



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

Summary of June 4, 2012 Meeting

Regional Water Needs and Supply Described to DPCAC

The Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) was given a comprehensive introduction to water planning for this multi-county region when Ron Neighbors, Vice Chair of the Region H Water Planning Group Executive Committee and head of the Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District spoke to community and industry representatives in early June. Readers may view his slides at www.deerparkcac.org.

“Drought drives water planning in Texas,” said Neighbors. While 2011 was the worst since records were first kept, six years of serious drought in the 1950s led the Texas Legislature to create the Texas Water Development Board and charge it with water planning. Initially, demand was met by building reservoirs. State water planning now begins at the regional level, involves stakeholders from a wide variety of interest groups, and includes strategies beyond reservoir construction.

In simple terms, planning involves determining how much water we need, how much we have, and what to do if we don’t have enough. Plans cover a 50-year period, are updated every 5 years, and cover both surface water and groundwater resources. The 2012 State Water Plan is a compilation of 16 regional plans, including the 2011 Region H plan, of which Deer Park is a part.

The 2011 regional plan shows little change in existing water supplies from 2010 to 2060 while significant population growth will greatly increase demands over the next 5 decades. In Deer Park, modest increases in population and demand are projected.

Like many other cities, Deer Park obtains its water by contract with the City of Houston. It travels from Lake Livingston by river, canals, and pipelines. City Manager Jay Stokes described recent changes in the cities’ contract, some of which are still being negotiated. Of concern to the city is the age of its water and sewage treatment infrastructure.

The Region H plan also analyzes trends in the industrial and oil and gas sectors. The 2011 plan projects continued growth but also anticipates that conservation and reuse of water by industry will increase over time.

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Asked afterward to list some of the lessons learned, DPCAC members said water conservation and reuse by both community and industry will be important to meeting future water needs. They suggested the planning group and the city help educate residents about how to conserve.

Work on the 2016 plan is already underway, with updates of population estimates, computer models, and other tools to project demand and supply. Neighbors emphasized that Region H welcomes input from communities, businesses, and other stakeholders.

DPCAC is a forum for community-industry dialogue. It meets again on Mon. August 27, 2012. Chad Burke, President of the Economic Alliance Houston Port Region, will discuss results of a recent commodity flow study related to Bayport Container Port traffic. To RSVP for the 6 p.m. meeting, contact Bob Pennacchi at 281/884-0239. For more information about DPCAC, see www.deerparkcac.org