

Minutes of a Public Meeting regarding Water Well Number 8, Madison Wisconsin
Monday, April 27, 2009 - 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Goodman Community Center
Buck Trawicky, secretary pro-tem

This was the second meeting of interested citizens regarding the Madison Water Utility's Well Number 8, on Lake Monona next to Olbrich Gardens. Well 8 has higher-than-desired levels of iron and manganese. The Water guys know this is a problem, and ask us (the small number who've showed up to become engaged) to learn about the condition and current circumstances, and discuss what to do about it. Thereafter and soon, there will be one or more general public meetings. After which the Water folk, under direction, will do their best.

We met at the Goodman Community Center, (149 Waubesa St, off Atwood Ave.). On Monday, Apr 27 '07, from 7 until about 9 p.m. Those present were: Al Larson, Water Utility Principal Engineer and Project Manager; Bob Hugo; 15th District Alder Larry Palm ; Tom Heikkinen, Water Utility General Manager; Madeline Gotkowitz (a hydrogeologist); 6th District Alder Marsha Rummel; Steve Klafka; Buck Trawicky; Mary Jo Walters; Mark McCullough; Dan Melton and; Jon Standridge of the Water Utility Board and Kathy Soukup.

After Introductions, we received literature on "Standard Procedure," and its English equivalent. And 3 documents, to refresh our memories.

Our assignment had been to absorb the matter of our 1st meeting, and to study the packet of info sent us. The Objective was to move towards a General Public Meeting (one or more.). [And, hopefully, for us and the Water Guys to be in accord, so we citizens would be of one voice with the Water Guys.]

Sense of the last meeting (the first one):

Does the Water Utility have a sense of the problem? (See below, for detail.) In sum, this matter of Iron and Manganese in the water of Well 8 IS a problem, and should be addressed.

Do The People WANT a reduction of iron and manganese? (At whatever the cost might be?)

Note that this is NOT a health issue, but a matter of housekeeping and aesthetics: Our public health is not endangered, but this is a matter of wide nuisance: laundry gets stained in the washing, our drinking water out of the spout looks weird, and it can taste wrong: not good.

Note that this irritation can be filtered out: Well #29 has a similar problem (worse than our #8's), and they've had filters on-line since Apr 15 '09, with very good mitigation.

Question regarding system Pressure Zones: (*) We're in Pressure Zone 6 – this encompasses the central City; 15 wells, about 1 mile apart. Each well serves 7-10 thousand people. Well #3 (you know it—by First St. and Johnson) has been abandoned (retired) because of unacceptable water quality. If we also lose our Well #8, by Olbrich Gardens, then the whole East Side, even our entire City, has a real problem.

So, as a by-the-way sense of our meeting, the Importance of Well Number 8 should be told to everybody.

At present, Well 8 is not used year-round; mostly only in the summer (July-September).

(We then spoke for a bit about the footprint of a new or existing well. In its final version, it's not particularly large – look at Well 8: well under the footprint of a modest house.)

We also discussed, briefly, what's involved in getting permission to drill a new well.

A Big Question: Is it preferable to drill a replacement for Well 8, or to mitigate the problem at the existing Well 8? (There's a Master Plan, but it wasn't on hand, and might not even have been particularly relevant.)

The Sense of the Meeting was this: it's better to maintain existing wells (with upgrades as needed), rather than to add or eliminate wells.

One Proposal is this: build a Treatment Plant for Wells 7 and 8, or just for Well 8. Note that if this is done, we MUST preserve the Sledding Hill at Well 8, and the viewscape. So any expansion should be directly downhill from the existing well building.

At this point, we realized we were drifting from our agenda, so we started over.

The Public Process regarding Well 8 has, ideally, 4 steps:

- establish the process (that's what we're doing at present; later, there will be one or more general public meetings)
- review alternatives, and decide on one
- site selection (including the option of retaining the present site)
- architectural decisions, if needed

Decision—makers are, ultimately, the Water Board. But there will be one or more public meetings, and one or more hearings before the Water Board.

Federal funding has become available – up to \$300,000 (!); thanks to our Congresswoman, Tammy Baldwin.

We next reviewed the Project Documents we'd been given. (Mary Jo led much of this.)

Document #3, p.2: "increase of facility" and "return to full-time use": the designed-for maximum is double the average day's use. So, we "over-design" – for July. And, build so the maximum is 85% of capacity.

Note that the design life for these wells is 100 years.

Also note that if you pump hard you're almost certain to pull in contaminants. Whereas pumping at a reduced rate (a steady state) pulls in less contamination.

Also p.2: regarding piping, there are about 400 miles of pipe that will have to be replaced, over the next 40 years.

Document #3, p.5: perhaps we'll need to construct a 2nd well.

Iron and manganese will need to be filtered out. Indeed, we're looking at the probable need for 4 filter plants, based on the experience with Well 29.

(A regional treatment plant referred to would probably be near East High School; no site has been selected yet.)

Comments:

Regarding the Scoping Document: it needs a Summary Table, at start of Section 4.

Regarding the 7 Alternatives: for each alternative, there is a cost estimate. Include an approximation of each alternative's effect on a typical household's water bill. (Note: all monies expended on our water system are generated from the water bills we all pay; none comes from the City's general revenue.)

The filtration idea has legs: please produce an architectural sketch, and show how it'd expand the existing facility's footprint.

Sense of the Meeting: YES, iron and manganese in the water of Well 8 IS indeed a problem.

Not certain is to what standard the water of Well 8 should be treated. This needs more info and discussion.

It was asked, "Why no discussion of the health effects of manganese?" The answer was that this is probably not an issue, at the levels we have, for water-borne manganese.

Regarding the Initial Public Meeting:

Preparation is needed, obviously.

But, in essence, there IS a problem. And there are various possible solutions. And public input is needed.

Questions: Should there be more than one public meeting? All at the Goodman Center, or perhaps one at Truax? Who'll facilitate?-- (probably Al Larson). How about

during the week of May 20 (Wednesday), or May 18 (Monday)? (We said either would be fine.) (Al will confer with the Goodman Center people re. room availability.)

In Sum, this is The Problem:

Well 8 has had an increase in its output of manganese, and it produces high iron.”

Buck Trawicky, secretary pro tem.