

October 18, 2000

To: Lafayette's Citizens Watershed Board

Dear Board Members:

I feel that in order for this board to come to a final, defensible recommendation for the watershed, all possibilities of use should be addressed, with reasons given for discarding them or for giving them further consideration. I suggest that you get a copy of the zoning, which is Exclusive Farm Use District, and go through all the uses and conditional uses. The Department of Environmental Quality's upcoming assessment and delineation of the watershed should certainly affect the number of possible uses. If it is determined that wells are replenished from water percolating from the surface, then a very conservative stance should be taken in terms of uses considered. If the findings are inconclusive, I feel the same conservative stance should be taken.

As you know, I feel the board has been spending a disproportionate amount of time discussing forestry as a use in the watershed, at the expense, in my opinion, of the discussion of other possible uses. If revenue is the goal of a forest use, and I'm not sure it is, but assuming it is, there are other possible revenue-generating uses to be considered.

This watershed is zoned Exclusively Farm Use. The obvious question is whether agriculture makes better sense than forestry. My research is showing that agriculture is more difficult on the sloping soils which are plentiful in the watershed; erosion control must be aggressively pursued. And agriculture causes yearly disturbance as opposed to the longer cycles of forestry. However, these are issues which may not matter if the Department of Environmental Quality's findings determine that surface activity has no effect on the city's water. I think you have the expertise within the board to determine, on an acre basis, which of the two have the potential for generating higher revenue, and thus to determine whether agriculture should be further investigated.

A new term for me is "agriforestry" which is the mixing of crops with forestry on a smaller scale than we typically see commercially. There are flat areas which could be cropped until such time as trees are large enough to cause considerable shade. These areas could then be planted with more shade-tolerant tree species, or left to develop naturally, either way contributing to more diversity in the forest. Again, I think the expertise is available within the board to determine the viability of such a program.

Further utility development is another possibility: As you know, I'm checking into communications towers. And I haven't gotten very far on that yet. I'm also checking into wind-generated power, which is appearing unlikely, so I should be able to put that possibility to bed soon.

A significant portion of the watershed is not given a "high-value farmland" rating by the county's Planning Department. This area, therefore, has more potential use options. This area could be the future site of Lafayette's dog pound or public golf course, according to the zoning. But significantly, I think, this low-value farmland could also be a campground. This is an area appropriate consideration if the DEQ determines that surface activities do not affect the well water.

I think it's important that all this be put to paper in order to justify the final recommendation, whatever it may be, in order to show that everything has been considered, nothing overlooked, and to show that the final recommendation is the clear response and how that conclusion has been reached.

Value should not be seen only in terms of revenue generated for the city. There is tremendous value in the watershed as a recreational outlet for the community. This is a value which will not show up in any ledger anywhere, but the value is no less significant. The residents of this relatively poor community could, and should, be reaping the psychological, emotional, and spiritual benefits afforded by the close proximity of a beautiful, natural ecosystem. The city of the future could be pointing with pride to their significant natural resource; the city of the present could take credit for its establishment. Whether through an official park or the previous unofficial public access, or some other system, I think this should be the board's highest consideration of compatible watershed uses.

Bob Long, of CH2MHill, asked at an early watershed meeting how to attach a value to recreation. I'm suggesting a way, and I think it's a very conservative approach: The state, due to pressure on its own park system, has instituted a fee of \$3 per vehicle per visit to any state park. Three dollars is a low value for a couple of hours of outdoor recreation, but this is a system that's in place and operating. Using city-supplied data, I have generated numbers over a sixty-year period. I've used population increases of 2%, 3%, and 4% annually, and a quantity of one trip by each household to the watershed per year, again, to be conservative.

The numbers are nearly \$300,000 for a 2% annual population increase, more than \$400,000 for a 3% increase, and over \$600,000 for a 4% increase.

Again, this is conservative in value and competitive with a timber harvest. Revenue generated from a clearcut of a well-managed forestry program on 45 acres in the same time period can be expected to bring about \$500,000. I think the question is whether the city is more interested in having that actual revenue from timber or in having its community realize an even greater value in the recreational use of its natural resources. My goal is not to quibble about the numbers, but to drive home the point that recreational use should be a major consideration. And I think security issues can certainly be handled and are worthy of investigation given the high value of this use.

I've given you a spread sheet with that information.

I wanted to tell you that access to the watershed isn't just a concern for those few of us who have been outspoken about it. I called everyone who had signed up at the July watershed meeting of 1999 and spoke to one woman who was so dejected about what had happened that she hadn't been back to a meeting and wasn't going to be here tonight, either. She described herself as living very close to the watershed and so she was concerned about it and attended last summer's meeting. Then she said she was told she didn't matter and that she couldn't go to the watershed anymore. I commiserated with her, because I heard at that meeting, as well, that my opinions and values didn't matter.

Is there more that the watershed board could be doing in terms of repairing the damage done to the community? I can think of five people with strong opinions who are not here tonight because they are fed up; they don't feel that city government represents or even cares about them. Their feelings extend to every arm of government. I am concerned that a final recommendation from this board will not prevent the type of backlash that occurred last summer if deep, resentful issues in the community are not addressed. Perhaps a door-to-door survey or mailing to really get to issues that could be potential roadblocks to whatever future progress is in store for the watershed.

I would like to see some sort of education program considered as part of the final recommendation. Perhaps an interpretive trail, a study of forest regeneration following clearcutting, an experiment in total nonchemical use, or whatever is appropriate given the final recommendation.

I'd like to see wildlife factored into every consideration.

Although I feel more strongly about some of these possibilities than others, and feel all uses should have an airing, I don't fully endorse any particular use yet. I'll have a final position when a thorough examination of options has been made. However, if that is not to happen, then my position will remain where it is now, which

is that this community should give maximum protection to this area for the ecosystem which cleanses our water and air, and for the creatures which live here.

I want you to know that I think this is a neat opportunity for the city and an exciting thing to be involved in. An area of land this large, and this close to the population center presents many possibilities. However, I feel some healing within the community needs to be addressed before real progress will be made.

I can't find a better place to put this story, so I'll end with it: Apparently the issue of clearcutting the watershed for revenue has come up before. Jimmy Schmauder, former mayor, told me that in 1969 the city council decided not to do it. Councilor Emanuel Gill went so far as to say "not in my lifetime!" According to Mr. Schmauder, Mr. Gill is no longer alive.

Thanks for your hard work up to this point.

Carol Paddock

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