

GHAAC Meeting, December 11, 2007 – by Trevor Evans, Secretary

At its December 11 meeting, the Greater Hansville Area Advisory Council (GHAAC) heard reports from County officials on the County's surface and storm water management program. GHAAC members reviewed how the recent heavy rains had affected the neighborhoods of the Greater Hansville Area (GHA). The GHAAC also heard Committee reports and noted comments from guests both in favor and in opposition to the recently installed speed tables in the GHA. Twenty-seven members, one proxy member, and nine guests attended. Also attending the meeting were Dave Tucker, Senior Program Manager of the County's Surface and Storm water Management Program, and Jim Bolger, Kitsap County Department of Community Development.

Chairperson Judy Foritano began the meeting by asking for reports from members on how their respective neighborhoods had been affected by the recent heavy rains. Each member gave a report on the effects of the storm and continuing cleanup efforts. The areas most heavily affected were stretches of Point No Point Road (under some feet of water, thought to be the highest observed in 30 years), the vicinity of the Hansville Repair facility (which was under 6 inches of water), Hansville Road in downtown Hansville, and Canal Drive in Driftwood Key, where several houses reported flooding. In the Point No Point and Hansville areas, observers suggested much of the flooding was due to improperly or non-operating tidal gates.

Dave Tucker reviewed the County's response to the flooding in Kitsap County, and said that officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were working with the County to collect data. Data indicated so far that the storm was twice what the County normally designed for, so assistance (equipment, supplies, etc.) were in very short supply. He urged members to report any private damage or road locations that had been flooded. He noted that the County maintains the tide gates it owns at Norwegian Point, Point No Point and Skunk Bay four to eight times a year depending on rainfall. He thanked members for their efforts to keep the gates operating properly and reporting problems, and offered to provide a key to give better access to the gate at Norwegian Point. When asked how maintenance/operation problems with the tide gates could be avoided, Tucker explained that the area behind the Hansville Post Office is at a 5.9-6.0 foot elevation. When confronted with a ten foot tide, exacerbated by storm surges, a certain amount of flooding will occur. One member suggested that building permits for new homes not be issued in designated flood plains, and another suggested all new development be required to handle any storm water runoff they create. Tucker responded that landowners in flood plains could build, but would be unable to obtain flood insurance unless their structures were designed accordingly. He noted that some new development standards for storm water runoff might occur in August 2009 when the County aligns its code with the State-administered National Pollution Discharges Elimination System. In response to a member's question, Tucker said the County had no routine maintenance program for drainage culverts, except large culverts under significant amounts of fill which were the most subject to catastrophic failure.

The Road Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) summarized the events of its past two meetings (November and December). At the December meeting, 43 people attended, and twelve participants made comments about the speed tables (ten against and two in favor). The Committee read into the record a letter to be sent to the County outlining these comments and requesting that the County continue working on the tables and related signage to assure that they are installed consistent with applicable standards. Three guests offered comments on the speed tables, two in opposition and one in favor of the tables. During the discussion which followed, and a subsequent comment period, guests and members suggested that alternatives to the tables could have been pursued further, such as a bypass road from Shorewoods to the Hansville Road, increasing the speed limit to correspond to observed speeds, and increasing police and/or community enforcement efforts. RSAC members responded that most of the complaints were coming from residents north of Hood Canal Drive, an area located between the two sets of tables, so first emergency responses from the Twin Spits Rd Fire Station would be unaffected. For those living elsewhere, the Fire Department had determined that each table delays a response by 4 seconds, not the 8 seconds originally predicted. One RSAC member acknowledged that few people like speed tables, but traffic data showed that joint efforts with the County to educate GHA residents about the public safety hazard presented by speeding, followed by ramped up enforcement programs (ticketing) had had no real effect. As a result, the RSAC and GHAAC felt it had no choice but to select the practical, affordable and least intrusive engineering solution available. One guest asserted that Commissioner Bauer would no longer respond to citizens' complaints about the tables unless they had first gone through the GHAAC. Foritano said this was incorrect, but that Bauer had requested those speed table opponents who did not agree that speeding was taking place to first check with the GHAAC for the relevant background information.

Following the discussion, a motion was approved (with one abstention) to send the RSAC letter to the County under a cover letter from the GHAAC endorsing the speed tables and the County's cooperation and support in getting them installed. The letter would also stress the GHAAC's interest in responding to community concerns by assuring the tables and related signage are installed or modified in conformance with applicable standards.

The following Committees also gave reports on their activities: Saltwater Parks (the master planning process for Norwegian Point Park will begin in January), Energy (the new substation should be running by December 14), and Greater Hansville Sign (ready for installation later this spring).

The new Hansville "downtown" and GHA planning committees will launch their planning work in January 2008. The Olympic Properties Group and the County have agreed on terms for a significant extension of the Hansville Greenway, involving 112 acres between Shorewoods and the center of Hawks Hole Creek and 2-1/2 miles of trail easement.

The next meeting of the GHAAC will be January 8, 7:00pm at the GHCC.