



Dear Neighbors,

I'm writing to help bring the temperature down and to share a clear path forward on the dam shoreline work.

First, I want to acknowledge what many of you have expressed: this issue is emotionally charged. Our lake is a defining part of Pine Lake's identity. When something changes along its edge, it can feel personal. That reaction makes sense. At the same time, I want to name something else that deserves to be said out loud: the passion for Pine Lake is not limited to the people who live here. It is also shared by the people who work here—staff who choose public service, and who care deeply about the long-term health and safety of this place.

Over the past several weeks, a lot of attention has focused on the AECOM engineer's report. That report matters—but it is not the only "point of truth" guiding this work. The fuller picture includes Director Kendrick's professional expertise and his responsibility to look at the entire system: the dam structure, the lake, the wetlands, Snapfinger Creek, and our floodplain risk—together. That also includes the realities of permitting, the long-term maintenance demands of any solution we install, and the non-negotiable requirement that we protect the structural integrity of the dam. If you haven't listened/watched the meeting from February 10<sup>th</sup> yet, I encourage you to do so, and see if your questions are clarified. The work session recording is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmiWMVzZnrs>

One key clarification: while engineering assessments are essential tools, they do not make policy decisions. Council does. Staff and consultants provide recommendations based on expertise, site conditions, risk, maintenance feasibility, and budget. Director Kendrick has been clear that his role requires integrating multiple technical inputs and constraints—especially floodplain management and what Pine Lake can realistically maintain over time with a small department and limited recurring funds. His recommendation—and ultimately Council's decision—was made weighing information from the AECOM report, the environmental consultant, the surveyor, and Mr. Kendrick's floodplain expertise. All of these pieces of information braided together into a recommendation put before Council.

I also want to address the heart of what many people are reacting to: the look of the riprap. The intent has always been a *vegetated riprap* approach—meaning plants are expected to establish and grow into and through the stone, filling in gaps and restoring a living shoreline aesthetic over time. That was the design intent from the start, and it is important to remember that this is not a "final look." Landscapes change in seasons, not days. The bank will not appear "finished" immediately, and patience is required as vegetation establishes.

At the same time, we heard loud and clear that residents want a stronger opportunity to weigh in on shoreline improvements—both now and in the future. In response, Director Kendrick has been working with the City’s consultant on a revised plan that will be brought back to Council—one that includes a robust planting plan designed to minimize the amount of riprap visible on the bank and to incorporate the elements residents have raised, such as plugging/seeding, and a plant palette appropriate for a dam (shallow-rooted species that do not undermine structural integrity). The goal is to have time for citizen engagement, bid the work to a qualified contractor, and require warranty and aftercare so the planting succeeds and stabilization holds.

Finally, I want to speak plainly about how we move forward together. We can ask hard questions and advocate passionately without turning on one another. As a governing body, Council and staff rely on professional consultants who understand the full context of Pine Lake—its hydrology, permitting history, maintenance capacity, fiscal constraints, and regulatory framework. Many citizens are deeply engaged, and some bring engineering or related backgrounds. That perspective is valuable. But they are not the City’s retained consultants tasked with crafting robust solutions to complex, interdependent problems with complete access to the data, permits, site history, and system-wide considerations. I encourage everyone to move away from relying on disparate sources of fragmented information and instead entrust that we have an informed, professional staff, experienced consultants, and an elected Council working together to make decisions in the best interest of Pine Lake—even when you may not personally agree with those decisions.

Thank you to everyone who has shown up, asked questions, and stayed engaged. Thank you, too, to our staff for continuing to serve with professionalism under intense scrutiny. We will keep you informed as further plans are scheduled for Council discussion, along with the next steps related to permitting and the broader system work that connects the lake, wetlands, and creek.

*With appreciation,*

*Brandy Hall*

*Mayor, City of Pine Lake*