

Watershed Working Group

14 May 2014, 8:30-10am

Attendees: **BECQ** – Kathy Yuknavage, Robbie Greene, Jihan Buniag, Ryan Okano, Erik Lash, Kaitlin Mattos
NOAA – Dana Okano, **USDA** – Pam Aguon, **Zoning** – Maryann Arriola, Therese Ogumoro

Meeting Notes:

- I. Opening, introductions
- II. Main speaker: Therese Ogumoro – Zoning Laws and Regulations (*see attached presentation*)
 - a. Zoning laws don't specifically address watersheds, but do address land use which relates to watershed management
 - b. Zoning map shows most of island is zoned grey = rural; maps of uses and zones can be downloaded at <http://www.zoning.gov.mp/sec.asp?secID=6>
 - c. 2013 Zoning Code improvements include:
 - i. Enhancements for tourism – screening around trash bins, limited fence heights, storage/trash must be kept out of sight
 - ii. Single family residences are allowed in almost all districts
 - iii. Cargo containers are treated as permanent structures in many cases
 - iv. Some new retail services are allowed in village/residential
 - v. Sidewalks are narrower, changes to parking requirements
 - vi. Clarification that 150 from shoreline is under CRM jurisdiction except for parking, which is regulated by Zoning
 - vii. Within sensitive areas (150 from shoreline), development must be as far inland as possible and must comply with federal and local agency requirements
 - viii. Rural zone regulations are aimed at avoiding danger to human health and safety, preserving scenic views, reducing loss of endangered and threatened species, protecting groundwater and renewal energy development
 - d. For piggeries: >5 pigs are considered intensive "agricultural" use, whereas <5 is a farm. Pigs (farms or agriculture) are not allowed in village residential or village commercial zones
 - e. The 18-71 Nuisance Abatement Act is in the Senate now after being passed by the house, which will allow Zoning to address properties that are abandoned, nuisances, and environmental/health hazards
 - f. Questions from the group:
 - i. Is it possible to provide tax breaks for rehabilitation of abandoned buildings instead of new developments? *Yes, this is something the Zoning Board could pursue in the future to improvement development on island.*
 - ii. Does Zoning have sustainable funding from the fees it collects? *All money collected from permits or violations stays within the program to fund future Zoning programs and personnel.*

iii. Does the Zoning Law apply on Tinian and Rota? *No, the Zoning law only has jurisdiction on Saipan, since 1993.*

III. Project Updates:

- a. Jihan (BECQ): Laolao Bay Pride Campaign is continuing with social marketing, outreach, school visits, watershed hikes, the April Environmental Expo, tree plantings, and an Erosion Control Training with 12 participants. More plantings are planned for June, along with BMP installation at Forbidden Island with MVA and Rep. Agulto
- b. Kathy (BECQ): Currently beginning to address red flags and stream pollution in Achugao. DPH can no longer assist due to manpower limitations. Need to get enough manpower and time to go door to door to talk to residents about health and environmental issues.
- c. Maryann (Zoning): Continuing with outreach and enforcement about the new Zoning laws. Inspections are occurring across the island and enforcement at schools and other community venues
- d. Dana (NOAA): Interested in the latest Army Corps updates about the sediment basins proposed along Middle Road (20 years ongoing). Determined that Lainie at CRM may have latest update. Environet contractor submitted recent plans to CRM and Army Corps and is waiting for local authorities to determine funding and whether project will move forward.

IV. Garapan CAP status report:

- a. Garapan storm drain project has been stalled. DPW and BECQ cleaned first phase along Orchid Street from Winchell's to Fiesta before stopping. Need DPW to identify funding and possibly contract rest of work. Plan is to clean all chambers, inlets and underground pipes from the Paseo south. Need to do north side too after discussing wetland issues with AMP. Sonya Dancoe left DPW and Vincent Cabrera is the new federal highway contact.
- b. Trash removal program is also on hold while MVA's Destination Enhancement determines their ability to assist with funding and their own needs (i.e. street sweeping). Business owners are sympathetic to trash problems and generally interested in compliance based on door-to-door visits.
- c. Recent presence in Garapan Core district has allowed for detection and follow-up on enforcement issues by BECQ, DEH, Zoning and others. Need to examine other opportunities to increase enforcement presence, possibly through "rangers"? Addressing joint capacity enforcement is a priority that came out of the NOAA capacity assessment performed last year.

V. Talakhaya CAP status report:

- a. Updates requested on how many years are left of phase 1 planting (securing soils with grasses). Possibly 1-2 years remaining, final decision pending discussions with Rota Forestry/USDA experts. Phase 2 will include planting more natives and other trees.
- b. Possibly reviewing Talakhaya Conservation Action Plan this fall on Rota.

VI. Next meeting

- a. August 13, 2014 at 8:30am
- b. Recommended speakers: FOG (Derek, DEQ); 2000 Garapan Project (Tim Brasuell, USDA)