

Summary of the Nov. 7th Kings Ridge Area Community Meeting

This is a brief summary of the Nov. 7th Kings Ridge Area Community Meeting. There was a good audience of 100+ people that just about filled the large room we had at the Elk's Lodge. Nancy Loving's idea of having music before and after was a nice addition that helped set the mood. Kurt Bauer's maps for people to draw on (what happened to their home during the flood) gave people a way to express themselves before the meeting started. The presentation by Kurt covered the key points about the history and future of the Wonderland Creek Improvement Project. Kurt brought with him a good team of experts (bios listed below) that were able to address the wide range of questions that came up during the Q&A session. After the Q&A, we ended the formal session so people could talk one on one with the City of Boulder experts and examine the detailed map posters that Kurt had provided. One measure of the success was that more than half the audience stayed around after the formal session to learn more. The overall goal of the meeting was mutual learning – for the City of Boulder to learn more about what happened to our neighborhood during the flood and for the Kings Ridge area homeowners to learn more about what the City of Boulder is doing to prevent a future reoccurrence of the flooding in our area. I believe the meeting met that goal.

Some of the key issues discussed:

- Source of all the water – Wonderland Creek has a fairly small watershed up around Wonderland Lake. But during very large storm events, Four Mile Creek overflows and flows into Wonderland Creek beginning near Broadway. And Four Mile Creek has a very large watershed feeding it – Four Mile Canyon. The rain coming down over the Boulder area was not uniform. Accurate determinations are still in progress but while some areas were at less than the 100 year flood level, Four Mile Canyon was very high – maybe at the 500 year flood level.
- Why didn't the flood hazard map show that all of Wonderland Creek was diverted into the Boulder & White Rock ditch? FEMA is the agency that certifies all flood hazard maps and the FEMA rules don't show flood waters in ditches unless the main purpose of the ditch is to carry stormwater. The main purpose of the Boulder & White Rock ditch is for agricultural irrigation so, per the FEMA rules, it was not shown on the flood hazard map.
- Wonderland Creek Improvement Project – This is one of the largest capital improvements for floods that the City has ever taken on. The total estimated project cost is about \$13M. The City has received \$2.9M from the Federal government and \$2M from the Urban Drainage & Flood Control district. The remaining funding for the project is coming from the City's capital improvement fund for floods. The City only has a budget of about \$4M per year for flood mitigation projects. The Wonderland Creek project took several years to fund.
- Will the Wonderland Creek Improvement Project limit the amount of water going into the Boulder & White Rock ditch? - Yes, the project will include a flow control that will limit the amount of water entering the Boulder & White Rock ditch to 135 cubic feet per second, which is the decreed flow set in their very old water rights. By state statues, the ditch companies must maintain their ditches to handle their decreed flow without overflowing.
- Impact on Wonderland Creek east of Foothills Parkway - A flood control improvement project can not create adverse effects downstream. So before the Wonderland Creek Improvement Project is done, there will be an assessment of the flow handing capability of Wonderland Creek east of Foothills Parkway. If dredging is needed to insure that the increased flow won't cause property damage, then it will be dredged.
- Schedule for the completion of the Wonderland Creek Improvement Project? The worst case schedule would be to get the project out for bid by May 31, 2015 (or they will lose the Federal grant money). Add up to 18 months for construction leads to a worst case completion by the end of 2016. Kurt hopes the project will be done sooner than that.

- Why are some of the sump pumps still running so long after the flood? - We had about 16 inches of rain in one week and we usually have 19 inches in a year. So the water in the ground is still slowly going back to its normal state. It could take months to get back to that normal state.
- Why did some of the sewers backup? The stormwater system and the sewer system are separate. But during the flood some of the stormwater infiltrated the sewer system through manholes, etc. This resulted in the sewer system having 4 times more water than normal and exceeding its capacity. There were also blockages in the sewer system due to debris from the flood. The blockages and the volume of water exceeding the capacity caused parts of the sewer systems to back up. It is possible for a plumber to add a sewer backup preventer to your home system. But if they are not well maintained the backup preventers may also cause problems in your home.

The City of Boulder brought handouts to the meeting about the stormwater utility, wastewater collection system, flood recovery FAQ, mold, etc. These handouts (as pdfs) are on the Kings Ridge Area Flood Information web site: <http://noblepark2hoa.com/floodinfo>

Bios of the City of Boulder personnel who attended the meeting:

- Kurt Bauer is a Professional Engineer and certified floodplain manager with over 25 years of flood mitigation experience. He is an engineering project manager with the city and is the manager for the Wonderland Creek Greenways Improvement Project.
- Dave Skuodas is a Senior Project Engineer at the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District. Dave has worked at Urban Drainage for the past 3.5 years, prior to that he was a consultant for 9 years. His duties at Urban Drainage consist of working with local governments, engineers, and contractors to plan, fund, design, build, and maintain improvements along major drainage ways in Boulder County and Adams County.
- Robert Harberg is a Professional Engineer and Certified Floodplain Manager. He is the city's Principal Engineer for Utilities. He has 35 years of utilities engineering experience including 10 years as a private consulting engineer and the last 25 years with the City of Boulder Utilities Division which includes the Water, Wastewater and Stormwater / Flood Management enterprise utilities.
- Kim Hutton is a Water Resources Engineer and Professional Engineer for the City of Boulder Public Works Department. She's been with city for 9 years. She works in city water supply matters including supporting work associated with irrigation ditches.
- Douglas Sullivan is a Professional Engineer with over 25 years engineering experience with water, wastewater and stormwater projects. He is an Engineering Project Manager with the City of Boulder Utilities Division currently managing the City's Wastewater Utility Capital Improvement Program and also the stormwater collection system.
- Chris Trice is a Senior Geographic Information System Specialist, and certified floodplain manager with the city. He is also the lead Geographic Information System Specialist on Boulder County's Type 3 Incident Management Team.

Thanks to Nancy Loving for originating the idea of the community meeting and for all the work she put into organizing the meeting. And thanks to Kurt Bauer for all the effort he put into making this meeting successful.

Thanks,
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