

HERRON ISLAND WATER COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 9, 2013

ATTENDANCE: Charles Smith - WDM, Judy Greinke - Chairperson, Janet Podell – HMC Board, Claudia Ellsworth – Island Manager

Judy Greinke opened the meeting at 9:30 am at the HI Community Center

Old Business:

Charles was thanked for doing a good job of publishing “Tapped” the Herron Island Water Newsletter on the HMC Website. In the next edition we suggested adding in big bold letters: STOP BEFORE DIGGING ON OR NEAR HMC ROADS AND HMC RIGHT-OF-WAY. CALL BEFORE YOU DIG! A reminder is also needed that nothing is to be on or around the service meters and the fire hydrants on the island. (Charles Smith)

The HMC Road Right-of-Way permit needs additional language stating it is member’s responsibility and expense to return HMC roads back to present condition after digging even if the costs exceed the \$1,000 deposit. (Island Manager)

A cost estimate is being calculated for increasing the length of culvert accessing the Water Lots with adjoining ditch work to be a shared expense with Roads Dept. (Charles, Kramer, Jack Wells)

Trees have been removed in areas outside the water department lots. More tree trimming and cutting will be done inside the water lots as time permits.

Charles has secured the use of a GPS Unit, at no cost to HMC, to work with the Fire Department to identify the locations of hydrants and shut off valves within our new system. The goal is to have all island water information identified and accessible if needed for emergencies.

“Herron Island Green” paint (the same paint used at the community center, North Beach Pavilion, and waiting sheds) is available if volunteers would like to do any exterior painting on the pump house buildings at the water lots. Painting would be done in the spring.

Cross Connection Checklist Data is almost complete. The returned checklist is a requirement from Wash. Dept. of Health and we are still contacting members who need to return their form. NWS is required to have a signed copy for their files. (Judy Greinke)

New Business:

The Committee reviewed the previous 3 months expenses and income with the 2013/2014 Budget. All expenses are in line with the budget except for the additional costs for post-construction expenses of dirt moving, water samples, and correcting connection problems.

Budget planning for 2014/2015 fiscal year begins now in January. The Committee is reviewing all sections of the reserve analysis, loan payments, and daily operation and maintenance expenses. A draft of the new water budget proposal is expected by the first part of February. (Judy Greinke, Charles Smith, Fred Fath, and Office Staff)

Rate Study: The Committee discussed different rate structures. We reviewed Dept. of Health -“ DOH 331-327 Water Rates” and “EPA – Setting Small Drinking Water System Rates” along with actual water usage on Herron Island for August, September, and October. Our meter readings have the benefit of showing members who still have major leaks at their properties; many leaks were fixed after notification but some still remain a problem. We need a base fee which includes the **average daily usage for all Herron Islanders** and a tiered increasing rate that sends a signal and incentive to conserve water. We have a seasonal variation in usage for summer peak season water consumption and winter off-peak season and uncompensated usage for fire fighting, flushing and HMC Connections which all need to be considered.

Water Rates must be set in January for HMC budgeting purposes and we only have a few months of off-peak usage at this time. At least 12 months of consumption data per connection is need for review which would reveal peak season water usage and off-peak usage. We need to set at least 2 tiers above the base rate with increasing charges for excessive water use. The goal is to set fair rates for all members keeping our Water Department sustainable for the future.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION: The Water Committee would like Board Approval to continue budgeting Flat Rate Charges for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. This would allow for collection of a full year Use Data (Aug. 2013 to Aug. 2014) and insure more accurate Herron Island information when establishing rates.

A Beachcomber Article will be published as a means of keeping members informed about all the possibilities and options that impact our Herron Island Water System.

Written by: Judy Greinke Water Committee Chair

