PDC gave a summary of the project progression including details on the environmental evaluation process. Public involvement is important and welcomed during all aspects of the project process, and is utilized to verify and document the purpose and need for the project. *Presentation slides are attached to provide details.*

The following comments and questions were received and responded to during the course of the presentation.

Q: What happens to the grant money if the project doesn't go forward?

A: The City doesn't receive \$2M up front; they receive funds as they are spent. If the project doesn't go through, the grant money could be allocated to another project not necessarily in North Pole.

Comment: Mr. Prewitt (resident) stated that there was a 1,000 gallon fuel spill on his property after a fencing company ruptured a line during installation. He and his wife, with the help of DEC have been monitoring and are still cleaning up this spill after over four years. A total of 150 tons of contaminated soil have been removed so far. He also mentioned a fuel spill in 2006 on Blanket Blvd. north of the subdivisions. He stated the file on the 2006 contaminated site is now closed and that this area is on City water. Mr. Prewitt explained that he has constructed three different leach fields on his property because the old ones have failed and he is out of room.

1028 Aurora Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99709
T: 907.452.1414
F: 907.456.2707

Other people began commenting on their septic systems: Mr. Merced stated he has had the same system since 1978 while another mentioned he was on his second leach field and recently had his pump replaced.

Comment: We like the trees in our area and don't want them cut down.

Response: (Karen) The design plans aren't final and they can potentially be amended to minimize the number of trees removed.

Comment: On the topic of roads, a resident commented that if the shoulders of the roads weren't paved, there would be a problem with four-wheelers. He suggested the entire road width, including shoulders, be paved to minimize this problem and to help control dust.

Comment: (Resident of Block 1, North Star) I would like to put the sewer and water line in the easement behind my property rather than connect through the front of my property.

Response: (Karen) The easement is likely too narrow for trenching and installation. Also, that would limit access for city maintenance and fire hydrants would require additional main to extend to the ROW.

Q: The water and sewer lines are shown going through the middle of the turnarounds. Are the lines really going to go through the middle and impact the patch of trees in the center or will the lines go around the center area with minimal disturbance?

A: (Karen) The figures are preliminary, and if this is a real issue, we can look at the cost and decide if it's feasible to go around the center area. This would cost more as it is a longer distance.

Q: Can the road paving be timed with the Richardson Highway overpass construction this summer?

Answer: Our project is dependent on funding and is not related to the Rich Highway project. It's not possible for construction of this project to take place this summer.

Q: Does a certified contractor need to do the installation?

A: No, the homeowner can do it himself since service stubs to the main line are provided.

Q: How will service to the homes be constructed?

A: The homeowner has the option of hiring a contractor individually or with a group of residents or doing the work themselves.

Q: Would I have to pay off an assessment before I sell my house?

A: (Mayor) It would depend on the lending institution and the specifics of your mortgage.

A discussion took place between a number of people regarding the potential problems this project would burden homeowners with when trying to sell their homes. With the market the way it is, if the value of the assessment isn't covered in the selling price of the home, then the homeowners would be responsible for paying off this loan before selling.

Comment: Council member Mike Welch stated that the monthly water and sewer rates would be re-visited in 2008 as 5 years between reviews is too long. He also mentioned that once a home is hooked up to City water, they would still be able to use their wells to water lawn or for landscaping. He has had to replace his septic at a cost of \$10,000 and lift station which cost \$1,500.

Q: Will the wastewater lagoon need to be expanded? How much would this project cost?

A: (Mayor) Yes, the lagoon will need to be expanded at a cost of approximately \$15M. The lagoon can handle the projected wastewater from Baker and North Star subdivisions but expansion is necessary to handle projected growth (20-year) of the Refinery and the community development.

Comment: Resident responded by stating that if he signs on to this project and pays what's needed, he will shortly afterwards be faced with funding the lagoon expansion project as well.

Response: The Mayor responded by saying that a majority of the waste discharge would come from the surrounding industrial facilities and they would therefore have to pay for a bulk of the project costs.

Comment: (Ron) The lagoon was built in 1984 and was in need of an upgrade regardless if the water and sewer were expanded into Baker and North Star due to the population increase in North Pole as well as design life.

Q: How will the project be decided on in the future?

A: Once the City knows how much grant money is offered for the project, they will know what is remaining that would need to come from subdivision residents. At that time, they would ask residents to vote to move forward or drop the project. There will be a subdivision vote and the City would secure a bond that would be paid for by the subdivision residents.

Q: With the money secured and promised so far, what is the cost assessed to each homeowner?

A: (Mayor) Over \$40,000/home, which is not realistic. More money would need to be secured for the price to come down to a reasonable level.

Q: Will voting be separated by subdivisions?

A: (Mayor) Yes. There is a possibility that the money identified for Phase I (North Star) could be rolled over to Phase II (Baker) if North Star votes against the project.

Comment: Keith (PDC) mentioned that reversing the order and constructing Baker subdivision first would require revising the cost to reflect necessary components (i.e. water circulation station) that are currently budgeted in the North Star Phase.

Comment: A resident said that the costs keep rising and this project would only get more expensive to construct. She mentioned this project was voted down in the 80's and that it shouldn't be delayed any further.

Q: How big are the lift stations?

A: (Karen) They are about 25 feet deep; a 50 foot diameter circle is the typical area around the lift station that is needed for construction.

Q: Do they smell?

A: Some people commented that yes, they do smell and the intensity depends on the direction and strength of wind. Karen advised people that if they were concerned to stop by the existing lift stations (South Blanket for example) and see for themselves.

Comment: I like being off the system and am not affected by other people's mistakes.

Comment: A resident was concerned about the sewer systems failing and filling in their daylight basement with sewage.

Response: (Ron) We can look into the possibility of putting overflow lines or other devices in to prevent this situation from happening.

Comment: A resident asked to see a show of hands as to how many people present at the meeting were from Baker and North Star: about a 50/50 split.

Question: When will we be informed next? I would like to be involved again when the funding numbers are more solid.

This was agreed upon as a reasonable time.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm and PDC Staff and Bill Butler were available to answer additional questions and take comments until 8:30 and those are listed below.

Q: (M. Welch) After reading the septic failures report, how did PDC come up with the percentage of failures within the time periods stated?

A: (Deanna) The DEC septic records were reviewed to determine how many systems of those on file had failed.

Q: When was the background map of the subdivision developed? My home is not correctly shown.

A: (Karen) The background map was developed in 1997. A survey will need to be done to update the locations of homes for design purposes if this project goes through.

Q: Where will the water and sewer main be placed in cul de-sacs? I don't want to lose the trees in the center.

A: (Karen) This will be determined after the survey is complete. The cost of routing main lines around the cul de-sac may be more expensive than routing them through the center. We will need to look at the lot configuration at each cul de-sac to make sure that each lot has frontage to the water and sewer mains.

Q: Where will the water supply be for Baker and North Star?

A: (Karen) Water will be supplied from the existing wells near the water treatment plant (5th Avenue). This project would tap into the 12-inch transmission main near North Star Drive.

Q: Will I need a lift station at my home?

A: (Karen) If you currently have a lift station in your home to pump wastewater up to your septic tank the chances are high that you will need it to pump wastewater to the new sewer main. The sewer main elevation will be set so the majority of homes in Baker/North Star won't need lift stations, however, home with basements may still need them.

Comment: I don't like the taste of City water.

Response: Karen asked if resident likes her well water better and resident responded that she currently distills their drinking water at a cost of about \$0.20 per gallon.

Q: Owners of Lot 10 Block 4 wanted to know details about potential connection of sewer and water to their existing system. They indicated they had a daylight basement and asked about the tie-in point for the sewer service since their leach field is in the north-east corner of their lot. They are also worried about it backing up into their house.

A: (Keith) Told them since they were near the lift station, the main line would be deep so they should have no problem hooking up without a lift pump. Also, deep lines mean that there is considerable storage in the main lines and manholes before it could back up into their service and house. High water alarms in at the lift station will sound before it backs up into the system. The service could tie-in near the leach field or further back towards the house- whatever worked best when we designed it. It is recommended to keep the sewer service out from beneath driveways and other locations that are kept clear of snow as the frost goes deeper in those areas. A cleanout should be installed where the new service connects to the existing.