



City of Harrisonburg Stormwater Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2019 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Members in attendance: Daniel Michael, Eldon Kurtz, Rob Alexander, Richard Baugh

Staff/Others in attendance:

Staff: Tom Hartman, Rebecca Stimson, Keith Thomas

Others: None

Review and Adopt Minutes

called for a motion to adopt the February 2019 SWAC meeting minutes. The motion was made, seconded, and passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Project Updates

Mountain View Drive Stream Restoration

The Mountain View Drive stream restoration was approved for SLAF funding. Tom informed the Committee that we received almost \$700,000 in grant funds. Rebecca noted staff met with the landowners on site, which they appreciated. Rob asked what questions were received. Tom recalled the most popular questions were what trees would be saved and how would the utilities be preserved. Rebecca advised staff received no comments on the 60% design plans and the 100% plans have been submitted for review. Staff are currently working to get easements on the 21 properties, a process that may take ten months to collect them all. The timeline is to begin construction next fall.

North End Greenway Stream Restoration

The North End Greenway trail officially opened two weeks ago. The restoration project is expected to start sometime this month. Tom noted that Rebecca has placed signs along the trail to explain the construction work that will be occurring in and around the stream to help to educate the public.

Woodchip Bioreactor

Rebecca overviewed the installation of the new bioreactor at Purcell Park, which takes water from Siebert Creek via a valve and discharges into Purcell Pond. The bacteria in the woodchips help break down Nitrogen in the water. The project was funded by a NFWF grant and the woodchips needed for the project came from the ash trees removed from Westover Park due to ash borer damage. While the practice is much more common out west, Rebecca noted that the bioreactor was one of the first along the East Coast for a MS4 locality. Virginia Tech students will be studying the water quality at the entrance of the bioreactor and at the outflow. DEQ will evaluate the data and determine the pollutant removal. Rob asked how much it cost. Rebecca recalled \$20,000 was the estimate and stated overall bioreactors are very cost effective. Rob asked about the lifespan. Rebecca noted that it's still a fairly new practice, so a lifespan has not been determined, but the oldest ones are 20 years old. It is thought that the major

maintenance burden of bioreactors is to replace the woodchips at the end of the lifespan. Rebecca noted that staff had some unexpected issues in the beginning when tannins released in the initial flush killed some fish in the pond before staff got out to close the valve. Since then, staff have worked to safely cycle through the initial first flush. Tom noted that he has kept Delegate Tony Wilt updated about the project as he is interested in the water quality benefit and the implications for use in agricultural settings.

Pollinator Habitat

Two Downtown Renaissance grants were received to put in two pollinator habitats downtown. One site is planted at the Billboard site and the other is planted by Matchbox Realty. Rebecca noted that Rob's class helped with the installation of the pollinator habitats. Rob stated he appreciated the time the City gave to help teach the students about the value of pollinator habitats.

Program Updates

Septic Conversion Program

The septic program has started which requires all landowners with a septic system, about 100 in the City, to get an inspection and pump out once every 5 years. Public Utilities has been sending out notices to landowners. In addition, if landowners connect to the sanitary sewer, the City can receive water quality credits. To incentivize landowners, Public Utilities is waiving connection fees up to \$4500 and Public Works will reimburse up to \$2000 for the work to connect plus a 50% credit on their stormwater utility fee. Spent a total of \$18,000 for a cost of \$212/lbN. To date 9 people have connected.

HCAP

HCAP started on July 1 with a \$100,000 budget in partnership with the SVSWCD, who is implementing the program. They have been fielding the calls and going on initial site visits. Keith noted he believed they have gone on 10-15 site visits and they are expecting several applications by the deadline of October 1. Rebecca noted the program has found some additional larger scale drainage problems. Rob asked how has the program been advertised. Rebecca noted that other than a press release and an article in the DNR and on WSHV, there has been no advertisement. Rob asked if the SWAC needs to be involved in reviewing applications. Tom said the SWAC will get an update on the number and types of projects, this first year the SVSWCD is handling the process.

Drainage Improvement Program

The Drainage Improvement Program has been shared with the City Manager and will be submitted to Council for approval at their next meeting. Rebecca noted that the HCAP program has helped underscore the importance of needing the drainage improvement program as many inquiries into HCAP have been the larger drainage problems. Tom reviewed the program presentation. He outlined the need for the program noting that 200 areas recorded drainage issues in 2018, 30 percent of which were on private property. Rob asked how maintenance of the installed practice would be secured. Tom noted maintenance requirements will be detailed in a maintenance agreement and noted in the deed in perpetuity. Daniel asked if we could use the stormwater utility funds to fund these projects. Tom noted we would have to get Council to reallocate the funds from one line item to the another in order to use stormwater utility funds. Daniel then asked if staff foresaw raising the stormwater utility rate. Tom reiterated that staff has no intention or desire to raise the rate. He said staff would evaluate the utility fee rate after the first year upon seeing the data of what we can do with the current funds. Following approval of the program, staff will work to get applications. Rebecca noted that extensive outreach will not be necessary as staff already know about 10-20 projects. Tom emphasized that the program is very

rigorous and not all problems/applications will make it through. Rob asked if the applications are eliminated early in the process, would they be able to get any recommendations on how they can alleviate the problem. Tom noted that staff would be in constant communication allowing for feedback. Rebecca also stated that a detailed memo will be given whenever applications are rejected.

Temporary/Permanent Credit Opportunities

Permanent Nutrient Credits Purchased

The City purchased first credits a few months ago which gave the City credit for eight pounds of Phosphorus and 59.44 pounds of Nitrogen. The City will also receive credit for an unspecified amount of TSS, which will be determined by DEQ. This next fiscal year, the City has budgeted for purchasing credits for another 10 pounds of Phosphorus.

Nutrient Credit Purchases for VSMP Compliance

Rebecca shared memo from Dan detailing new guidance on credit purchases. In order to stay in compliance, credit purchases must be upstream of the project within the watershed. Nutrient purchases outside of the watershed or downstream are no longer allowed.

Other Topics

Local TMDL Update

New TMDL has waste load allocation in Blacks Run/Cooks Creek which will take effect in 2023. DEQ gave the required reduction numbers, and the City will create a plan for when the reductions can be achieved. The plan will have to be submitted to DEQ for approval.

Chesapeake Bay TMDL Update

Rebecca reviewed the pollutant reduction numbers given in the Action plan that will be submitted to DEQ. The Action Plan will be opened for public comment from September 23 until October 8.

Staffing

Rebecca introduced the newest employee in the stormwater division, Keith Thomas.

Rebecca noted that Greg Sachs resigned from the SWAC and the position will be refilled.

Next Steps

2019 Dates

November 19, 2019