

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES
Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility Project Update**

March 3, 2014 – 6:15 p.m.

Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

City Council Present: Mayor Lister, Assistant Mayor Splaine, Councilors Shaheen, Kennedy, Lown, Dwyer, Morgan, Spear, and Thorsen

Staff Present: City Manager John Bohenko, Public Works Deputy Director Brian Goetz, City Engineer Terry Desmarais, Deputy City Attorney Suzanne Woodland

Mayor Lister called the Work Session to order at 6:20 p.m.

City Engineer Desmarais reviewed the status of the Wastewater Treatment Facility Project via a slide show presentation including the topics: History, Design Process, Design Status, Required Improvements, Next Steps including public outreach and Peer Review Report process and results.

Councilor Spear asked if we had a blank canvas for an entirely new plant, would it reduce the complexity or the cost if we did not have to build it next to the old plant. City Engineer Desmarais stated it would be less complex but we know we have to do it this way. Councilor Spear continued asking if sustainability has been brought into the process early on as we don't want to wait until it has been designed.

City Engineer Desmarais stated we are still in the early stages and can add sustainability components and stated the Consultant did look at this already, but some things are not necessarily cost-effective but if the Council wants them to look into them, they can.

Councilor Dwyer asked what is next is regards to permitting approval deadline for the EPA consent decree. Deputy City Attorney Woodland stated there are interim milestones in the design process with the completion date set for May 2017, although we are in talks to push it back 18 months to accommodate BAF, and we are still awaiting this decision.

Assistant Mayor Splaine stated he has visited the facility with Deputy City Manager Allen and has also done on-line research on innovative options of different ways to treat sewage, and wonders how we know if these other options have been explored and if constituents have ideas, how they should let the city know.

City Manager Bohenko stated that as we have been going through the process we have had people come in with other ideas but we have not found any that have proved out that meet the environmental requirements. He stated it then becomes a matter of if we spend time looking at these options or go forward with the proven option that will keep us in the footprint on the island.

Councilor Shaheen stated regarding the cost implications, when we will have a better idea of the impact to ratepayers.

City Manager Bohenko stated that there will be a public input session on March 19th and we will be looking at different ways of dealing with the costs i.e. tiers, and also increasing net assets to smooth rates to 4-5% increase per year to level it out. He stated that David Hyder will be in attendance.

Councilor Lown asked if the Sustainability Committee has been involved for their input. City Engineer Desmarais stated they did meet with the committee but haven't gone any further as the space is not available on Peirce Island.

Deputy City Attorney Woodland discussed the Peer Review Report stating that the City of Portsmouth had concerns with the science that underpinned the findings so we joined with Dover and Rochester after last year's litigation. She stated that specific questions were asked of the joint panel of experts to review the findings and the final report was received in mid-February so we are still evaluating the findings.

She stated we will continue to work more collaboratively with the DES going forward.

Councilor Kennedy stated she doesn't want to wait until August for answers and wants a more formal discussion with the EPA.

Deputy City Attorney Woodland stated we are still evaluating the report, but we are comfortable with the technology selected by the City Council.

City Manager Bohenko stated storm water is an important issue and is a concern of staff and others in the region.

Councilor Dwywer stated it may be obvious but she doesn't think the report dissuades us from going forward with our decisions but is more about how we are held accountable of what occurs in the bay.

Councilor Spear stated that the technology we picked allows flexibility of what is discharged, but we are also building to be able to adapt for storm water.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.