



Upper White River Watershed Alliance, Inc.
Special Meeting for The GIS Feasibility Proposal
March 8, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 1:29 PM Thursday March 8, 2004. Those present were as follows: Mr. Robert Thompson, Hamilton County Surveyor's Office; Mr. Bob Weaver, Upper White River Board of Directors; Mr. Larry Stout, ISSD; Mr. John Buechler, Polis Center; Mr. E. J. McNaughton, IDEM; Mr. Zach Bishton, Christopher Burke Engineering; Mike Tosick, U. S. Fish and Wildlife; Mr. John Kosinski, Plexus Group; Mr. Bob Meyer, Upper White River Board of Directors was on conference call for the duration of the meeting.

Hosting and Maintenance of GIS Proposal:

Mr. Thompson stated that the issues for today's meeting were not only the maintenance of the GIS Proposal, but in particular the hosting of it and what their options are; where do they go from here.

Mr. Meyer stated that they have a proposal tentatively before the Trustees and he believes that Beth Admire has been the Trustee paying the most attention to their GIS project and giving him the most feedback. Initially she had been apprehensive about the endurance of the Upper White River Watershed Alliance as a group and funding a GIS project, which maybe the Upper White may not be around months or years from now, to sustain the proposal and thereby the funding from the Trustees would be wasted. He stated that he believed that Beth and E. J. had a conversation in the last couple of weeks in which he had assured her that IDEM may be a good backup in the event of the Upper White demise and for that reason Beth is less anxious about that than in the past. He asked Mr. McNaughton if that was a fair summary.

Mr. McNaughton stated that this was a fair assessment.

Mr. Meyer stated that he believed that Mr. McNaughton had also assured her that, in his opinion, GIS is helpful in the recovery of the river when it has been damaged. He believes that she had been anxious that because of the settlement had assured that the money would only be spent in that fashion; that this would fit that criteria. That removed the two things that had been on the Technical Committee's agenda for dealing with Ms. Admire, but he believes that there may be a new one come up, which is the hosting of the GIS. He believes that Mr. McNaughton had suggested that IDEM and Access Indiana might be able to host this GIS site whereas the Upper White intention to host it themselves using Indiana University servers. The main point of today's meeting is to discuss where the best hosting site was for that.

Mr. Thompson stated that at the quarterly meeting the Board wanted to make sure that these issues were settled upon prior to the April proposal to the Settlement Committee (Trustees); that is the direction that they want to go today; to see if they can settle or have some direction today.

Mr. Meyer stated that he would like to go to Mr. Ward and the other two Trustees and make sure that they even want this proposal presented; they may on the other hand feel like it has been tossed around for so long that it's kind of a foregone conclusion and they are ready to approve it without a formal presentation; sometime in the next couple of weeks before the agenda is set for the April 7th meeting, either by way of Mr. Thompson, Carl or Mr. Meyer, and ask that question.

Mr. McNaughton stated that he believed that to be a good idea; he spoke with Scott this morning and he also has a concern about the way this project fits in with the recovery of White River; as an overall project it will be a benefit for a lot of agencies, but his concern was how it directly benefits the Trustees and the Council; with answering those questions would be good to back it up. He expressed to him that he could see the benefit for a lot of counties and municipalities and a lot of different people.

Mr. Meyer stated that these are the two matters they need to settle before they go any further publicly. He asked if they wanted to talk about the hosting or to first talk about the suitability and the recovery of the river.

Mr. McNaughton stated that they should talk about the suitability because if it is determined not to be suitable then why talk about hosting. He stated that he has not really been with this group so please take these comments with a grain of salt; he believes that it fits within their mission to have a GIS, not only to benefit other agencies and municipalities and themselves in the future, but they can also use it as a tool to demonstrate the effectiveness of the cleanup and of all their efforts here and it would be great to have something in place in the future in case something happens so they don't have to start from scratch; in general what they have been tasked with it can very easily demonstrate the quality of the water and being able to see that graphically with this mapping tool.

Mr. Bishton stated that he agreed; municipalities and counties are under all the new regulations and if that will help those and these regulations are designed to improve water quality it will help a municipality better manage their program.

Mr. Thompson stated that in some respects it is unfortunate that they are getting new people in the discussion of this; a lot of this has been talked about before in various technical Committee meetings; not only mapping and where projects are, but mapping where new projects are proposed and keeping track of projects; relating these ongoing projects with other agencies and environmental groups that are also doing project along the White River which is one of the more obvious reasons to go forward with this.

Mr. Tosick stated that when they talk about water quality and how it relates; if he is a user and he's going in to look at this GIS; what about water quality; will there be sample points that are highlighted that they can go in and look at water quality over the past months, sediment, suspended particles and all that stuff; will that be available to any user.

Mr. McNaughton stated that it would be available for any user plus, if he read the design specifications correctly, there will be data there for any number of users from beginner to public to intermediate to the high end user and they would be able to query the databases to see the sample points.

Mr. Tosick asked if they had planned to plug this in to the gaging stations for USGS; has that been planned.

Mr. McNaughton stated that there are a number of gaging stations in this area.

Mr. Buechler stated that this has not been specifically defined there, but if it is truly a web service it can be integrated; that is a possibility; are they talking about real time.

Mr. McNaughton stated that he was talking about real time and historical; it would kind of go with the water quality stuff. USGS is a really good service and seem to be very available with their information; he does not believe that they would be apposed to working in conjunction. He asked about outfalls; would they be located on the map as well.

Mr. Thompson stated that as these Phase II requirements are in place in the next five years communities that are designated entities will be mapping their conveyances and outfalls; some counties already have the ability in their own GIS departments to show these; according to what he understands the GIS project will link up to the various existing websites and pull data from that; if that data is made available from Hamilton County then other people will be able to see those outfall locations; for municipalities that do not have a website it will be an opportunity for them to have their data shared.

Mr. Stout stated that he did not believe that this was a valid concern that this project would primarily for the benefit of the local government bodies involved; in fact he believes that it is the other way; Marion, Madison and Hamilton County already have a pretty robust GIS systems; the power of this project is putting them together so the county boundaries aren't limiting them; the data that will be added to this then was pretty much all about the river; if they consider being able to take better care of the river a benefit for a community then he would guess that it is a benefit for the community, but only because it is a benefit for the river.

Mr. McNaughton stated that he believes that anyone would agree that taking care of the river is a benefit for the whole community and the community is not boarded by a county line by any means. The issue with Scott was that this is kind of a tangible project; you can put your fingers on it, but you really can't; they want to concentrate on buying land and protecting water quality through that route and he believes that it will come down to the cost benefit; the initial cost was \$90,000.00.

Mr. Stout stated that he mentioned buying land; if you want to buy land the first thing you have to do is find out who owns it; the counties are going to be contributing that type of information with the GIS data.

Mr. Bishton stated that he believed that it was a good way to track all of these different projects that the Trustees are funding and different local groups are funding; you have all these things that are out there, but nothing really brings them all together; it helps you target which parts of the river might be focused on compared to others based on water quality or based on activity of local groups.

Mr. McNaughton stated that this is a good point for public awareness, too; it has been really hard for them to get the word out on some of these things they have been working on; unless an individual has a specific concern or interest in one of these pieces of land they don't know what is going on.

Mr. Tosick stated that it was kind of like reading the news papers; you can read an article and read all of these words; then trying to put it together in your mind; sometimes that works, but when you see the picture and the map of what is truly going on it really reaches everybody and makes the connection.

Mr. Thompson stated that with the number of projects graphically represented on a map you may see an area where it seems to have been neglected; there may have been projects everywhere around it, but until you see it on a map it may get missed.

Mr. Buechler stated that he spoke with a gentleman in Morgan County; he said he was at the bottom end of the water and he would like to know what everybody is doing.

Mr. Thompson stated that there has been presentation in the past and if another presentation is useful he would think that it would be a good thing; whatever their thoughts are; there has been enough discussion in the past and then today there is a real value there and from what he has heard most of the Trustees apparently are in agreement on that.

Mr. Meyer stated that he agreed; he believes that there is another matter as well; the proposal has been out there for so long that people have begun to cover the same ground multiple times. It is basically the Trustee's call; if they want a presentation they will do it; if they decide privately that they are behind this that is fine; if they think they want the public to see presentation for procedural purposes that can be done.

Mr. Thompson stated that if they are in agreement on that point then maybe they can discuss what their options of hosting and see if they can come to an agreement with that as well.

Mr. Meyer asked Mr. Tosick if he felt that on the basis of today's discussion that they have enough to talk about for a justification.

Mr. Tosick stated that it would depend on what Scott thinks; he has some ideas that he can relay to him about the effect in this, but maybe that could be addressed by another presentation to the Board. His concern was that it benefits a lot of other people, but he did not see the benefit for the council; some of the points that have been made today would go a long way in convincing him otherwise.

Mr. Meyer asked if Scott had a copy of the feasibility study.

Mr. Tosick stated that they have all of that. He asked if all information related to the river was going to be incorporated in this.

Mr. McNaughton stated that generally speaking they are very open to data sharing and the walls between them are dissolving quickly; as long as there is not a security concern for that data you can get it and generally use it.

Mr. Bishton stated that if the goal is to include anything they could possibly include in this it will be a benefit.

Mr. Thompson stated that this may be a template; they will work the bugs out and refine it and then could be used in other watersheds across the State.

Mr. Tosick asked where the money is going to come from in the future.

Mr. Buechler stated that they will have the architecture in place so it's mainly picking up that service and copying it and changing out the data.

Mr. McNaughton stated that there is some of the architecture in place currently that he believes in the proposal would use a lot of that and then add a lot more to it to make it customized for the application; a lot of the architecture is there from GIS and web portal standpoint.

Mr. Stout stated that they are fairly early in the days of putting these regional things together and this would be a nice demonstration for the next guy so he doesn't wonder if it can be done and how he would do it.

Mr. Tosick asked Mr. McNaughton is he would be the person that ran this thing or has it been determined yet who will take care of it.

Mr. McNaughton stated that he did not believe so; there are a lot of people that are better at creating these things than he is like Plexus and Polis Center. When it comes to hosting and maintenance he offered their services as a last resort so it would not die; they have some similar things in the work for Statewide coordination for this data; this would fit perfectly with this; he would generally like to have this sit with the experts, but if it comes down to crunch time and there is no place to put this he feels that it would be well within IDEM's province to pick it up and keep it going.

Mr. Meyer stated that since he sits on the Citizens Advisory Board for the Trustees he is probably conscious of how the Trustees have to be extremely careful to avoid funding projects that have tremendous goods for the community, but are not strictly inside the consent agreement as it was written; as much as it's going to be wonderful that this will be a demonstration project for the rest of the State and maybe Polis will take the State into a more advanced GIS program over the long haul; that in itself probably won't be an argument that the Trustees can use for justified funding because the consent agreement is not resigned to help anything but where the fish kill occurred. They can sell themselves on it's value and he is just as excited to see the State benefited as everybody else in the room is, but he is afraid that in itself won't help them too much with the Trustees.

Mr. McNaughton stated that he did believe that there are other benefits that they can stand on and bring to their charter and that this can fit well within.

Mr. Thompson stated that the Upper White River is undergoing some changes at the moment that are hopefully better able the organization to sustain itself and not need necessarily a back up support from IDEM or anybody else, but having that in the back pocket can't hurt; some additional funding and re-organization is ongoing that will help; all of this is kind of tied into these efforts.

Mr. Tosick stated that it would be a good idea on their proposal if it ends up that the Upper White River is the entity that will host this, a lot of times in some of the cooperation's that they have dealt with in other projects; if there is a question of how long this entity will be around and able to do this that they have some kind of reverting clause that may be, in the unlikely event that the Upper White River did dismantle that this GIS project would not die with it, would be very important.

Mr. Thompson asked if he meant a letter from IDEM to that effect.

Mr. Tosick stated that he would have to be agreed upon and put in the proposal; a letter would be great, but if they would have that idea that this would be a big benefit for everybody.

Mr. McNaughton stated that this proposal is so open that it could go anywhere; it can sit on many GIS systems and be run and dealt out to the public and continued on; it doesn't have to be spelled out specifically, but just that there would be efforts to keep that going.

Mr. Tosick stated that if it was hosted through Indiana University, through the Upper White River, if you knew it was there you could find it, but how would the average citizen know it existing and how would they know how to find it.

Mr. McNaughton stated that it comes down to marketing a little bit, but also getting with some of the logical places and put a link there.

Mr. Buechler stated that a link could be anywhere.

Mr. Stout stated that know body even needs to know where it is hosted; you put the same links in the same places.

Mr. Thompson asked if they wanted to wait and see if they need to make another presentation at this point; if they do then in the next week or two start making those plans.

Mr. Meyer stated that he feels that this would be the next step; if they feel they have resolved the hosting issue then he believes that they need to determine what the Trustees prefer; do they want to do it in public before then and if so how thorough a presentation would they like; or would they like to do this more privately given the ground that it has been well covered before the Citizens Advisory Committee Members several time previous. He stated that he has sent an e-mail message to Beth Admire to that effect, but he has not heard anything back from her. He asked if Mr. Tosick if he could do anything to help move this decision along; if there is a presentation to be made it may involve several of them and they would like to have plenty of time to get ready so they can do a good job for it.

Mr. Tosick stated that he could talk to Scott today as long as he gets back before he leaves and get his initial reaction; unfortunately Carl is out of town this week and he is usually the person who coordinates more with Beth and John, but he can give them a call. John seems to go with the flow better than the other two.

Mr. Meyer stated that he would put a gentle reminder in Beth's voice mail that she would give him a call back one way or the other on this and he will try to let them know by voice mail what he hears from her; he'll mention in that message that Mike will potentially be saying the same questions as Scott Pruitt and perhaps she and Scott can speak before there is a final answer back to one or both of them.

Mr. McNaughton stated that he would add that if these people still have any questions and would like to contact him for anything as a person that is not on this Board, kind of a disinterested party he would be more than willing to facilitate this and move it along.

Mr. Meyer asked if he caught the drift of this conversation up to this point that they are thinking that the Upper White will host this by way of I. U. Servers, but by using links they will make it possible for people to approach from any of a number of ways including Access Indiana.

Mr. McNaughton stated that he was correct.

Mr. Buechler stated that if there is some reason that Beth or someone feels, Mr. McNaughton had stated that he would host.

Mr. McNaughton stated that if worse comes to worse he would; he doesn't want to be on the hook to take care of everything; he believes that there is enough energy here to keep it going for a while; or it can start somewhere and then move over if worse comes to worse, but he doesn't want to be the sole.

Mr. Meyer stated that he would get his message off to Beth and some time in the next two weeks they will make a decision about a presentation so they can get on the agenda one week before and they would actually be prepared for the presentation. He asked who all should be part of that presentation; should they think that through a little bit now in the event they do in fact need to give one.

Mr. Bishton stated that they would hope that Mr. Buechler would be a part of that; he is sure that someone from his office would be happy to be there as well.

Mr. Buechler stated that he would be happy to do that; the Upper White representation would be key.

Mr. Meyer stated that he would be happy to go as well, but if they get very technical he did not feel adequate; with Mr. Buechler there then that would not be a problem and he could step aside; with sitting on the Advisory Committee it would be like presenting to himself so it may be best if they make more of the introductory remarks and ask favorable questions rather than give the heart of the presentation, but he would do whatever the Trustees prefer that he do in a situation like this or any of them in the room want him to do.

Mr. Bishton stated that they may want to wait to see what the Trustees want and that way if it's going to be more of a private setting then it will be more of a conversation.

Mr. Tosick stated that the Trustees feel like they have a grasp of what the project is and if they ask specific questions it seems like to would be more effective use of their time to ask specific questions to people who know and not worry about listening to another presentation; he would anticipate it being a more informal meeting or phone call; once it comes to that the actual presentation can be very short; he will let them know as soon as he knows.

Mr. Weaver asked if Mr. Kosinski had gotten his questions answered or discussed his interest in being there today.

Mr. Kosinski stated that he didn't have a whole lot of questions he just wanted to make a couple of comments. They as a company do a fair amount of business with a good many of the Counties involved; they are currently hosting, from a GIS web hosting standpoint, Monroe County and Hendricks County; they are in discussion with Johnson County and Madison County about doing the same thing. In addition to hosting their GIS applications they have also done a fair amount of data conversion and mapping work with Madison, Johnson, Henry, Hendricks, Monroe and Clinton Counties. As they progress with putting this thing together, and in reading the proposal he noticed that there were several comments regarding open GIS capability and Counties that have a web GIS presence; their system is going to have to interface with that system and then

those that currently do not have a GIS presence they will end up essentially hosting their GIS application. If Plexis can add any value to their effort let them know and they would be happy to discuss that with them. He can only assume at this point that there will probably be a fair amount of data integration work that is going to need to be done in creating a seamless user interface that's going to take them from one county to the other and the user doesn't really realize that. He hasn't been with this group and doesn't know everything that has happened up to this point, but if they can add any value let them know and they will do what they can.

The meeting was adjourned.

Kenton C. Ward