



City of Harrisonburg Stormwater Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2016 5:00 – 6:50 p.m.

Members in attendance: Joanna Mott, Daniel Michael, Dale Chestnut, Eldon Kurtz, Ted Byrd

Staff/Other in attendance: Thanh Dang, Kelley Junco, Poti Giannakouros

Public Comment

Poti commented on the mulch ordinance and suggested that the implementation of the stormwater utility fee may coincide with more recent mulch fires. He suggested that Public Works staff deny credit applications to those with mulch installations (conservation landscaping) close to their homes.

Review of Procedure

SWAC reviewed the Rules of Procedure document which outlines public comment and credit application appeal procedures. SWAC chairperson or vice chair is responsible for ensuring that the public comment or appeal does not go over the time allotted.

Credit Manual Updates

Staff reviewed the proposed credit manual updates and clarifications which were to be presented to City Council on May 10. See the Agenda Packet for further information about the credit manual updates.

Ted broadened the conversation from specific credit manual updates to the residential credit program in general and asked about the 10-15 year outlook for the stormwater utility fee program. In particular, he wanted to know the average lbs TP, lbs TN, and lbs TSS per year that we get from residential homes that receive stormwater utility fee credits and whether the City can apply these pollutant reductions to the city's required Chesapeake Bay TMDL pollutant removals. How do the residential pollutant removals compare dollar wise to the estimated value of purchased nutrient credits? Thanh explained that state guidance for residential best management practices is still being developed. Attempts to quantify the pollutant removal of residential practices have proved difficult with the limited guidance available at this time. Therefore residential stormwater utility fee credits, at this time, cannot be applied to TMDL pollutant removal for the city. However, city staff expects to be able to apply residential pollutant removal to Chesapeake Bay TMDL requirements once DEQ guidance is available. Ted asked that staff try to establish those numbers as best as possible with the information available.

Eldon stated that based on previous SWAC meetings the residential credit program was adopted with an understanding that the pollutant removals would be fairly insignificant in the broader context of pollutant removal requirements for the city, but SWAC wanted to give residential property owners the opportunity to participate. Ted said that if the values are not equivalent then is the 50% credit offered for the residential credit program too high? He again asked about the correlation between dollar value of stormwater utility fee credits and pollutant reductions. Eldon said that alternatively, he would like to

see the credit program increase its credit option to non-residential and residential property owners to those that are making an impact. Joanna said she is concerned that we are charging a fee, offering credits for that fee which reduces the city's overall collection, and then may need to raise the fee to account for that loss. Kelley said that the average credit received is 40% and that approximately 160 applications were received for the first billing cycle. Daniel Michael said that assuming 15,000 residential property owners in the city, this equated to about 1.4% of applicants in the City. He said he did not feel this was a significant enough amount of participants to cause concern since staff and SWAC assumed a 15% loss on total collected stormwater utility fees due to participation in the credit program.

Joanna offered that she thought the residential credit manual should be simplified into credits that are easily measurable. If we have to offer a credit she said she didn't think it should be so detailed and complicated. Thanh asked her what she proposed and also made clear that the details collected on a residential application are the anticipated information needs for calculating pollutant removal credit for those individual residential practices. Kelley said that Charlottesville's program is based on the same credit manual for both residential and non-residential. The concern there is that the manual is very similar to the city's current Non-Residential Credit Manual and is therefore very difficult for homeowners to participate.

SWAC made a motion that staff presents the proposed credit manual updates to City Council on May 10 and requests feedback from Council. SWAC and staff could then work through questions and present the updated credit manual at a later date.

Cost Share Program Update

Kelley outlined the research from Rob Alexander's class about the cost share program. Ted said that the program should require applicants pay up front and be reimbursed by the City, as opposed to being paid up front by the City. He also asked if other municipalities had implemented a cost share program. Kelley said that other than the newly formed Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) program through the Soil and Water Conservation District, there have not been equivalent cost share programs for water quality-based projects and the municipal level. Ted asked if we wanted to push forward and be one of the first cities to offer the program. SWAC agreed that the program is needed for non-residential property owners in the future but it is not necessary to push it out ahead of others.

Stormwater Improvement Plan Update

Thanh overviewed progress on the Stormwater Improvement Plan. The current consultant has prepared a document that outlines the information (GIS layers, storm sewer data, etc.) the city currently has so the future consultants bidding on the project know what data is available and can develop the appropriate scope of work on existing data or proposed additional data to be collected or created.

Ted asked for an update on the city's current pollutant removal levels. Staff shows Ted current removal levels of TP, TN, and TSS. Thanh and Dale also expressed that the removal we are getting from street sweeping may fluctuate whereas a stormwater facility's pollutant removal will not due to a grandfathering clause in the guidance.

Even so, Ted commented that the city is in compliance for TP and TSS through 2028 but not for Nitrogen. He asked if the Stormwater Improvement Plan and the cost share program would be focused on nitrogen. Thanh explained that the criteria have not been established but it could be nitrogen-based. Dale offered that infiltration practices like wetlands and bioretention ponds are those that have the most nitrogen removal which are difficult in karst areas. Thanh said that maintenance of the storm sewer system and even water quantity projects could legally use monies collected as part of the stormwater utility fee. Ted encouraged that designated projects and plans are needed to justify the stormwater utility fee program.

Next Steps/Assignments

SWAC is encouraged to continue brainstorming needed credit manual updates.

The next SWAC meeting will be held on August 3, 2016.