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**Echo Lake Dam**

As Mayor for the City of Burlington, it is ironic four years ago, I felt I needed to communicate on the flood of 2017 to give you the facts, and so that you knew what we were faced with good or bad. There are many rumors circulating in the community including social media pages, in which I feel compelled to answer regarding the Echo Lake Dam. Some of which are, “the City of Burlington has already made up its mind”, “we have not completed any due diligence”, and “we have determined to either remove the dam or save the dam”. I know staff and elected officials have been providing as much feedback as possible when possible. Please know, if we are not providing information, there is nothing to report.

As a reminder, Echo Lake Dam does not meet DNR requirements and must either be modified or removed by 2025. This is a huge decision that has the potential to impact the community for generations to come. When faced with any costly and impactful project of this magnitude we owe it to community and future generations to fully explore all possible options. To find the best solution we must first understand the problem(s), identify all costs for the short and long term, identify what a reconstruction of a dam and/or removal would look like along that corridor and the impacts to those choices. This exploration helps paint the full picture for the Council to determine which option best serves the community good.

In the case of the Echo Lake Dam, this means exploring a variety of options that would retain some kind of dam structure and also options that remove the dam. Because we have included dam removal as an option to explore, does not mean this is the desired outcome of City Staff or the Council, although I have publicly stated I personally am in favor of keeping the dam. To be clear, this project is arising out of a compliance mandate, not out of a desire to remove the dam structure. Dam removal is one of many potential solutions and not exploring it would leave the Council and Community with an incomplete set of choices. Depending on our options and costs, these will be communicated to the community and regardless of the decision, if funding opportunities are available, we will be sure to apply for those opportunities.

Throughout this process we have stated that community feedback is important and welcomed. We have always planned to engage the community once we have preliminary costs and concept designs for those possible solutions. We don't yet have all the information necessary but, encourage you to listen and participate. Should you attend the Common Council meetings, please note citizens can provide feedback during the appropriate time in which I will recognize you. As a formality, the Common Council and/or staff is unable to engage in dialogue- but note, we are diligently writing your information down for either future communications and/or answers to those questions. This is not unlike any other emotional/ tough decision we have had to make. Your previous and current Council's have made difficult decisions, and this is unlike no other!

What we do have and have communicated is a report outlining IF the Council chose the pathway of keeping the dam a preliminary cost for dredging a portion of echo lake NOT all of it. We are in the midst of identifying at what levels the dam currently floods to determine if any compliance can ever be met for the DNR compliance mandate. Please remember, this is a DNR mandate who has direct influence on the dam. Studies completed to date can be found at <http://burlington-wi.gov/549/Echo-Lake-Dam>.

While community dialogue is welcome, there simply is no information yet available to discuss regarding the choices. In the coming months this information will become available, and we will reach out and solicit engagement from the community at that time. As your governing body, we must be thoughtful, thorough, and not make decisions based on emotions. They must be on facts, figures, and what is in the best interest of Burlington today and for tomorrow. My hope of this press release is to communicate what we are faced with and hopefully add a sense of calm and understanding.

Remember historically the dam was originally built to supply waterpower for a log sawing and feed grinding business at the time, but now, I feel like this is an aquatic gateway, surrounded by Veteran's Terrace, a beautiful park and memorial for our lost soldiers. Thank you for all of your interest in this important project. It is these types of community issues that identify community solutions!

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