



City of Harrisonburg Stormwater Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2016 5:00 – 6:45 p.m.

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

Staff/Others in attendance: Staff: Tom Hartman, Erin Yancey, Kelley Junco, Rebecca Stimson; Timmons Group: Mike Claud, Amelia Wehunt

Review and Adopt Minutes

Daniel Michael called for a motion to adopt the August 2016 SWAC meeting minutes. The motion was made, seconded, and passed.

Public Comment

No public comment.

New Employee Introductions

Staff introduced two new Public Works employees to SWAC:

Erin Yancey, *Public Works Planning Manager*

Rebecca Stimson, *Environmental Program Support Specialist*

Stormwater Improvement Plan Scoping

Amelia Wehunt, Project Manager at Timmons Group, presented the final Stormwater Improvement Plan (SWIP) Scoping Recommendations Report. Timmons Group was tasked with assessing the current data the City has available and recommending how that data can be improved to develop a stormwater improvement plan. Timmons Group suggests the SWIP should be a Citywide assessment based on a systematic watershed approach. The watershed assessment will include system capacity and water quality as well as an evaluation of existing projects and programs in the city. Timmons Group recommends the SWIP be completed within a 12 month schedule to provide the city with an achievable plan for meeting regulatory compliance regarding the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and to provide a plan for the city's long-term stormwater needs. The SWIP will deliver a prioritized listing of proposed projects and programs and project sheet summaries for high priority projects that will help the City meet these goals.

There were multiple comments and questions from SWAC members about the SWIP Scoping document. These comments are attached as an appendix and will be shared as a part of conversations with SWIP consultants.

Credit Application Update

Rebecca shared with SWAC that there were 132 residential applications approved for the 2017-2018 billing cycle. The most common three credits applied for were the Homeowner Nutrient and Lawn Care Agreement, Roof Drain Disconnection, and Urban Tree Planting – which used the new criteria for tree canopy cover. If the City of Harrisonburg were to get credit from the state for these BMPs, credit can be submitted for the Homeowner Nutrient and Lawn Care Agreement, Roof Drain Disconnections, and Rain Barrels. Kelley reminded SWAC that there is value in these homeowner BMPs (price per pound of pollutants removed) and said the spreadsheets have been sent on to DEQ for approval so that the City might be able to use these homeowner BMP credits for state credit in later permit cycles.

TMDL Action Plan Update & Stormwater Utility Fee Program Review

Tom led SWAC through the stormwater utility fee program review memorandum which was prepared for the Tuesday, August 9 council meeting. This program review and update is based on regulations and methodology approved for this current permit cycle (2013-2018). Tom created a table to show where the city stands based on the current guidance. With street sweeping calculations using the current mass loading approach, the City achieved all N, P, and S reductions for the first permit cycle with this single BMP.

Public Works then reviewed planning projects with SWAC (East Market Street Regenerative Stormwater Conveyance is fully funded and matched with 50% grant from DEQ, this project was identified through the retrofit study; North-End Greenway Stream Restoration is fully funded in FY17- the stream restoration helps achieve significant sediment removal; Stormwater Improvement Plan, fully funded FY17). Ted was concerned that these planned projects were not vetted through the Stormwater Improvement Plan ranking criteria. Tom said that the Stormwater Retrofit Opportunities on Public Land in Harrisonburg ranked the East Market Street Regenerative Conveyance project highest in that project ranking and the North-End Greenway Stream Restoration will be constructed in tandem with a shared-use path. Staff did not feel that it was necessary to put these planned projects on hold.

Public Works looked at the stormwater budget to see where changes were possible:

452041: Operational budget should stay the same – no reductions are recommended.

472041: Replacement of aged street sweeper is necessary (\$250,000), but can be reevaluated.

There is potential for adjustment of this budget down to \$250,000. \$215,000 of this budget was set aside to fund downtown projects and private partnership projects – these are able to wait until the SWIP is complete in order to rank these projects against others.

910541: Capital projects for stormwater: There is potential for adjustment of this budget down to \$825,000.

Adjustment to this budget would mean removing the Ralph Samson Park project to see how it ranks in the Stormwater Improvement Plan and splitting the funding of the North-End Greenway Stream Restoration over two budget years, FY17 and FY18.

After looking at possible budget reductions, the next step was to evaluate the maximum allowable reduction to the stormwater utility fee. This came out to a \$4.50 reduction (reducing fee from \$10.50/BU/year to \$6.00/BU/year).

Tom reminded SWAC that any potential reduction would come with a caveat that once the 2013-2018 permit cycle ends, street sweeping credit calculations will most likely change and the City will not be able to meet pollutant load reductions based on street sweeping. This means once the new guidance comes out, the stormwater utility fee will need to be re-adjusted in FY19 based on the new guidance and the SWIP recommendations. The new permit cycle will include the updated Chesapeake Bay TMDL model and it is highly anticipated that nitrogen reduction rates will change. Tom reminded SWAC that the 1st permit cycle is only 5% of total reductions needed overall and that meeting those goals is important, but it is only the beginning of the planning process to meet the remaining pollutant reductions. Tom said the City is in compliance up to FY18 and assuming the state of Virginia adopts the Chesapeake Bay Program guidance, next permit cycle the City will receive credits for storm drain cleaning, however, the amount of street sweeping will drastically reduce.

Ted asked why the City is moving forward with the SWIP with so many unknowns with state guidance. Tom responded that the benefit of doing the SWIP plan now will mean staff can react faster to changes in permit and accounting of water quality and re-rank all the projects if need be. Rob asked if it would be useful to create different rankings based on different outcomes in permit requirements. Tom responded that projects under construction during this permit cycle will continue to be credited based on their approvals this permit cycle but programs like street sweeping and storm drain cleaning can be re-evaluated and credited differently for the new permit cycle. Timmons Group offered that DEQ will at some point be held by the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Guidance. They seem to be proactive about getting ready for the next permit cycle and municipalities should get more advanced notice – which will coincide nicely with the SWIP.

Joanna commented that, in regards to the fee adjustment, lowering the fee will show honesty and stewardship on the City's part. Dale said that renters are likely not going to see that money back since landlords and property managers have already raised rents to account for the existing billing rate and rent will probably go up again if the also fee goes up again at a later date. Ted said that if we adjust the fee now, in a year's time, we can institute the SWIP and make a plan. Guidance might change and then we can re-evaluate the fee once again. He reminded SWAC not to lose sight of the fact that the City is in compliance with regulations in year three. In FY19 the city has a year to react to any changes in the permit cycle. In the meantime, the City has enough money to complete the planned projects. Rob offered that the City is collecting the fee to collect funds for projects and not to create an incentive to participate in the credit program. Kelley noted it will be interesting to see if a reduction in a fee would disincentives people to participate in the credit program.

Rob posed a question to the group: do we delay changing the fee till we have more information about the next permit cycle and then re-adjust the fee at that time? He felt that the City should reduce the fee under greater certainty of what the new permit cycle requirements will be, rather than reducing the fee in the face of uncertainty and then re-adjusting again once more is known. Rob also suggested a table of cost effectiveness of different BMPs. Tom agreed and said he would add that information for Council to review.

Kelley says a proposed study on the Black's Run/Cooks Creek TMDL will likely assign an additional waste load allocation on Harrisonburg, which means there might be additional pollutant removal requirements for the City. Kelley also shared that municipalities received information about how states are complying with regulations: no states have met nitrogen goals and there is actually an increase of nitrogen in the Chesapeake Bay. Rob asked if this lack of Nitrogen is where the residential credits will come into play. Kelley said yes, homeowner BMPs will most likely come into play to help us meet future requirements. Tom agreed with this, however stated the City will need a lot more than 270 homeowners to participate in order to help. Rob asked if there is a way to incentive nitrogen reduction. Tom answered that one way would be to modify credit program and give people more credit for nitrogen reduction, this is something that might come out of the SWIP.

Motion:

A motion was made: All those in favor of positive response to the report, but delaying a fee reduction until more guidance is issued by DEQ.

4 in favor

1 opposed.

1 abstained.

Next Steps/Assignments

Staff will take SWAC comments and add them to the RFP which will go out mid-August. It is anticipated that by the next meeting staff will have the firm selected and kick-off the improvement plan in early winter 2017 which will help staff and the consultant react to the new permit cycle.

The next SWAC meeting will be held on November 2, 2016.



City of Harrisonburg Stormwater Advisory Committee *Appendix A: SWIP Comments*

Comment 1: Rob acknowledged that systems modeling is not a primary focus of the SWIP but asks how climate change modeling will be used and what other communities are doing with climate change modeling. Amelia Wehunt (Timmons Group) has seen that climate change modeling is mostly a priority for coastal communities where they are already seeing effects of immediate climate change. Mike Claud (Timmons Group) stated that there may be a need to account for climate change, however it is difficult to forecast out that far because of the way modeling is done. Trying to forecast out for those changing events makes the cost of infrastructure very high and not economical. This is the main reason designs plan around 10 year storm events. Rob stressed the importance of language in the SWIP - that the SWIP should acknowledge that precipitation rates will change over time and that is something the City is not ignoring. Mike Claud adds that it may be more efficient to look at future land development and account for that because future land development will have a bigger difference on the City's system. This will be easier to forecast since the SWIP will be looking at the City's long-term planning documents. Tom says that in regards to climate change, the VSMP regulations that new development follows will help to address flooding issues caused by an increase in land development and potentially an increase in rainfall because it improves water upstream of the City of Harrisonburg.

Comment 2: Rob asked if there are any recommendations for the consultant working on the SWIP to analyze and identify internal and external partnerships. Internally, there would be areas to bundle stormwater ordinances and best practices with zoning and real estate development, etc. The City should also look at what other localities are doing to bundle stormwater with other ordinances. Externally, there are three institutes of higher education in this area and since there is data available from these places, there is potential to leverage data to save costs and create partnerships in these institutions.

Comment 3: Joanna asked how the City is going to rank water quality projects when there are multiple different water quality issues in Harrisonburg. Ted built off this question and asked where and how the Watershed Model is tied into ranking prioritization? Tom reiterated that prioritization will be based mostly on water quality with ancillary benefits of flooding, etc. giving projects an extra weighting factor. Kelley adds that the focus of the plan is water quality. This will pose an interesting challenge when the City engages the community and will be something SWAC and the SWIP consultant can help the City with – how to engage citizens in the plan when the SWIP isn't directly addressing backyard flooding issues.

Comment 4: Rob pointed out that to him, the water quality projects seem like they are all capital projects. He would like to know if the SWIP will give recommendations for policy opportunities. These could include the ordinances he was mentioning before, or even SOPs that City departments could add that would both help the departments do their business more efficiently, and provide some benefit to

water quality. Tom says the SWIP development will follow the same lines as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan plan the City is updating. Public Works will get all departments together at the beginning of SWIP development to help brainstorm. This way all departments are involved and can provide input.

Comment 5: Rob asked if the SWIP identified projects include cost-share projects. Tom stated that cost-share programs would potentially fall under programs, not projects, which the SWIP could help identify.

Comment 6: Ted would like to know how the East Market Street project and the North End Greenway Stream Restoration were identified. Tom stated that these two capital projects were evaluated based on the retrofit study. This study had its own ranking system and these two projects will be extremely valuable in helping the city meet its regulatory requirements in the coming years.