

Stormwater Advisory Committee

3/2/2022

In attendance:

- Bruno Giri
- Jamie Hill
- Ed Lane
- Dave Hyder – Stantec
- Todd Stevenson – ACC Stormwater

Approve February 2022 Meeting Minutes

- Bruno motioned
- Ed seconded
- Motion approved

Approve March Agenda

- Bruno motioned
- Jamie seconded
- Agenda approved

Public Comments

- Todd said that no public comments had been received.

Staff Reports

- Todd asked Dave Hyder to introduce himself, followed by the committee members.
- Todd showed a Cost of Ownership diagram and explained that TPW was trying to figure out what should be budgeted to sustain long term costs.
- Todd stated that single family residential accounted for about 30% of total stormwater fee revenue. Adding in condos and duplexes raises this to 35%
- Todd described a recent case in which used cooking oil from a restaurant had found its way into a storm drain and eventually a ditch between two residential properties.

Level of service

- Committee members asked Dave Hyder a number of questions.
 - Bruno: Other municipalities similar to Athens-Clarke? Dave: Ann Arbor is similar in that it is a college town and that they have a tiered rate structure. Different in that something called the Bolt decision means that customers have to be able to get to a point where they don't have to pay the fee.
 - Jamie: How specific should level of service be? Dave: Can get into trouble if too vague. At the same time, have to make sure you can pay for services that are specifically articulated. Overall, specifics are a good thing.
 - Ed: Are you aware of other municipalities that have developed a source of funding that accounts for life cycle costs for stormwater infrastructure? Dave: Can't think of any. Most communities are playing catch up. Buried utilities are out of sight and out of mind. This seems to be especially so in the case of stormwater. In general, the public doesn't understand the need for stormwater funding.

- Jamie: Where stormwater fees have been restructured, has there been push back? Dave: What helps with acceptance of fees is the fact that stormwater is funded through a tax, some property owners with significant amounts of impervious surface do not contribute because they are tax exempt. What also helps is being as transparent as possible and link the fee to specific projects. It's rare that there is a rate increase without push back.
 - Jamie: Clean Water Act versus just maintenance? Dave: Communities with a dedicated funding source generally do a better job of maintaining assets. Identify the need, then get there with the funding source you have.
 - Bruno: Have you run scenarios for Athens-Clarke County? Dave: Yes. We've looked at financing needs. ACCGov is updating impervious surface data.
 - Jamie: How is the breakdown between base, quantity, and quality determined? Dave: This was originally calculated by another firm at the outset of the fee in Athens-Clarke. Stantec is recalculating that number based on current data.
 - Jamie: Can you talk about credits for residential areas? Dave: Many communities don't offer credits for single family residential because of the administrative burden. ACCGov has a credit manual. Some communities offer a rebate to homeowners for rain barrels or rain gardens. Portland has a tree-bate program. Todd: Challenge for single family residential is that the fee is low enough in the first place that the credit doesn't amount to much. Need to be careful about managing expectations. Bruno: If a certain percentage of residential property owners provide improved stormwater stewardship, it can make a difference.
 - Jamie: Do incentives work? Dave: Yes. One way this is done is to set aside a certain amount of funding (say \$10,000) for an incentive program and then offer it on a first-come first-served basis.
 - Jamie: Have noticed that cities take different approaches to incentives. She said her interest is primarily with old development. Is it usually grandfathered? Dave: Yes. Existing development is a challenge.
 - Todd: We're seeing a lot of existing homes replaced with new, larger homes. We have no jurisdiction in these cases. Do you see communities dealing with this issue? Dave: Generally not.
 - Ed: Developers here pay significant impact fees for water and sewer but none for stormwater. There is only so much the stormwater fee can be raised. Dave: I've seen stormwater impact fees for municipalities in Colorado, Maryland, and Florida. Rockville, MD has an in-lieu fee for stormwater if it can't be provided on-site. Todd: In a related issue, there are permit fees that developers pay for ACCGov's inspections of construction sites and for review of stormwater management plans. Those costs are currently being subsidized by the stormwater fee so it would be surprising if the permit fees are not raised.
 - Jamie: What are impact fees? Dave: It's a one time fee that buys into the system. Ed: It takes into account long term costs needed for expansion of the system.
- Next meeting date: Wednesday, April 6th at 5 p.m.