

Parks and Rec Report of PPRC Meeting of August 11, 2023

Attendees Cathy Weber, Brian Luetzow, Eric Benn, Al Drum in person; Virtual Attendees Minal Hahm and Graig Neville of MSquared, Forrest Van Asten, Uriah Monday and Konstantine LNU of DNR

Item one—Dam Breach analysis and additional analysis still Possibly Required

Graig reported that a dam breach analysis using a simplified method showed that of the four properties downstream of the dam within Wisconsin, only the two dwellings closest to the dam would have flooding, to a level of 18 inches. Both homes have walk-in basements, so flooding will be in the basement only. Much technical discussion followed among MSquared and DNR people. The analysis assumed a worst case where the Presque Isle River is flooded from a 100-year storm, and then the Pipke dam system fails suddenly cascading water on top of the already flood stage river. The DNR people seemed to feel this study was suitably conservative, but wanted some further methodology applied to confirm. There is concern that the results need to be bullet-proof in case a downstream property owner challenges the results. The DNR people seemed to agree that this dam is a “significant hazard” dam (which, counter-intuitively, is the lesser of the two dam classifications) and does not reach the level of a “high-hazard” dam, the more serious classification. The DNR people asked MSquared to perform some further studies to corroborate the results already produced, just to be sure.

Konstantine stated that parties objecting to our dam failure results will need to challenge the technical details, and not simply object because they are unhappy with being in a flood fringe. That is why we need to be sure of the dam failure results.

Also, attempts to take anti-flood measures on a property, such as a dike, usually are too costly or do not work.

Forrest also urged us to get the dam failure analysis letter to Vilas County Zoning ASAP.

Item two—Siphon for Pipke Pond

The PPRC members asked if a siphon can be used as a pond emptying method instead of a buried pipe system that empties the pond the way a bathtub drain operates. A buried pipe will have to be placed underneath gas and fiber optic buried lines, which could require expensive relocation. The siphon could be mounted to operate above the utilities, and not disturb them. Forrest was concerned that a siphon is hard to manage and to start, requiring knowledgeable people present while starting. The siphon is useful for temporary, non-emergency type operation, but not so good for normal pond management.

Attendees also discussed the emergency spillway design, wondering whether or not culverts could be used instead of depressions in the berm walls.

The DNR people urged the PPRC to gather license agreements that the Town has with the gas supplier and the fiber optic operators, to be prepared in case buried utilities need to be dealt with.

Item three—Grant request application and Schedule

Uriah reminded members that March 1, 2024 is grant application submittal deadline. We'll need accurate dollar project cost projections and substantial plan completion at that time. PPRC members asked when the dam failure analysis will be done so that MSquared can get busy with detailed design and construction plans. MSquared attendees agreed to confer and get back to PPRC. They intend to continue work on DFA alternate approaches while also producing design details. PPRC members intend to urge MSquared to get done with all design requirements, procedures and cost estimates before the end of 2023, perhaps early December, to submit application as early as possible.

PPRC will need to discuss wetland fill details with Noel Hayes, DNR staff.
ACD, August 15, 2023

