2/4/2021 Committee of the Whole Meeting
Chat Questions

These questions were asked in the chat during the meeting. The meeting video can be found at https://wsto.tv/vod/2021/2/committee-of-the-whole-2421.

1. How much sediment was removed from each project that was noted?

Sediment removal was not required on the example projects presented and is unlikely to be required here in Stoughton.

2. How will the development of this area affect the ability to continue to have the Fair operate in this location? If the Fair cannot be hosted here or is negatively impacted, was that made clear in your surveys from 2005 and beyond....where folks were informed about this potential issue.

In 2019-20 the City completed a park master plan for Mandt Park. The consultant was selected based on their prior experience working on fairgrounds and riverfronts. As part of the planning process, the Stoughton Fair board was invited to participate in a focus group meeting with the consultants. During this meeting they asked them questions about how the park did and didn't work for them. They used their answers to help draft concepts of the park.

The master plan for the park has nearly doubled the parking, created more greenspace to be used for the midway, and has designated more square footage for building space than what is currently used. Other amenities in the Master Plan include outdoor restrooms and provided accessibility within the park for people with disabilities. These improvements will benefit the fair.

Additionally, and in coordination with the Redevelopment Authority, there will be an enhanced trail system and a pedestrian bridge. This will provide more pedestrian traffic toward Mandt Park.

3. How are the number of drops determined and by whom? You reported 9 drops in Pueblo, for example. How was it determined for the Stoughton proposal? In theory could additional drops be developed/included?

Appropriate number of structures for the available hydraulic fall at the site have been proposed. The dam in Pueblo was much taller than the one in Stoughton, and more drops were required to distribute the hydraulic drop.

4. What will the water depth be and how does it compare to the other examples?

Water depth varies and would be similar to other example projects.

5. Who will legally own the land south of Uniroyal that will be exposed when the millpond is drained? The plan shows that it will be developed as a public park. But could Uniroyal lay claim to this land?

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The City's attorneys have reviewed the deed for the dam and have come to the conclusion that any exposed land in the millpond would be owned by the City. Uniroyal would have little use for the property since it would lay within the 100-year floodplain.

6. What is the proposed elevation at the top of the new construction?

The water surface elevation at the entrance of the park will be 837.9 feet.

7. Are there any statistics on drowning in the areas you mentioned for comparisons?

Increasing public safety is a primary objective in the design of the whitewater park, and many of our projects are driven by a desire to reduce drownings. Low head dams, such as the one in Stoughton, present a major public safety hazard, and many drownings occur at low head dams each year. However, drownings can still occur in any river, and wearing a PFD (lifejacket) is critical. We are aware of one drowning that occurred at our project in Pueblo 15 years ago, the victim was not wearing a PFD.

Please see the answer to question #9 for more public safety explanations.

8. What was the reason for a steering committee formed for this project and not a feasibility committee? I see a feasibility committee as more objective and neural to gather data.

The feasibility of the project was completed by staff prior to the concept plan being developed. Background research included researching construction costs, meeting with senior DNR officials, conversations with multiple engineering firms, conversations with leaders from communities that have these projects, researching outdoor recreation participation, reviewing completed City planning documents, and site visits to completed projects.

A steering committee was formed to provide support, guidance, and oversight of the project. This included reviewing plans and technical data from professionals to recommendations to the Parks & Recreation Committee and City Council. The formation of the steering committee was approved by City Council unanimously on March 13, 2018. The steering committee includes a member from the River and Trails Task Force, Madison Area Sports Commission, Dane County Parks, Redevelopment Authority, City Council/Parks & Recreation Committee, whitewater paddler, and a downtown business owner.

The steering committee has acted objectively throughout the process, listened to various concerns that have been brought to their attention, has hosted many professionals who presented information to address concerns, and voted accordingly. The professionals who have attended meetings include:

- Gary Lacy PE, Recreation Engineering & Planning
- Mason Lacy PE, Recreation Engineering & Planning
- Rob Davis PE, Water Resource Specialist, Wisconsin DNR

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- John Reimer PE, Assistant Director, Dane County Land & Water Resources Department
- Ryan Wicks PE, City Engineer, City of Manchester, IA
- Raj Shukla, Executive Director, Wisconsin River Alliance
- Paul Woodard, Director of Public Works, City of Janesville
- Emily Stanley, Center for Limnology and Department of Integrative Biology, University of Wisconsin – Madison
- Chuck Ungs, Naturalist, Linn County, IA Conservation Department
- Andy Paulios, Natural Resource Area Supervisor, Wisconsin DNR
- Mark Piotrowicz, Director of Development, City of West Bend

9. What are similar white water parks seeing for emergency response numbers. How many calls to assist with major or minor accidents?

"We do have scraps, bumps and bruises from running into the rocks but we haven't had anything serious that I'm aware of. Occasionally someone needs stiches. With our tube rentals we require shoes for cut feet is always a problem out on the river." – Cheryl Saam, Recreation Supervisor, City of Ann Arbor Canoe Liveries (Argo Cascades)

"I have been with our Fire Department since before the whitewater park was installed here in Charles City, and have been the Fire Chief for 8 years. To my recollection, and in doing some research, we have not had any calls that I can tell due to anything involving the whitewater portion of the river. It has been very successful, and also a very safe feature. We have everything from rafting, to tubing, to kayaking going on a lot time during that type of season." – Eric Whipple, Fire Chief, Charles City, IA

"I have to echo the sentiments shared by Eric. The WWP has been a tremendous addition to our community and the surrounding area. Of course we still have a few residents that occasionally vent about the revenue that the City of Manchester put forth towards the completion in 2015'. But, on a given Saturday or Sunday in late June, July or August it is not uncommon to have cars in the parking lot from multiple counties in Iowa along with occasional attendee's from other States.

When the park was being proposed, I also reached out to the folks in Charles City in an attempt to "get ahead" of any possible equipment and training needs. Indications were that we would see minimal events that required response from our public safety agencies. The summer the park was scheduled to open, I did organize a couple of joint drills for EMS, Fire and LE. We set up various injury and illness scenarios and practiced patient assessment, stabilization, and various means of transport form the river level to the street level where ambulances would stage.

Things we considered were: broken bones, head injury, lacerations, sprains, abrasions and sun burn. In discussion with our local emergency department in the hospital, these are consistent with what they have seen. They are also quick to share that the numbers of injuries that come through the ED from the WWP are very, very minimal. Weekend statistics in the ER have not risen since the WWP opened.

The summer the park was being completed and as part or our joint drills, we were able to use our ladder to practice raising the injured from the river level to the street. A road closure due to construction, resulted in the bridge that crosses over the WWP being closed to traffic. This served to be great practice for us.

Our WWP is also used as a training tool for others as well. The Iowa Homeland Security funded Urban Search and Rescue Team, TF-1, based in Cedar Rapids uses the park every May for training their staff. They split the crew and are here 2 full days. We have welcomed the Grant County Emergency Management Office as well. They provide training for their area FD's. I let them use the Manchester Fire Station for classroom and then they head to the Park for the skills portion. My office has organized 1 day water safety and flash flood response for area responders. This is a 1 day class that is taught by DNR certified water safety instructors.

This may be more information than you were looking for but we are very proud of this asset to our community and I feel you will also find a similar sense if a project is completed in your town/area." – Mike Ryan, Fire Chief, City of Manchester, IA

10. Will liability waivers have to be signed to enter the whitewater or will it be at their own risk?

The river is a public waterway and can be used without needing a liability waiver. There will be signs around the whitewater park like the one below from Bend, OR.

11. Is there a reason for not performing an actual environmental impact study? Data would seem to be very significant.

The permitting agency or grant funding source will dictate if an environmental review is necessary. The DNR is the permitting agency for this project and we have been told by their staff that an environmental impact study (EIS) is not warranted for this project. An EIS could cost in excess of $40,000 and take approximately one year to complete. If the City receives federal grant funds for the project, then compliance with National Environmental Policy Act will be needed. A categorical exclusion (CE), environmental assessment (EA), or an EIS may be required and this will be dictated by the federal funding source.

12. How toxic is this sediment? Will those reports be listed for public knowledge?

Please watch Jim Killian, Water Resource Management Specialist, address this question in the Committee of the Whole video found here - https://wsto.tv/vod. The sediment sampling report can be found at www.stoughtonrec.com/riverpark.

13. How much grant money has been secured for this project or is it being fully funded by taxpayers?

Over $800,000 in grant funding has been secured for the project. Please watch the budget breakdown towards the end of the Committee of the Whole video found here - https://wsto.tv/vod.

14. There were no actual samples from the river north of downtown? Why not?

The sampling was conducted only in the area that would be affected most by the dam modification. Focused on those areas of the impoundment where sediment 1) has the most potential to be eroded and translocated downstream due to drop in head, and 2) areas of sediment that would undergo emergence under lower water conditions.

15. What is the cost for additional police, emergency staff, and how will the noise and overcrowding effect the value of residential property, including the RDA? Also, how much is maintenance and continual clean up during and after use?

There have been minimal incidents in other parks, so no additional emergency staff is needed. Please see question 9.

"The only maintenance we have had to do was for erosion control. We piled up some large rocks to prevent erosion from occurring where the flow from one of the drops was directed towards the shoreline. We also had to build some wood and/or stone stairs where paths were eroding where people with tubes enter and exit the river. Cleanup is daily trash pick-up due to the large crowds the cascades attract." – Cheryl Saam, Recreation Supervisor, City of Ann Arbor Canoe Liveries (Argo Cascades)

It is estimated that the operation and maintenance of the park will cost $11,800 per year. This is a significant decrease from operating and maintaining the dam.

Please see below where the Market Demand Analysis question is for answers to property values.

16. Blue green algae is more plentiful at present due to climate change making water temperatures warmer in our area and in the midwest. Madison beaches are closed to swimmers from time to time in the summer for this problem. Public Health monitors this all of the time. What has been the impact of this concern for Whitewater Parks in this area or in the midwest?

"No, we haven't had any issues with blue-green algae. It is a flowing river with 60 cfs." - – Cheryl Saam, Recreation Supervisor, City of Ann Arbor Canoe Liveries (Argo Cascades)

"No - generally we see that as a problem in reservoirs and lakes with beaches more than in moving waters." – Chuck Ungs, Linn County Conservation Department (Manchester, IA resident)

"I would also caution you against assuming that conditions in the river at Stoughton are equivalent to the conditions you see in the lakes upstream. Planktonic blooms that form high-risk floating scums are more likely to occur on Lake Kegonsa when winds are calm, or if gentle winds push floating blue-green algae toward the downwind shore. Calm, stagnant conditions in the lake which are conducive to bloom growth and scum formation are very different from conditions in the river, where turbulence and flow prevent the accumulation of blue-green algae in high concentrations such as floating scums." – Gina LaLiberte, Statewide Harmful Algal Bloom Coordinator & Applied Limnologist, Wisconsin DNR

17. The proposed City budget item for the market demand analysis for 2023 is $34,000 for this project. While this project was being planned for the last 4 years, did I miss an independent survey that was done to assess the needs and desires of current residents for this project? If it was not done, why not? What is the value of what might be lost to habitat, recreation and property values with massive demolition/construction project?

The market demand analysis was to analyze the demand for a rental operation and subsequent facility to rent/store kayaks, canoes, and tubes. It was determined at the time to complete the project first and then complete a market demand analysis. After further meetings with the University of Wisconsin Small Business Development Center, it was suggested to contract out a rental operation much like Madison Boats and Rutabaga do with the City of Madison. This is due to no risk to taxpayers with an upside of splitting the profits.

A survey for 2018 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan was sent out and provided questions about parks and recreation facilities. Over 1,000 people completed the survey. The data was then compiled and in turn put into goals and objectives by a consultant from Ayres & Associates.

Property values will improve since the current site conditions are poor and this will be an improvement. Redeveloping riverfronts have been a successful way to increase property values. Here is a video with a

real estate developer in Des Moines where they are working on a like project - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meTUe0hD7PQ&feature=emb_title.

The Grand Rapids, MI economic impact report is a good source about property values. On page 17 the document covers land uses along their riverfront and on page 25 the document covers economic benefits from new development. - https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5617ffade4b0f733b489eab8/t/5e2a138c49c51041ac88a580/1579815831751/Grand+Rapids%2C+MI.pdf

18. Will the modelling take into account the county project to dredge the river channel?

We are in contact with the County regarding the dredging project and have requested information on the dredging design and schedule as it progresses. The preliminary model represents current conditions.

19. I would like to know if anyone has thought of bringing this to a referendum?

Our consideration of a potential referendum has been based on the dam designated as a Local Landmark and the financial implications of the park improvements.

1. The dam does not qualify as a Local Landmark.

2. The whitewater park including changes to the dam is estimated to cost $1.9 million less any grants.

20. Any plans for dealing with the thick weed growth in the river above the project area? It impedes flow when it's thickest and pieces of rotting weeds flow downstream.

Dane County will be performing a dredging project that will occur from LaFollette Dam at Lake Kegonsa to the railroad bridge at Cooper's Causeway. The dredging project's goal is to improve flow conditions which will aid flood mitigation.

21. If a kayaker does not want to go through the rapids, will there be a by-pass that will allow them to continue on down the river?

The southern bypass channel is designed for beginners. However, there will be takeout before the bypass channel and near the 4th Street bridge if someone would like to portage around the paddling improvements.

22. There are whitewater parks within an hour drive of Chicago and Milwaukee. Why would people drive 2 hours or more to come here?

The Marge Cline Whitewater Course is the closest park to Chicago. However, it does not compare recreationally to what is being proposed in Stoughton. Dan Bowers, Rutabaga Sales Manager and paddling enthusiast, told City staff that the main objective for the Marge Cline Whitewater Course was to provide a bypass around a dam. He is unaware of anyone from Wisconsin who travels there to paddle. However, he communicated that many Wisconsin

paddlers travel to Manchester and Charles City, Iowa where dams were removed and whitewater parks were built.

The Marge Cline Whitewater Course also a 2-hour drive from Milwaukee which routes people through the City of Chicago. Wausau would be the next closest destination which would be roughly a three hour drive from Milwaukee.

23. If upstream areas are lowered significantly, won't you lose kayakers who enjoy those areas currently and probably spend money in Stoughton?

The preliminary hydraulic and hydrological model does not show a significant decrease in water levels upstream. When the additional survey data is collected upstream of Stoughton, a video will be released that illustrates what the water levels will be.

24. What is the total surface area of relict flood plain, or other land surfaces, to be exposed at the new water surface elevation?

Approximately four acres of land will be exposed in the millpond.

25. Was there any attempt to determine how many of the kayakers (29,000+) in the immediate area would be interested in the type of whitewater opportunities being suggested?

The steering committee expressed their intent to the designers of the park that they would like the course to be used by all skill levels. This is the reason for the south channel which would be comparable to the Argo Cascades in Ann Arbor, MI. Additionally, the surfing wave that is created by the dam reconstruction would allow for more intermediate to advance whitewater paddling skill levels.

26. Where is the Fair going to go with the new design of Mandt Park?

Please see the answer to question 2.

27. What is the criteria for holding a referendum for the City and the criteria for having an "accurate economic impact study" that the City is displaying to the public?

Please see the answer to question 19.

28. Wouldn't you want to show as much accuracy and factual information to the public to increase trust and reliability to your constituents?

The purpose of this meeting was to provide facts.