



Roanoke County Stormwater Advisory Committee

Meeting #7 Evaluate/Modify Recommendations

Date: February 27, 2014, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Location: Glenvar Library

Attendance:

See sign in sheets at end of these minutes.

Welcome and Introduction

Mr. Tarek Moneir welcomed the Roanoke County Stormwater Advisory Committee (RCSWAC) members to the meeting. He reminded the general public present at the meeting that they may submit comments either verbally or in writing to County staff, but that the discussion itself would just involve the committee members. He introduced County Supervisor, Mr. Al Bedrosian, and noted that Supervisor Church wanted to attend but had a meeting conflict due to the recent snow and he sent his regrets.

Meeting #6 Recap and Revised Draft Program

Mr. Moneir introduced Mr. David Bulova of AMEC Environment and Infrastructure. Mr. Bulova provided an overview of the agenda and a brief recap of the last meeting. He summarized the draft RCSWAC recommendations that were gathered at Meeting #6 on January 9th, 2014. He asked the committee to keep in mind the draft recommendations as updated information was presented at this meeting. The recommendations would be revisited at the end of the evening's discussion and revised/adjusted as needed.

Rate Refinement

Ms. Lynne Mowery of AMEC presented adjustments to the program and rate calculations that have occurred since Meeting #6:

- Utility administration costs were added to the five-year program to reflect annual costs to coordinate billing, manage impervious data, respond to appeals and review and respond to credit requests. These costs were estimated to be \$40,000 annually.
- Current program costs were reviewed and increased by \$75,000 to reflect more accurate data since the costs were originally estimated in September 2013.
- The number of billing units was adjusted to remove those associated with Town of Vinton properties – a separate rate will be developed for Vinton.

These adjustments increased the rate per ERU billing unit by approximately \$2.60 annually and the rate per 500 sf of impervious by approximately \$0.43 per year. Adjusted approximate rates for the utility and tax rate funding options were also presented. Ms. Mowery noted that the rates presented are still preliminary estimates as the data analysis on impervious area per property still needs to be performed.

Question: Can you resend the information previously provided on rates for other communities? **Answer:** Yes, that information can be forwarded to the committee members, but remember you are not comparing apples to apples. Each program is



unique to a community and the billing approaches are also unique. For example, some communities pay for all stormwater services from the fee and others still use general funds to support some services.

The cost of a utility fee for County properties would be paid from the General Fund and these costs were estimated to range from \$75,000 - \$150,000, depending on how much of the stormwater program is funded by the utility.

Mr. Bulova presented an overview of typical credit programs and the legal requirements for stormwater utility fee credits in Virginia. Credits do not pay for the initial installation, they are a recognition of the ongoing maintenance requirements.

Question: Won't the County be inundated with credit applications that will require significant staff time to address? **Answer:** Typically, a stakeholder committee, similar to the RCSWAC, would be convened to develop a credit program that would balance rewarding stormwater management activities with manageability. The program would have to be clearly defined and a manual prepared to assist property owners with applications for credits. Based on similar situations, large numbers of credit applications are not anticipated.

Feedback from Public Meetings

Ms. Mowery presented information on the public meetings which were conducted by the County on February 3-7, 2014 in each of the five supervisor districts. She noted that the County made a concerted effort to get people to attend by placing announcements in the newspaper and on the County website, but turnout was still light. Those that did attend was walked through a series of "stations" where the stormwater program and funding options were presented and staff were available to answer questions. Attendees were asked to provide comments and those detailed comments, questions and staff responses are posted on the County website.

Ms. Mowery also raised the point that if the County decides to implement a stormwater utility, citizen expectations for stormwater service will increase. This means it will be very important that the level of service associated with the utility needs to be clearly defined and communicated.

Question: Does the County provide service on private property if the infrastructure is in an easement? **Answer:** The County provides maintenance to facilities that are located in County easements. The County does not maintain facilities that are in private easements or natural watercourses.

Final Recommendations

Mr. Bulova noted that if the Board of Supervisors decides to proceed with a stormwater utility, there are implementation costs required before the bills can be finalized and sent that are not reflected in the five-year program costs. The one-time up-front implementation costs may include:

- Impervious area digitization,
- Billing file development,
- Finalization of the program and rate,
- Credit policy and manual development,
- Public education and outreach,
- Customer service training, and



- Ordinance development.

These costs were estimated to be in the range of **\$100,000 - \$150,000** depending on the rate structure selected.

The group was asked to review the draft recommendations and discuss the modifications, as presented. The group agreed by hand vote to recommend that the current stormwater program costs be removed from the general fund and that the tax rate for the general fund be reduced to reflect the moving of the costs to the utility fee. It was noted that the difference in the stormwater rate between Roanoke City and Roanoke County would need to be explained to the public as the program of services is different and the City is not funding their entire stormwater program through their utility so the rates are not directly comparable.

The group discussed timing of a Board decision on a stormwater utility and the impact of pending bills in the Virginia legislature that may impact stormwater requirements. Mr. Bulova noted that the current direction of pending legislation should not impact Roanoke County's short-term regulatory requirements. RCSWAC members noted that the fee could be decreased in the future if requirements change.

Question: How is the rate typically adjusted? **Answer:** There are two common options. The rate amount could be written into the utility ordinance and the rate would be adjusted by revising the ordinance. Most communities are now addressing stormwater utility rates by resolution through the budget process and adjusting them along with other local utility rates.

Each member of the RCSWAC present at the meeting was asked to comment on the draft recommendations. Following are their comments:

- Stormwater services should be provided in accordance with the recommended five-year program.
- The County should fund stormwater through a dedicated fund and move it out of the general fund.
- The County should fund stormwater through a utility structure with billing based on impervious surface (either ERU or straight impervious cover) because of equity.
- Impervious data should be clearly defined and defensible.
- Tax-exempt properties should not be excluded from paying for stormwater.
- The County should establish a credit program to recognize stormwater management measures by property owners.
- The general fund taxes should be decreased if the entire stormwater program is funded through a dedicated user fee.
- Supported the recommendations as summarized and suggested that the fee be phased in (similar to Roanoke City) to give citizens and businesses time to adjust.
- Comfortable with recommendations – also supports a phase in of the fee.
- On board with recommendations – appreciated the amount of work and the representation of different constituencies on the RCSWAC.
- In favor of recommendations as a committee member, but not as an individual because of fiscal concerns.
- The recommendations are reasonable.
- Agree with the recommendations in general – the devil is in the details that need to be considered while moving forward.
- Delighted with the committee and the recommendations reflect a good plan.
- The recommendations are as good as we can have at this point – move slowly though because of all of the unknowns.



- Comfortable with recommendations. Make sure that Roanoke County is competitive with its neighbors. Perception is reality so the fee and program needs to be explained well.
- Support recommendations – Don't rush, but take the time to put a good program in place.
- Support – the recommendations are as good as we can get.
- The recommendations are fine.
- Support moving forward with recommendations.
- The recommendations are good. Would like to see the utility become part of a regional stormwater authority.
- The recommendations are good.

The comments from the committee members reflected a consensus that implementing a stormwater user fee was the best option for funding the stormwater program.

Next Steps

Mr. Richard Caywood, Assistant County Administrator, thanked the RCSWAC for all of their hard work. The recommendations will now be presented at a Board of Supervisors work session in the next month or so and the RCSWAC will be kept informed about the date when it is scheduled. He noted that the staff will be presenting alternative program options to the Board in addition to the RCSWAC recommendations, at the Board's request. He noted that he expected that the consensus of the RCSWAC will carry a lot of weight with the Board.

Mr. Moneir also thanked the committee for its dedication and hard work and invited RCSWAC members to attend the Board meeting to show their support for the recommendations. He specifically asked if 2-3 members would consider attending and standing with staff as the information was presented. Those interested should contact Mr. Moneir.

Process Review

As part of closing out the work of the RCSWAC, Mr. Moneir asked for comments on the Advisory committee process. He asked for both positive and negative feedback so that future stakeholder processes could be informed by their experience.

The following comments were received from the committee members:

Positive comments:

- It was greatly appreciated that the County cared enough to engage different voices from the community as they worked through the stormwater funding assessment.
- The workload and committee discussions were well managed. The consultants did an excellent job supporting the process and the process was very transparent.
- One member said she walked in thinking that the committee would only be given info that the County wanted them to see, but was very impressed that the process was actually very open, all questions considered, and the result was a recommendation that showed the County was listening to the committee members. Kudos for a job well done.
- There were lots of good information provided – learned a lot.
- The diversity of County interests represented at the table was impressive.
- Having consultants that have done this before was very valuable – good choice by the County.



- Committee enjoyed working together and most would be interested to continue to be involved if a group is reconvened during implementation.

Negative comments:

- Acoustics weren't good at the last meeting – could have used a microphone
- Don't send out attachments with 11" x 17" paper – too hard for members to print
- Appreciated the effort to identify program needs, but the regulations are still a moving target so implementation should move slowly
- Good to have an engaged committee, but they are only a small percentage of the community so more education will be needed. Perhaps engage groups like the Civic League to spread the word.

ROANOKE COUNTY STORMWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE- SIGN IN SHEET
MEETING 7 - FEBRUARY 27, 2014

Member	District	Organization	Alternate (if Member cannot Attend)	Present
Mr. Michael "Mike" Keen	Catawa	Selected By Board		
Mr. Leonard F. Firebaugh	Cave Spring	Selected By Board		X
Mr. Steve Rossi	Hollins	Selected By Board		X
Mr. James R. Nelson	Vinton	Selected By Board		X
Mr. Eldon L. Karr	Windsor Hills	Selected By Board		
Mr. Stephen Peak	Windsor Hills	TMEIC		
Mr. Todd Creasy	Vinton	Vinton Chamber of Commerce		
Mr. Kit Hale	Cave Spring (valley-wide)	MKB Realtors		
Ms. Wendy Akers	Cave Spring	Tanglewood		X
Mr. Peter Fields	Valley-wide	Roa Regional Homebuilders Association		X
Mr. Ross Smith	(valley-wide)	Smith/Packett		
Mr. Terry St. Clair	Valley-wide	Terry St. Clair		X
Mr. Bill Tanger	Valley-wide	Upper Roanoke River Round Table		X
Mr. Steve Edwards	Hollins	Greenridge Baptist Church		X
Mr. Tom Dale	Cave Spring	Lumsden and Associates		X
Mr. Steve Musselwhite	Valley-wide	Roanoke County Economic Development Authority		X
Mr. Martin Misicko	Valley-wide	Roanoke County Public Schools		
Ms. Kerry J. Edmunds	Hollins	Hollins College		X
Ms. Mava Wingate	Valley-wide	Salem - Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce		X
Mr. Tori Williams	Valley-wide	Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce		X
Mr. Todd Ross	Valley-wide	Valley Bank		X

**ROANOKE COUNTY STORMWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE- SIGN IN SHEET
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Roanoke County	Position
Al Bedrosian	Board of Supervisors, Hollins District
Clay Goodman	County Administrator
Richard Caywood	Assistant County Administrator
Arnold Covey	Directory, Community Development
Tarek Moneir	Deputy Director, Development Services
David Henderson	County Engineer
Town of Vinton	Position
Ryan Spitzer	Assistant to the Town Manager
Gary Woodson	Public Works Director
Anita McMillan	Planning and Zoning Director
Consultant Staff	Position
David Bulova	Senior Water Resources Planner, AMEC
Jean Haggerty	Senior Water Resources Program Manager
Lynne Mowery	Project Manager, AMEC