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October 9, 2001

Minutes of Meeting

USE OF ST. JOHNS LANDFILL & ADJACENT METRO-MANAGED PROPERTIES

Attendees: Mike Burton, Charlie Ciecko, Dan Cooper, Paul Garrahan, Terry Petersen, and Pete Sandrock.

The purpose of the meeting was to reach agreement on basic principles regarding interim and long-term uses on the St. Johns Landfill and nearby land in the Smith & Bybee Lakes Management Area.

The attendees agreed that the following statements are accurate:

1. The landfill is a heavily polluted, regulated, and managed site. Although the Department of Environmental Quality has not issued a final closure permit, it is probable that Metro will be required to monitor and contain pollutants on the site for several more decades. Pollutants in the landfill are health and safety hazards. The landfill is subject to sudden subsidence and risk of fire. Pipe and valve systems on the surface of the landfill are vulnerable to tampering and damage with hazardous consequences. Methane will be commercially extracted for about 5 more years. Thereafter methane extraction will continue for safety purposes for an unknown number of years.
2. Five full-time Metro technicians maintain the landfill and operate its environmental control systems. The technicians are subject to 24/7 recall by automated alarms triggered when monitoring equipment detects unsafe conditions.
3. Metro does not have enough information about its future responsibilities under the closure permit or about the dissipation of methane and groundwater contaminants to begin master planning for public use of the site. A master plan typically costs \$80,000 and \$100,000 to develop.
4. Public use of the landfill prior to final stabilization and closure would require extensive control and regulation. Trails would need to be fenced and restricted to the circumference roadway. Limited use by small groups, such as model airplane hobbyists, would require the construction of controlled access points and the physical protection of vulnerable pipes and valves. Allowing public uses before completing a master plan may limit future options.
5. A public trail along the south shores of Smith and Bybee lakes is undesirable because human encroachment will disturb vulnerable wintering and breeding birds. If a bridge were constructed across the North Slough immediately upstream of its confluence with the Columbia Slough, it would be possible to route a trail onto the perimeter road of the landfill without disturbing wildlife along the south shores of the lakes. A bridge would be an expensive and semi-permanent structure.

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6. The Office of General Counsel advises that Metro has a legitimate legal claim that it has satisfied Condition A of conditional use permit LUR 99-00579 EN related to trail planning and construction on the landfill.

The attendees agreed to apply the following guidelines to administer the sites:

1. No public uses should be permitted on the landfill until DEQ and Metro have agreed that it is safe to do so and the Metro Council has adopted a master plan for the site.
2. No other uses should be permitted on the landfill that are inconsistent with its status as a landfill or that foreclose future uses by the public or for wildlife habitat.
3. No public trail should be permitted on the south side of Smith or Bybee lakes unless (1) access can be regulated cost-effectively to prevent unacceptable disturbance of wildlife and (2) the trail has an acceptable egress from the site.
4. Master planning for the end use of the landfill should begin no earlier than 3 years before the site is suitable and safe for public access.