CHARLOTTE

City Council
Follow-Up Report

March 11, 2011

February 28 – City Council Business Meeting

Citizens' Forum – Marshall Griffin
Staff Resource: Danny Pleasant, CDOT, 704-336-3879, dpleasant@charlottenc.gov

Marshall Griffin, one of the speakers at City Council's February 28 Citizens' Forum, complained to Council about trash along the Brookshire Freeway. Mr. Griffin seemed thought the debris was coming from City garbage trucks. The city's Solid Waste Services trucks infrequently use the Brookshire. The payloads on any SWS trucks are secured so that trash seldom flies out. It appears the debris is typical, recurring trash from any number of sources that builds up over time.

The state is responsible for maintaining the Brookshire. CDOT staff has made contact with the NCDOT District Engineer's Office and relayed Mr. Griffin's concern. Staff understands that NCDOT is in the process of procuring a maintenance contractor to clean up trash alongside the Brookshire and other state maintained highways within the Charlotte region. Staff do not yet know the date NCODT will complete the contract and commence the clean up. Council will be updated as staff receives more information.

Staff reached out to Mr. Griffin and explained the City's collaboration with the state. Mr. Griffin was satisfied with this resolution and thanked staff for reaching out to him.

Pond and Dam Rehabilitation Projects
Staff Resource: Darryl Hammock, E&PM, 704-336-2167, dhammock@charlottenc.gov

At the February 28 City Council meeting, Council member Barnes requested a report on the benefits of the City's pond rehabilitation program. The Pond and Dam Program was updated and approved by City Council in May 2007, and staff starts feasibility studies on 3-4 projects per year under the program.

Most water bodies in Charlotte are identified by the state as 'impaired' by Clean Water Act standards. This means they do not fully support fish or other forms of aquatic life, and that

streams are not fit for recreational human contact. The US EPA requires that the City take action to restore its watersheds. Improved water quality in creeks also supports the City's environmental sustainability objectives.

Pond rehabilitation is an extremely cost-effective means of improving water quality, averaging only one fifth the cost of creating new water quality measures that provide equivalent environmental benefit. Every pond rehabilitation project in the program controls pollutants in stormwater runoff, protects stream banks from erosion, provides wildlife habitat, and often addresses flooding issues. Rehabilitation improves the quality of water passing through the pond before entering adjoining creeks.

A properly functioning pond typically removes 50%-90% of the pollutants in stormwater runoff, which include heavy metals, sediments, and nutrients. If ponds and dams were allowed to continue to fail, water quality conditions in Charlotte would likely decline even if the same capital investment were made through other stormwater control measures.

Repairing ponds on private property is much cheaper than obtaining property to build new ponds or installing other types of control measures. Each pond owner donates his or her pond in perpetuity through a conservation easement. These donations represent a significant private landowner contribution toward project success, ensuring that the property can no longer be developed, and is conserved. The City then designs the pond projects to maximize environmental and stormwater benefits and not to address aesthetic concerns of the owner of the pond.

If existing ponds fail, the City will realize greater impacts to the stormwater system, divergence from the regulatory goals of the Clean Water Act, and permanent loss of the opportunity for enhancement.

Staff sees this approach as a model for other communities to follow in order to achieve future regulatory compliance for clean water, provide cost-effective water quality enhancements, and preserve the quality of life for the community.