

What Good Are Basic Facts If They Are Not Factual?

Among the documents sent to all WFCAs members by the Board in their 11/11/22 e-mail is "Pond Project Summary.pdf". The last of the 3 subsections of that document is simply titled "Basic Facts". Some of their basic facts conflict with the truth concerning the stream channel option. Point "a" recounts the fact that ponds 1 and 2 were recently renovated (i.e., ~2016). Those two ponds will likely need to be dredged soon, since all retention ponds require periodic maintenance.

Point "b" attempts to sway any wafflers away from the stream channel option to the pond renovation plan. Never in my time as chair of the WFCAs Pond Committee nor while on the WFCAs Board did I hear anyone suggest that the stream channel option would saddle us with a million-dollar debt. And never was it suggested by PE Andy Knust that the bridges should be removed. Instead, the stream channel design put forth by Mr. Knust specifically left the two existing bridges and the understructures intact.

Point "c" speaks to the need for extra permits, engineering plans, and landscaping if the stream channel option were taken. I sincerely hope that the WFCAs Board does not intend to forgo obtaining the necessary permits, whichever option is chosen. The Davey Report, commissioned when current Board member Ted Boardman was president of the WFCAs, specifically warns of the dangers of proceeding without permits on projects involving waterways under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers. On page 9 of the report are these statements: "Failure to perform agency coordination could lead to a violation notice mandating construction activity stop immediately and require remediation. Violations are very costly and burdensome to the landowner." It is true that early costs of eliminating weeds from a properly installed rain garden are higher than mowing the area, but within five years the maintenance costs should be much less. Dredging two of our largest ponds (#3 and #4) is not a cheap option, and there are landscaping costs to bear even if the ponds are renovated. No one is happy with the aesthetics of the areas around ponds #1 and #2 since 2016, not to mention the weed patches around the other ponds. The statement that "... water could back up and stagnant (*sic*) in pond 4" if the stream channel is constructed has been repeatedly refuted, and it is embarrassing to see that our elected leaders would again troop it out in defense of the plan to renovate the ponds.

Point "d" maintains that the option to convert the ponds to a stream channel was predicated on reduced maintenance costs. In truth, it largely emerged from the advice of knowledgeable people, including City Engineer Phil Peden, Layna Thrush (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), PE Andy Knust (Bledsoe, Riggert, Cooper, James), and professional landscape architect Charles Steele. The costs to put our two largest ponds (#3 and #4) on a reasonable dredging schedule are not insignificant. From 1/1/2008 to 9/11/2018, the total maintenance cost for all ponds was \$273,581.81. I challenge anyone to tell me that was adequate, given the state of the ponds by 2019 that has led us to the current plans.

Point "e" blatantly states that both surveys of WFCAs homeowner preferences resulted in pond renovation being the winner. Reasonable people should never base a statement of support on such flawed input. A significant portion of the eligible voters, for whatever reason, chose not to vote for either option in the first poll. The WFCAs Board voted 3-2 on 1/11/22 to drop the second survey and ignore the results to date after 11/15/2021, thus also negating the statement by the 2021 Board sent to all WFCAs members on 7/11/21: "Now that we have the pond design and recommendations from the engineer it will be up to the membership to vote on the future of the pond i.e. whether they will remain as wet ponds, dry streams or a combination." At least give us the vote totals!