

EDAW INC

601 PRINCE STREET
ALEXANDRIA VIRGINIA
22314
TEL 703 836 1414
FAX 703 549 5869
www.edaw.com

TO Kevin Wheeler, Tammy Noble, Tracy Hatmaker, Butch Seidle, Mike Reese
FROM Andrea Sweigart
DATE June 27, 2005
CC Beth Clark, Team
SUBJECT June 21, 2005 Meeting Summary of Comments
FILE NAME 050627_June Meeting Summary

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

EMH&T
MSI DESIGN
SCHOTTESTEIN ZOX &
DUNN
TRANS ASSOCIATES
THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

This memo summarizes the community input received during the June 21, 2005 public meeting for the Big Darby Accord. The meeting was held at Alton Hall Elementary School in Prairie Township. An Open House period from 5 to 7 PM was followed by a presentation and small group exercise. Overall, 108 people signed in for the meeting. It is estimated about 25 to 40 people did not sign.

The meeting format provided a brief question and answer period, an opportunity to write a statement about the future of the watershed (using a handout provided), and small group exercises to discuss issues and concerns that were documented on flip charts by teams of facilitators. Participants were also given comment sheets to submit any other ideas or suggestions. The remainder of this memo summarizes:

1. Comments (from Comment Sheets)
 2. Statements about the Future
 3. Small Group Exercise (recorded during the group discussions)
-

1. Comments:

- Science and green technology should be the key, as design and building standards developed should be mindful of clustering development and reducing impervious surfaces. Develop funding mechanism to compensate jurisdictions that place land in protection and thus remove it for tax base.
 - It is very important that Metro Parks, Columbus City and Prairie Township work together to define the active park needs_of the Westland area and to identify pieces of land that would be appropriate for these purposes. For example, are there areas in highly sensitive environmental locations that could be used for community or recreation centers and athletic fields? Would this use be more protective of the areas than other development?
 - Your presentation was great. But in some townships if we wait for sewer and water or other services from Columbus it will take many, many years.
-

2. Future of the Watershed – Statement

Participants were asked to provide a written response to the following question:

IN 10 TO 20 YEARS

“With the Big Darby Accord Mission Statement in mind, please write a brief summary of what you hope to see within the Accord study area in 10 to 20 years, once the plan is implemented.”

- I hope to see educated land owners within the development area. Hope to see that landscaping would play a huge part in developing along the Darby – in that there would be a prevention of invasive species introduced along the watershed – homeowners to understand the precious resource that Darby Creek holds. Metro Parks make a cooperative effort in education land owners.
- Corridors and concentrations of density centered on neighborhood schools, with connecting corridors of greenways and natural spaces.
- Would like to see the Darby still a unique stream system and viewable stream with controlled growth that does not impact the environment or the stream. Infrastructure that is balanced to the growth in the area.
- Overall land area for parks will remain relatively unchanged with some zones set aside for agriculture and sub-urban production and development. These areas would be placed mostly in the north where they are needed.
- Documented improvement in the water quality and the number of health of species within the study area done to the participating (in terms of unified standards for protecting the Darby Watershed) by all jurisdictions involved.
- Farm fields, woods. Exactly like it does now.
- I would like to see a responsible plan that protects Darby but does not severely limit development. We need to establish reasonable protection corridors, erosion control standards, stormwater management policies but still allow development.
- Much more significant use of farm/village concept throughout the rural areas of Brown, Prairie and Pleasant Townships. Would not like to see development of a very large portion into areas in excess of 2-3 units per acre. Limited extension westward of central sewer and sewage treatment plants built in the watershed.
- Most of existing open space would remain open, either as farmland or mostly along streams, parkland. Development would be away from streams mostly in existing communities but also in new clusters—villages with a mix of housing, shops and other businesses that people can walk to.
- No additional degradation of water quality, stream habitat or biological diversity in the Clover Groff Ditch, Hamilton Ditch, Hellbranch Run, Big & Little Darby Creeks. Restoration of those stream segments currently not meeting their aquatic life use designations to a full attainment condition.
- Sound land use that provides for local needs while including need for clean water and intact stream corridors for the health and enjoyment of local residents.
- The same pristine creek that I have walked in, canoed on and taken pictures of for over 30 years. A rural residential area that still embraces agriculture, woodlands and open prairies.

- A vast natural park with no development within view of the streams, creeks and forests. Dense villages with all necessary daily service at the center of each, including schools, shops and active parks. Roadway system which maintains rural character. Large farms beside wooded preserves.
- I don't wish to see the Darby area developed into just another dumpy Midwestern town that uses every available acre for shopping strips, franchised restaurants and poorly planned residential areas with lots of traffic congestion (a.k.a the typical development of central Ohio). Some cluster development, community minded, with lots of open space and preserved farms by purchasing development rights would be preferred. Protection of corridors and wetlands is paramount.
- Development is confined to designated areas (growth boundary). Remaining areas are left as green space, included wetland restoration on hydric soils. Area is noted as an "ecological reserve" and attracts visitors throughout Midwest who are desperate for green space in a Midwestern farm/sprawl/desert.
- A mix of development, including commercial and multi-family, sufficient to provide tax revenue to support the infrastructure; road and street maintenance; fire and police protection; school capacity; thus avoiding making the area a slum.
- Development that is sensitive to its natural surroundings and established in harmony with nature. Technology will be present in all buildings, design and materials. Watershed areas necessary to keep clean and safe drinking water. Regional impact and ecological importance of the area is recognized and preserved.
- We hope to see development that is well planned and organized. Moratoriums should be illegal since it prevents the land owner from selling. After all, the land belongs to the owner and not the township, county or state. I hope the moratorium ends this year. We have been trying for 6 years to sell our farm and have lost sales because of moratoriums by everyone involved in the Darby Watershed.
- Very limited development, large area dedicated to parkland.
- Excellent fire and EMS coverage and response.
- A healthy rich river system mixed with modest, conservation oriented development.
- Active parkland with sufficient athletic fields for the population of youth and adults, available to all jurisdictions. A recreation center, which was planned collaboratively by all jurisdictions in Westland area to meet needs of all ages.
- Development patterns representing fairness to all, not to reduce total densities but to preserve environment with "sound practices".
- A multi-jurisdictional agreement that provides adequate parkland (including community parks), standard commercial design, more upscale development. I would also like to see areas preserved as green space for conservation of the natural environment.
- Connected parkland along waterways as well as east-west greenways to connect parks. Conservation development. Farmland preservation.
- To protect the property rights of landowners in this area. To develop home sites and provide opportunities for homeownership in high-end or upscale developments.

- A realistic approach to high quality development which takes into account the rights of the individual property owners within the study area. If this requires tax payer dollars to compensate for lost value perhaps that should be explored.
- Growth will occur, new septic system installations need to be upgraded to types that eliminate run-off- mound systems- others? Also sewage treatment plants need to be strategically planned for the neighborhoods that will be built.
- The Big and Little Darby Watershed is recognized nationally as an environmentally friendly and successful development concept. A mixture of conservation development, farm village and nature focused landscapes are prized by the community for the commitment to perpetual protection of the unique diversity.
- Facilitate future development, including residential and park facilities and open green space.
- Permanently protected – 100-year floodplain, extensive riparian corridors, preserved and green space connectivity. Imperviousness of less than 25%. Restoration plans in active stream channel reaches, wetlands and levee removal. Primarily rural character.
- The Big Darby and its associated tributaries will be a stable, thriving natural habit area where current species flourish. The area's jurisdictions will have resolve a unified, codified set of policies, regulations and standards of compliance that are capable of being enforced and compliance maintained.
- A mix of land uses, resulting in a model of how appropriately regulated development actually preserved the Darby.
- Clustered housing, multi-family and single. Large areas set aside to protect the main stream in a park-like wild corridor. Generous riparian areas for every tributary. Minimal roads across Big and Little Darby. People visiting the area for recreation, respite, renewal and reflection.
- I would like to see that the Darby Creek Watershed is preserved in a natural state as much as possible. Public policy should be used to facilitate the creek's preservation. I expect restriction on development, utilities and transportation as need to achieve the goal of preservation.
- Development occurring that allows growth and permanence where people will develop appreciation for lasting landscapes that are supported by commercial and residential development.
- Environmentally responsible development projects that balance environmental protection, reasonable densities with utility extensions serviced with central sewage and public works.
- People fishing along Hellbranch and other streams. Environment sensitive areas to be left alone and areas that often flood be seriously looked at, such as Lake Alton on Alton Road and down on Tamaro/island area.
- I would like to see parks, homes, shopping and commercial sites integrated with roads, trails bicycle paths so that people can live, shop and have recreational facilities all within walking distance where cars are not needed.
- A good mix of development but with lots of trees and ponds in each development. Also trees along the major roads.
- Attainment of EWH in Hellbranch Run. Return of Big Darby Creek's rare species. Full attainment of EWH in upper Big Darby. Permanent assurance of lasting protection of Big Darby and Hellbranch Run.

- Create a planned development area that can serve as a model for the entire nation. Having the best of environmental sensitivity and also excellent economics.
- 90% of the sensitive areas permanently protected. 100% of the perennial stream corridors protected. 10,000 more acres of parkland. Conservation development as the standard in all jurisdictions.
- Very little development and a wild river running through it.

3. Small Group Exercises

Meeting participants separated into seven small groups (groups were assigned during the sign-in process) in various areas of the school. Each small group had 2 facilitators to ask questions and record comments. Participants were asked to “list key factors and concerns about the future of the watershed related to developing an agreed upon future land use plan and implementation strategy for the Big Darby Accord.” This section transcribes the notes taken during the small group session; in some cases words were added to form sentences or for clarification. Following discussion, green and red dots were distributed and participants were asked to use green dots to identify those ideas they strongly supported and red dots to identify those ideas which they did not feel were as important. Dot summaries are included where applicable.

Group 1

- Rules should be based on science not politics – 7 green
- Increased densities are needed in the townships – 4 green
- There should be a cost benefit analysis as part of this study (there is a cost for additional regulations) – 4 green
- Someone already owns the land; they should be paid to protect the land – 1 green
- There is concern about how the townships are going to pay for and provide services in the future – 1 green
- What is the value of keeping water quality high? Who benefits? – 1 green
- Consensus on density should be reached for the entire area – 1 green
- Educate people about the definition of sprawl – 1 green
- Do not poison the watershed
- Explain the impacts of farming vs. development
- Impacts for future scenarios need to be included
- Regulations should be based on science
- Development is not necessarily bad for Darby
- Layers of approval are difficult for developers
- Being able to walk to services and amenities is good

Group 2

- A designated wetlands program that includes restoration – 3 green
- 100 year flood plain should be protected not debatable/negotiable – 2 green
- OEPA needs to be extensively involved – 2 green
- Protect/ensure the protection of endangered species – 1 green
- Protection of private property rights – 1 red & 1 green
- A mechanism to compensate land owners – 1 green
- An implementable plan – 1 green
- Storm water management is a key issue – 1 green
- A process that concludes with an agreement – 1 green

- Restoration should be a priority before allowing for new development – 1 green
- The Hellbranch is in decline, this needs to be reversed. – 1 green
- Mixed use should be considered as a revenue source for providing infrastructure support (fire, schools, police, roads, sewer) – 2 red
- Extend sewer as long as done properly is ok – 1 red
- Develop a super-regional ecological area within the Midwest – 1 red & 1 green
- An agreed-upon and consistent approach is needed
- An on-going watershed forum that revisits agreements long term is desired
- Low cost resources for inspection, review, etc should be considered.
- Landowner incentives for conservation are needed
- Look at transfer of development rights to address private property issues
- Other features (besides the floodplain) should be protected using a set minimum criteria
- Building permits need to be evaluated more closely (by all jurisdictions) in reference to stormwater management and water
- There should be an analysis of impervious surfaces at sub watershed level
- There is concern about shallow wells; new wells are constructed twice as deep
- Opportunities for dialogue beyond 3 minutes are desired
- Do not reinvent the wheel

Group 3

- Total protection of the 100 year floodplain and partial protection of the 500 year floodplain - 10 green
- There should be universal development standards for the entire area and standards should related to the sensitivity of the area – 5 green
- Every jurisdiction should adopt and enforce consistent standards, developers want guidance – 5 green
- Sewer service needs must be resolved in a timely fashion to meet the needs of the developer – 4 green
- Guidelines should be flexible and not too prescriptive – 2 green
- Inter-jurisdictional cooperation is important (three creeks park) – 2 green
- There is a need for active parkland – are environmentally sensitive areas appropriate for active park areas? – 2 green & 1 red
- There is a disconnect between development and schools; this should be considered as part of the plan – 1 green
- Areas with high groundwater recharge should be identified and opportunities to naturally recharge groundwater should be pursued – 1 green
- Need to reduce peak storm water flows – 5 red
- All community facilities (fire, police, parks, roads) should keep pace with development – 2 red
- Protection of the floodplain is important from a resident, developer, and environmental perspective

Group 4

- A parcel owner needs to be able to show maintenance of /or improvements of water quality outputs (environmental quality) of site pre-to-post development. If they can meet the standards they should be able to develop the site – 5 green
- Creation of broad based funding mechanisms for implementation 3 green & 1 red

- Infrastructure improvements are needed, including improvements to the transportation network – 3 green
- Reasonable densities that warrant utilities/infrastructure – 2 green
- Measurable outcomes for performance based development standards – 2 green
- Development should be compatible across jurisdictional boundaries – 2 green
- Provide adequate community parks – 1 green
- There is a potential to explore remediation in exchange for development rights – 1 green
- Conservation districts need to be explained – 2 red
- Consider park “banks” that cross jurisdictional boundaries – 2 red
- Consistent conservation district zoning is desired
- Central sewers are the best way to go
- Development should be based on community needs and not be developer driven
- Development standards should be created

Group 5

- Focus development in appropriate areas and minimize the impact on the environment – 6 green
- Remove threats to the environment – 4 green
- Define the value of property rights – 3 green
- Maintain and achieve the goal of Exceptional Warm Water Habitat – 3 green
- Provide economic incentive to protect the natural/rural/ecological/environments – 3 green
- Determine how much impervious surface can be permitted without further degradation – 2 green
- What is the political will to accept the recommendations? – 2 green
- Get all jurisdictions to agree – 2 green
- Develop town centers, villages, mixed use nodes – 1 green
- Agree to protect all the biological assemblage – 1 green
- Protect the riparian areas – 1 red & 2 green
- Find a means to assist property owners to maintain septic systems – 3 red
- Reassess the environmental impact of agriculture and find the best management systems to reduce the impact on the environment
- What is the science behind the distance of the protected riparian corridor?

Group 6

- Develop a Greenway system that incorporates Metro Parks, connects woods and trails and major tributaries, and establishes east-west connections between the Big Darby and Hellbranch – 5 green
- Protect all medium and high sensitivity areas as permanent greenspace – 4 green
- Consider costs of protecting land and identify a funding mechanism – 3 green
- Density should consider design, character of development and mixed use and should not only focus on numbers – 2 green
- Consider the unique characteristics of the Darby, including Biology – 2 green
- Development should be centered on schools and neighborhood centers – 2 green
- Implementation should provide a mechanism to compensate winners and losers, and transferable development rights – 1 green

- Consider wetland mitigation areas on hydric soils. A wetland program could be developed in the plan and provide incentives for creation of wetlands. Other green, low impact development principles should be part of plan – 1 green
- Create a Watershed Conservancy district – 3 red
- Consider upland development, north of the study area – 2 red
- Provide open space, a mix of parkland, and agriculture
- This study could provide a potential model for other counties
- What is “maximum occupancy” of study area?
- Consider costs of providing services to low density areas

Group 7

- Resolve jurisdictional issues (establish a framework/mechanism to reach consensus) – 5 green
- Establish a minimum threshold for environmental goals – 5 green
- Create a system of incentives to meet development goals (conservation/easements/density/bonuses) – 5 green
- Use best management practices in development – 3 green
- The Plan needs to be scientifically credible – 2 green
- Address storm water treatment from development – 1 green
- Develop uniform standards/assumption/definitions – 1 green
- Economic feasibility should be part of the plan – 1 green
- Be flexible in changing assumptions – 1 red
- Create a strong foundation for other areas in the Darby watershed but outside of this study – 1 red
- Need to meet clean water act regulations
- Have adaptive management plan and ongoing monitoring
- Provide environmental education for residents