Saskatchewan Municipal

Best Practice

6th Street Storm Water Drainage Project

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THE PRACTICE

The Village of Buena Vista constructed a water drainage system to help the lakefront community prevent flooding from spring run-off and summer storms.

THE PROCESS

Village council was always aware of the potential flood hazard existing in Buena Vista, but a limited budget had always forced council to turn a blind eye to the problem. The threat of a flood in the community became a highly debated issue again in 2005 when a new subdivision was created on the flat lands above the village. Council was aware that this new subdivision would require a new drainage system in the community, and made plans to address this issue throughout the winter of 2005.

While new drainage plans were being completed, the spring run off of 2006 occurred and numerous properties were flooded and ditches were eroded up to 3 feet in depth, depositing silt into the lake. The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries became involved and made it clear to the village that the existing and proposed water drainage systems did not meet regulations to protect the lake shoreline, fish habitat, and residents from flooding.

The community held numerous meetings, attended by council, ratepayers, professional engineers, and officials from the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries. Various water drainage system presentations and discussions ensued, and after extensive discussion and debate, council made the decision to construct an underground drainage system using blue brute piping, man holes, and a holding pond. Residents rejected several less expensive systems due to safety concerns for the public.

Once the decision to construct a new water drainage system was made, some residents had concerns over the cost of the project. Council invited professional engineers to more public meetings to educate the public on the various methods of implementing the plan. Council was also challenged by ratepayers on how the project was to be funded. Council worked with residents and engineers to modify the plan so that expenditures were limited.

The village then tendered the project and discussed various options on how to finance the project. This led to discussions with the subdivision developers to see if they would review their development fee. Once the developers realized a need for improved water drainage of their subdivision, a new agreement was reached with the village. The village also applied for the New Deal Gas Tax grant and the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative grant. The remaining funds of $622,000 were provided when the village took out a ten year loan from the bank.

THE RESULTS

The project proved successful during the melt in Spring 2009. There is no erosion to the road way and there have been no issues brought forward by residents. Not having problems in the village nor with the lake is a sign of immediate benefits. The system has proved to perform the way the village wished and there is no reason why the second phase of the subdivision can not go ahead and use the system that is in place now. The engineer says that this system will handle the “1 in a 100 year” flood. This is a standard that the community is very proud of.

LESSONS LEARNED

The major lesson is to make sure the plans are accurate enough to allow for a developers servicing agreement that takes all costs into account right from the start. It is much easier the first time around. Every effort has to be taken to keep residents informed along the way and it will be necessary for them to put up with some inconvenience during construction.