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See below 1/11/01

6/11/2001

Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing this in response to what I have learned while researching issues concerning the NE Park and Duck Pond. What I have found is that no information has been compiled that supports excess runoff occurring from NE Park. Also, no water originating from the park or from the easement that was installed 30-40 years ago to funnel water into 2nd Street has been shown to contain contaminants from park runoff. Also, a large percentage (aprox. 80-90%) of the flow into Sweetwater Branch is coming from the Gainesville Shopping Center and Main Street.

In late March of 2001, there was a significant rain that lasted 2-3 days. The rain total for this period was 2+ inches. During the peak of this event, video footage was taken that clearly displayed the 80-90% flow into Sweetwater Branch coming from the Gainesville Shopping Center down 10th Ave. The outflow from NE 2nd Street seemed steady, however, at a ratio of roughly 1/10 or less to that of the 10th Ave outflow. Something even more alarming was that the flow of water at the easement which is located at around the 1400 block of NE 2nd Street had a seemingly larger volume of water in it than was appearing at the outflow at 10th Ave. This video was submitted and viewed at the Task Force meeting.

The volume difference in stormwater flow down 2nd street started a new, and more interesting, array of questions. Namely, why is the volume different? I reviewed a report titled "Redesign of the Duckpond for Effective Water Management", June 1999. In this report I found that for every water quality test done, NE 2nd Street was nearly double the other sites tested. I then called EPA to get a definition of these compounds that turned up downstream of the 2nd Ave outflow. Then I called Dennis Norton with GRU. His job is to inspect lines to make sure there are no problems. While talking to Mr. Norton, I asked him to check back to see if any inspections or servicing had ever been done to NE 2nd St. His response, upon further checking, was that no checks or repairs have ever been done to NE 2nd St. main line for sewer or stormwater. I went to Mr. Norton's office and reviewed hard copy

information to support his comment. It was then revealed to me that, although not common, it has been found periodically that wastewater and stormwater lines have been connected to each other. I contacted Stu Pearson in Public Works to ask him what he thought of the issue. Mr. Pearson's response was that "the pipes on 2nd St are very old and have probably cracked and separated and are allowing seepage." This seepage leaks out of sewer lines, and during rain events is washed through lines causing elevated contaminant levels. It then became very puzzling to me that if everyone seems to know about this problem, why would a development be allowed to connect into a system that has definite problems. Ms. Underwood with GRU, who reviews site developments and wastewater had no answer for this, stating that "she reviews each cluster development only by figuring the number of units times 300 gallons of wastewater and size of existing pipes. Condition of pipes or system to be connected to is not in the equation." I find this approach to infill development irresponsible, especially in light of parafecal material being found in Sweetwater Branch by the EPA. Upon further review of that sampling, I found that a neighbor further downstream in the Duckpond area witnessed raw sewage coming out of a pipe meant for stormwater. GRU discounted this by saying that vagrants sometimes frequent this area. I continued my search for information concerning the state of pipes in older neighborhoods, which led me to the Wastewater Dpt.. GRU stormwater engineer, Pam Sead, indicated that with clay pipes it is common to have separation and that if NE 2nd Street has a problem, it could be very costly. Alice Ran Keilor, stormwater rep for Public Works, echoed Ms Seals comments saying that if there is a problem, it could be very expensive and named the NW 38th St. project as an example. She stated there were 3 other projects ahead of it, if it was determined to need an overhaul. I don't think its a question of "if" it needs an overhaul. In the Perry McGriff study (1985) on NE 2nd St., it was reported that NE 2nd St needed to be completely redone. I think that in light of study done almost 20 years, the 1999

Duckpond study and the other information relating to pipe separation no development should be allowed until the problem is addressed and rectified.

In the Duckpond, the issues have been clear and the existing plan put forth by the city is designed to help clean the water by using a step-down technology of baffles and pools to collect water and using plant foliage to help in the decontamination process. It sounds like a good plan in theory, however, people very close to the design feel that it is a poor design and will offer little, if any, benefit to relieving water quality problems and if implemented will not allow the city to pass new EPA standards in two years. The other problem is volume of stormwater as it exists now that in peak times the inflow exceeds the outflow of the Duckpond. Which leads to NE 2nd Street and the Capstone Development. Mr. Rory Casseaux, representative of the developer and the city, would have us believe that the flow of water going down the grade southward on NE 2nd St. hits the main flow on 10th Ave and is impeded and in turn backs up 5 blocks all the way back up to Mr Popejoy's property. This totally discounts the property of entrainment in which a secondary stream (2nd St) encountering a strong primary stream (from Main St) in a tangential manner will "pumped" by the ^{stronger} weaker stream enhancing the flow at that junction. Inadequate piping, as I've said, could cause the problem, however. Step down retention that the task Force has recommended could solve the problem of quantity and quality of water in Sweetwater.

I have been talking to many individuals about the prospects of using existing stormwater areas to the north and south of Gainesville Shopping Center. These facilities have been in place for at least 30 years and are completely overgrown to the extent that most people don't even know they exist. The first area is to the north located behind 43rd Street deli. The rail trail will run right past it and the idea is to design a wetland park and utilize the same step down technology being used in the Duckpond redevelopment. The other site is south of the Gville shopping center south and west of Mac's drive through and is a 2+ acre parcel . The idea here isn't

to cut down everything ,dig a hole and put a fence around it. It is to design a natural wetland park to receive water flow off the shopping center area and other impervious surfaces. I am currently talking to a group that helps in design of such projects to see if it is a doable project. I have talked also with Carla Palmer with St Johns River Water Mgmt to see about funding, design, and implementation of such a project. Ms Palmer thought that if Public Works liked the idea she would be behind it and offered her services. The properties, as you know, must be bought by the city. I was told that Commissioner Hanrahan would know about funding but I have been unable to contact her for info on grants dealing with land acquisition. I am aware of the city's dilemma on the Depot Ave site and the need to keep as much money in the land acquisition fund as it can pending that outcome. My wife contacted one of the owners of the facility to the north and he was eager to discuss the city purchasing his property. I have talked with Tom Saunders and he favored the idea of that site (A) w/ proximity to the rails-trails. The one hurdle being that Public works doesn't like to pump stormwater even though its done all over the country. The site to the south (B) should meet city criteria. I would hope that you would take some time to review some of the information I have outlined in this report. I think, especially, as it pertains to development plans along NE 2nd street. I think the Task Force did a wonderful job with the limited time frame and I thank the commission for creating the Task Force. I do feel as though a much larger vision in moving us closer to a solution to the problems in Sweetwater Branch. We must look forward and lay groundwork that will ensure that our environment and water quality will meet and exceed all EPA guidelines in the future and possibly change the complexion of the whole Gainesville Shopping Center and surrounding businesses.

Curtis Cooper