

SPOKANE COUNTY WATER AVAILABILITY ADVISORY GROUP

**Thursday, April 26, 2012
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Spokane Regional Health District, Room 320/321
1101 W College Ave
Spokane, WA**

MEETING SUMMARY

Attending: *(This list includes only those who signed the sign-in sheet)*

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Dick Price, Stevens PUD | Mike Hermanson, <i>Spokane County</i> |
| Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth Water</i> | Ty Wick, <i>SAJB</i> |
| Jim Kolva, <i>Jim Kolva Associates</i> | Jeanne Barnes, <i>Spokane Assoc. of Realtors</i> |
| Doug Greenland, <i>City of Spokane</i> | Mike Lithgow, <i>Pend Oreille Co.</i> |
| Steve Skipworth, <i>Liberty Lake Sewer & Water</i> | John Covert, <i>WDOE</i> |
| Steve Davenport, <i>Spokane County Planning</i> | Rusty Post, <i>WDOE</i> |
| Ken Garceau, <i>Spokane Assoc. of Realtors</i> | Joel White, <i>Spokane Homebuilders Assoc.</i> |
| Steven Holderby, <i>Spokane Regional Health District</i> | Karen Skoog, <i>Stevens Co. Farm Bureau</i> |
| Alene Lindstrand, <i>Realtor</i> | Rachael Osborn, <i>CELP</i> |
| Dwight Hume, <i>Land Use Solutions and Entitlement</i> | |
| Jim Mathieu, <i>Northwest Land and Water</i> | Susan Gulick, <i>Sound Resolutions (Facilitator)</i> |

1. Options to Address Water Availability Prior to Approval of Land Divisions

- ❑ The Advisory Group reviewed the current process for land divisions and the determination of water availability.
- ❑ There are two methods for the approval of land divisions within Spokane County: sub-divisions in accordance with Chapter 58.17 RCW or a certificate of exemption issued by Spokane County.
- ❑ All sub-divisions subject to Chapter 58.17 RCW are required to demonstrate that potable water supplies are available. To demonstrate this, Spokane Regional Health District requires that the applicant provide one of the following:
 - Proof that the new lots will be served by a public water supply system;
 - A pump test from a well located on each proposed new lot that meets the same requirements as for a building permit; or
 - A report from a hydro-geologist that includes a statement of adequacy (along with other requirements).
- ❑ A Certificate of Exemption (CE) may be granted for *some* (but not all) divisions of land into parcels of greater than 10 acres. There are no requirements to demonstrate water availability within the CE approval process. The CE is granted at the counter within the Planning Department as an administrative process; there are no opportunities for review or appeal of these determinations.
- ❑ The provisions for CE are a bit complicated and there are a lot of nuances regarding which divisions are eligible for a CE. For those property divisions that are eligible, however, there is no requirement for any evaluation of water availability.
- ❑ All building permits, regardless of how the land was divided, require a pump test to show adequate water.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Susan Gulick of Sound Resolutions at (206) 548-0469 or by e-mail at Susan@Soundresolutions.com.

- ❑ There is concern that if property is divided without adequate assessment of water, the purchasers of the lots will not be aware that water may not be available, and therefore the lot is not really “buildable”.
- ❑ The question for the Advisory Group is whether the current process is adequate or should the Advisory Group recommend changes. There are two issues:
 - Should there be a requirement to demonstrate that water is available prior to land divisions?
 - If so, are the current procedures used by Spokane Regional Health sufficient, or should changes be recommended.
- ❑ The Advisory Group discussed a variety of options, including:
 - Establishing a flow standard (gpm);
 - Requiring specific testing procedures from multiple wells (e.g. observation well or neighbor’s well); and
 - Requiring long-term monitoring or metering.
- ❑ The Advisory group also discussed how to assess impacts on neighbors and/or stream flows, particularly in closed basins.
- ❑ Some Advisory Group members expressed concerns about too much government intrusion and did not think there was a need for more stringent requirements at the time of property divisions.
- ❑ Others felt that the CE process should require the same demonstration of water as the sub-division process.
- ❑ The Advisory Group discussed that establishing geographic areas of concern—possibly overlay zones—would help focus on problem areas rather than impose new requirements county-wide.
- ❑ Jim Mathieu of Northwest Land and Water explained the value of observation wells. If well testing is done appropriately, observation wells can provide data to help assess the potential impacts on adjacent users and water sustainability. The observation wells can be used as a domestic well after the testing is completed, so the costs are not lost.
- ❑ The Advisory Group also discussed the need for improved disclosure requirements regarding water availability at the time of property sales.
- ❑ There is more complexity and controversy with addressing water availability at the point land division than there is at the time of issuing a building permit. The Advisory Group would like to consider some recommendations regarding land division, but feel their time is better spent on developing recommendations regarding the building permit requirements.

2. Options for Regional Evaluations to Assess Impacts to Other Wells and Stream Flows, and Long-term Aquifer Sustainability

- ❑ Mike Hermanson provided an overview of past and current studies. A copy of Mike’s presentation is attached as a separate document.
- ❑ The Advisory Group discussed options for additional data gathering and evaluation, including groundwater monitoring and additional hydrogeologic characterizations.
- ❑ The Advisory Group will consider recommendations for future evaluations or studies.

3. Next Steps

- ❑ Susan will prepare **DRAFT** recommendations for the Advisory Group to consider at the next meeting. These are preliminary concepts for consideration and revision. They will likely change significantly before they are finalized.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Susan Gulick of Sound Resolutions at (206) 548-0469 or by e-mail at Susan@Soundresolutions.com.

Upcoming Meetings

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Topics</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Thursday, May 24, 2:00-4:00 p.m. SRHD Room 320/321</i> | ✓ Review of draft recommendations |
| <i>Thursday, June 14, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. SRHD Auditorium</i> | ✓ Finalize recommendations |

If you have questions or comments, please contact Susan Gulick of Sound Resolutions at (206) 548-0469 or by e-mail at Susan@Soundresolutions.com.