

**Little Cuyahoga River  
Balanced Growth Plan Meeting**  
Wednesday, May 29, 2013  
10:30 a.m.

Goodyear Branch Library  
60 Goodyear Boulevard  
Akron, OH 44305

**Meeting Summary**

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

- The meeting began with a brief summary of previous work done by NEFCO for the Little Cuyahoga River Balanced Growth Program Plan.
- Introduction of all meeting attendees.

**II. Water Sentinel Program – Sierra Club**

- Amanda Keith and Jack O'Toole presented "Little Cuyahoga River Water Quality Data 2012/2013"
- The graphics for the presentation were prepared by Sierra Club's Clean Water Fellow Alex Litofsky.
- The goals of the program is to monitor 36 sites once every 3 months for chemical and visual parameters. The data is provided to NEFCO for inclusion in their Balanced Growth Plan. The results will also be used to increase public awareness at various events.
- Over the past year 12 volunteers, led by Lead Water Sentinels Mary Trent and Jack O'Toole, collected the data.
- Maps of the sampling locations were shown. Also a graph of the 2012 rainfall record in Akron was displayed.
- Graphs of the results for water temperature, conductivity, pH, and nitrate were shown. Ms. Keith pointed out how the limitations of some of their sampling equipment were displayed on their graphs. For example, the pH strips used by the volunteers only showed pH values up to 8. Therefore, 71 pH readings were shown as having pH values above 8, but they could not determine how much above a pH of 8 the readings were with their current equipment.
- The results for all the chemical and physical parameters were shown by subwatershed. Ms. Keith pointed out that none of the watersheds were shown to be significantly better or worse than the other watershed based on their first year's results.
- Ms. Keith cautioned that this is the first year of sampling for the Sierra Club and there is little data from previous monitoring efforts for comparison. Ms. Keith did compare their results with Ohio EPA's 1996 monitoring results for water temperature, conductivity, pH, and nitrate. 1996 was the last year Ohio EPA assessed the watershed.

- In general, Ohio EPA samples for nitrate were higher and conductivity lower than the results attained by the Sierra Club.
- The next steps for the program are to improve the monitoring, training, and data collection methods by the volunteers. They will also examine the usefulness of the current parameters and determine if there are more useful parameters to monitor.
- They will also be conducting side-by-side monitoring with Ohio EPA in 2013 at select sites.
- A question was asked about the subwatersheds used to display the sampling location and results. Eric Akin from NEFCO said the watershed boundaries Sierra Club used are based on the boundaries used by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). He said he will work with the Sierra Club improve the mapping of the sampling sites.

### **III. Northeast Ohio Planning Overview – Maia Peck, NEFCO**

- Ms. Peck gave a brief presentation titled “Planning Efforts: Little Cuyahoga River Watershed.”
- Ms. Peck said multiple planning efforts are taking place in the watershed utilizing various implementation tools.
- A goal of NEFCO’s Balanced Growth Plan is to be consistent with these other planning efforts.
- Local planning is being done to various degrees in the watershed by cities, villages, and townships. This planning is the basis for local zoning, capital improvements, etc.
- The Northeast Ohio Sustainable Community Consortium (NEOSCC) is conducting planning on a twelve county basis to encourage more efficient development patterns and community investments. Ms. Peck urged attendees to get involved with this effort.
- NEOSCC has compiled and mapped various planning data including population trends, land use, and zoning. This data can be useful in developing balanced growth plans.
- Portage County is developing a visioning plan to create an image of Portage County for development.
- Portage County has also mapped priority areas for protection with potential measures and actions.
- The Summit County Plan provides basis for subdivision regulations and riparian setback protecting natural resources.
- NEFCO completed the Middle Cuyahoga River Watershed Action Plan in 2012. Many of the communities in the Little Cuyahoga River Watershed are also in the Middle Cuyahoga River basin. For these communities there needs to be consistency between the two watershed planning efforts.

#### **IV. Balanced Growth Work Session - Determining Priority Areas**

##### Community Priority Survey

- Eric Akin from NEFCO passed out the latest version of the Community Priority Survey for the group to review and fill out.
- Mr. Akin said the survey will be distributed at meetings and events to help determine the development and conservation priorities for watershed communities. The survey will eventually be available on-line at NEFCO's website.
- It was suggested that Google Forms has a good on-line survey tool NEFCO should consider.
- NEFCO will use the results from the survey to map priority areas for review by the communities.

##### Future Meetings

- Mr. Akin asked the meeting attendees what format or information would be useful for upcoming Little Cuyahoga River meetings.
- It was suggested the NEFCO staff provide a summary of completed balanced growth plans. Specifically how others have determined and mapped priority areas. Mr. Akin said he has tried to avoid using approaches developed by other entities because the balanced growth process is very flexible. He said he wants the communities of the Little Cuyahoga River watershed to use their own process to determine priority areas. However, if reviewing what others have already done will help with determining priority areas in the watershed, then NEFCO will provide summaries of two or three completed balanced growth plans at a future meeting.
- The group requested a site visit to the City of Akron's Little Cuyahoga River Restoration Project near the new Goodyear Headquarters. Mr. Akin said he would schedule a site visit for the next meeting.

#### **V. Watershed Updates**

- No updates from members.

#### **VI. Next Meeting**

- Site Visit: Tuesday, July 9, 2013, at 99 Seiberling Street, Akron, OH 44312 (parking lot next to the Little Cuyahoga River).
- Start Time: 1:30 p.m.