



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes - Final FLOODING STUDY TASK FORCE

ALD. ASHANTI HAMILTON and ALD. JAMES A. BOHL, JR.,  
CO-CHAIRS

Gerry Novotny, Rep. Sandy Pasch, Jeff Polenske, Kevin  
Shafer, Erick Shambarger, and Ken Yunker

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Thursday, January 20, 2011

10:00 AM

Room 301-A, City Hall

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Meeting convened: 10:08 A.M.  
Members excused: Sandy Pasch

**1. Review and approval of the minutes of the January 6th meeting.**

*Mr. Yunker moved, seconded by Mr. Polenske, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections.*

**2. Long-term and short-term maintenance and flood-prevention plans of the city and the sewerage district.**

*Mr. Polenske presented the rest of the PowerPoint presentation from the prior meeting. The Dept. of Public Works has been inspecting and repairing manholes to deal with clear water entering the sewer system through that means. The city is spending a lot of money in the public way, but money has not been spent on private property, where much of the clear water may be infiltrating the system. The city spent \$36 million on the sewers last year, of which \$15 million was in grant funds and the rest was in low-interest loans from the state. Mr. Shambarger noted that a line item was created in the budget for the elimination of sanitary sewer overflows, an inflow and infiltration (I&I) account, for work on the public way with the goal of reducing the amount spent over the years as improvements are made. This account was then increased with the intention of addressing I&I on private property. The amount in the account will depend on what the city decides to do on private property. Ald. Bohl had questions about the funding of the sewer maintenance fund. The city has been performing work to prevent sewer overflows in specific areas of the city that have been occurring consistently over a number of years. These projects tend to be fairly costly. Martin Aquino, Dept. of Public Works, said that sewer lining will last at least 50 years. Prior to working private laterals, the dept. can install meters to monitor the flow in the sewers and then can monitor the flow once the work is completed. Unless there is almost 100% compliance, the project wouldn't be valid in terms of reducing overflows. Kevin Shafer noted that the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewerage District will be providing the bulk of the funding for work on private laterals and it will mandate that work be done and that access to private property be*

*provided. Mr. Shafer doesn't think the combined sewers are responsible for the backups as they are too deep for clear water to access them and the bulk of the overflows in the July storm were in the separate sewer areas.*

*Mr. Shafer noted that there are approximately 20 communities across the country that have put public money into private lateral work or into the separation of foundation drains from the sewer system. Mr. Polenske noted that the city will be improving laterals on 5 city-owned homes to get a better understanding of the cost and effectiveness. Mr. Aquino stated that for lateral linings workers do not need access to the basement, but they would for disconnection of foundation drains.*

*Mr. Yunker left at 10:51 A.M.*

*If roots have infiltrated a lateral, then the roots can be cut and the lining replaced. If a lateral is sagging or broken, then it cannot merely be lined, but it must be replaced. The dept. intends to have experts inspect the laterals and suggest what the city should do. Ald. Bohl sees that it may be a problem to gain access to private homes if the homeowner may then face a huge bill for sewer work. Politically it may be difficult to sell to homeowners. Mr. Shafer is assuming that the work will need to be completed when funding is available to fund 60% of the work. This may run over 25-50 years and all homes may not need to be examined based upon the flow as the work is done. This program will not stop all basement back-ups, but is a step toward that goal. As time goes along, technology and knowledge will be shared across all municipalities and across the country so expertise can be brought to solve this problem. Mr. Shambarger noted that focusing on a single watershed allows the city to see what impacts changes make and to maximize funding. Ald. Bohl also suggested creating a financial incentive to have the work done when the city is prepared to do the work, such as 60% will be funded by the city, but in the future it will be only 40%.*

*Mr. Polenske said that there are 2,400 miles of sewer system and 940 miles of those miles are sanitary sewers, with an estimated additional 1,500 miles of private laterals. The dept. has selected 15 areas across the city to work on reducing I&I. Mr. Shambarger would like to look at land-use decisions and Mr. Shafer encouraged the task force to look at stormwater management issues. Mike Hahn is present for Mr. Yunker who agrees that stormwater management needs to be examined. Mr. Aquino noted that some of the pipes that are only 50 years old are in worse shape than those 150 years old.*

*Mr. Shafer presented his PowerPoint presentation on the Mayor's report (attached to file). The text in red in the presentation was added by Mr. Shafer as to how the recommendations have been implemented to date. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) is looking at a fast-flow treatment which would be a full treatment of sewerage as part of a pilot study and that would meet all the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources' standards for treatment and would be used as needed during a heavy rain event. Blending also meets the full state and federal standards for treatment. Jones Island can treat 330 millions of gallon per day, and add an additional 60 million gallons, if needed. Mr. Shambarger noted that the combined sewer system is currently a treatment plant, so separation of sewers would need to be closely examined. The maximum daily load is the amount of pollution an area of the river can hold without the pollution being a problem.*

*Mr. Hahn said that, though not desirable, basement backups can equalize pressure and aid in preventing the collapse of basement walls, but backflow preventers can create an unequal pressure on basement walls, which can cause the walls to collapse. He said that this should be taken into consideration when installing these*

devices. Sump pumps can be installed on sewer laterals rather than just in the basement floor. Separating the combined sewer system, per Mr. Shafer, noted that this is not the most cost-effective way to solve backups and overflows and might put the city into non-compliance with the state in terms of suspended solids. Mr. Shafer sees a lot of positives with green infrastructure as a means of reducing clear water into the sewer system.

**3 Set next meeting date and agenda.**

*The next meeting will be Feb. 24th and the proposed meeting dates over the next two months generally work okay for members.*

*The agenda for Feb. 24th will include:*

*Sanitary sewer overflows (which will include Milw. Metropolitan Sewerage District's use of pumps)*

*Combined sewer system*

*Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's stormwater and inflow study*

*The agenda for March 10th will include the Dept. of Public Work's discussion of submitted proposals.*

*Meeting adjourned: 12:00 P.M.*

*Linda M. Elmer*

*Staff Assistant*