



CITY OF DOVER

STORMWATER AND FLOOD RESILIENCE FUNDING COMMITTEE - MINUTES

Meeting Type: **Regular Meeting**
Meeting Location: **City Hall, Council Conference Room**
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 25, 2021**
Meeting Time: **5:30 PM**

Members present: Bill Baber, Ray Bardwell, David Dagenais, Marcia Gasses, Eric George, Paul Geraci, Vincent Hayes, Chad Kageleiry, Ken Mavrogeorge, Jan Nedelka, Cynthia Walter, Dennis Shanahan (Chair, City Council, ex officio), Gretchen Young (Community Services, ex officio)

Members Not Present (excused): Peter Driscoll (Dover School District, ex officio), Steve Haight, Otis Perry (vice chair)

Members Not Present (un-excused): Allan Krans

Also Present: Ben Sweeney (NHDES/PREP Project Partner), Nathalie Morison DiGeronimo (NHDES Project Partner), Abigail Lyon (PREP Project Partner), Jamie Houle (UNH Stormwater Center), Martha Sheils (New England Environmental Finance Center), Joanne Throwe (Throwe Environmental)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Shanahan called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Meeting declared an emergency because a physical quorum is not reasonably practical based on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the need to accommodate social distancing. Accommodations will include remote participation.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 21, 2020 MINUTES

Motion: Dagenais made a motion, seconded by Baber, to approve as amended.

Roll call Vote: Motion passed 11-0

The following amendments to the minutes were made:

- Bardwell noted that John Storer, Dover Community Services Director, provided background information during the presentation on the City's stormwater and flood resilience and response cost of services.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Updates on outstanding items from previous meeting

Young reminded members a presentation on the Great Bay Total Nitrogen General Permit was given to City Council on January 6, 2021, and a recording is available on Channel 22. Geraci mentioned Dover's ongoing exploration of an inter-municipal agreement to share permit implementation costs with other communities.

Sweeney presented preliminary results from a quick analysis of impervious cover (IC) in the City using data gathered from the UNH Stormwater Center. Houle clarified IC



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includes all impervious surfaces, including roofs of buildings, driveways, roads, and other paved areas. Dagenais acknowledged that the IC data will likely need to be broken down to the parcel level in the future to better evaluate different funding strategies.

Houle acknowledged the committee will need to try to find a balance between getting started with the data available and capturing good questions that need more research versus waiting for perfect information – which never exists – to act.

Bardwell asked if the committee will explore how homeowners and developers could implement specific stormwater measures to get a credit on their financial contribution to the City's stormwater management services. Shanahan answered that nothing is excluded at this point, and that these good questions should continue to be captured to help flesh out recommendations as the committee starts evaluation specific funding options.

Shanahan asked about opportunities to learn from other communities who have explored alternative stormwater funding options. Young answered that guest speakers will be asked to attend and present on specific funding options at future meetings.

Young suggested the committee's work should be shared with other local communities.

Degenais encouraged collaboration with neighboring communities sooner rather than later, noting that Wentworth-Douglas Hospital's stormwater runoff mostly flows into Rollinsford.

Sweeney notified the committee that a map showing the FEMA 100-year floodplain and other areas in the City that have experienced flooding can be found in the shared online box folder. Baber mentioned that the FEMA flood maps do not reflect climate change impacts, and any available information on how climate may exacerbate flooding in Dover should be shared with the committee.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Overview of municipal stormwater and flood resilience/response funding options

Sweeney presented on municipal stormwater and flood resilience funding options and the advantages and disadvantages for each option.

B. Discussion on potential topics for next committee meeting

Sheils mentioned need to determine if current sources of funding are adequate and the need for dedicated sources of funding to pay for long term financing of capital projects.

Throwe discussed the how many communities in the country are facing stormwater funding challenges, how climate change impacts will continue to change stormwater



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management, and why communities in Maryland are exploring climate resilience authorities to address stormwater and flooding issues. Throwe also expressed her thoughts that forming this committee was the right next step for the City.

Kageleiry asked how enterprise fund works. Sheils explained a stormwater utility is a great example, where funding is set aside in a dedicated fund, only to be used for stormwater activities, similar to sewer and water utilities which are also enterprise funds in the City.

Gasses asked if other states benefit from grants more than New Hampshire (NH), and if certain federal grants are even available for NH. Sheils answered that it varies for each state. Throwe added that federal grants are very competitive and communities need to show why they are unique.

Walter asked if dedicated funds generated from a stormwater utility could be used to satisfy matching fund requirements for grant opportunities. Throwe answered yes, and added that communities are not competitive unless they can show they have matching funds.

Throwe mentioned that each community is unique, and the funding option(s) the committee recommends has to fit with Dover to ensure it is sustainable.

Bardwell asked what alternative funding sources typically pay for, and encouraged prioritizing tangible projects that reduce pollutants over planning projects. Throwe answered that you have to be very clear about what you are spending your dedicated funds on regardless of the funding mechanism.

Houle asked what the City's primary stormwater needs are. Young answered that she perceived the needs as upgrading aging infrastructure, implementing BMPs, and achieving nitrogen reductions.

Baber asked if the Great Bay region is disadvantage because it does not have an entity like the Chesapeake Bay Commission. Throwe answered that you don't need a central entity.

Sheils mentioned communities are more powerful when they band together to go after funding. Dagenais added there is a gap in banding together with other communities and wonders if the committee needs to play a bigger role in bridging that gap.

Dagenais asked if Throwe or Sheils have any success stories of communities that have relied on their general fund for stormwater costs. Throwe and Sheils answered no because many City services compete for general funds and may be seen as higher priority.



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Throwe suggested the committee should narrow down the list of funding options by discarding the options that will not work for Dover.

Throwe encouraged the committee to think about public-private partnerships, but also mentioned the need for a dedicated source of funding to work with the private sector.

Kageleiry mentioned the committee needs to know how many property owners would contribute to a stormwater utility, how much stormwater runoff those properties contribute, and which properties are tied into the City's closed drainage system. Houle added that the committee could be tasked with answering those technical questions.

Lyon mentioned that while the closed drainage system and flooding may be concentrated in the urban core, the entire community benefits from efforts to reduce nitrogen and activities that reduce flooding in the urban core. Therefore, Lyon encouraged the committee to think about the equity of only have residents and businesses in the urban core pay for stormwater.

Nedelka asked if legislation exists in NH that allows multi-municipality/regional entities to impose fees and/or taxes. Houle and Young answered the Southeast Watershed Alliance (SWA) is an example and is a legislatively enacted body that has the power to create legal jurisdictions over the coastal watershed. Mavrogeorge mentioned he was interested in learning more about SWA and the potential for a multi-municipality solution.

Mavrogeorge encouraged the committee to consider a stormwater funding solution that incorporates multiple funding options. Throwe agreed that a mix of funding sources is a good approach and suggested looking into a dedicated fund and then going after grants.

Gasses mentioned that sticking with the general fund should still be an option the committee considers, and the committee should look at all of the ways to involve the private sector.

Young mentioned an example of a public private partnership exists when developers have the opportunity to make off-site improvements elsewhere in the watershed to meet required pollutant reductions required for redevelopment in highly developed areas.

Nedelka contended that the existing distribution of stormwater costs is not equitable.

Sheils explained a stormwater utility brings in properties currently excluded from the tax base to pay into the stormwater program. Sheils added that before Portland, ME implemented a stormwater utility, a portion of the revenue generated from sewer use fees was used for stormwater costs, which was deemed inequitable because there were many car dealerships with huge parking lots that contributed a lot of stormwater runoff, but they only had one bathroom which kept their sewer use fee very low.



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Mavrogeorge asked about the outreach efforts that occurred in 2010 related to implementing a stormwater utility, and mentioned the importance of letting the public know that a utility fee would offset their general fund contributions to the stormwater program. Nedelka answered that the messaging in 2010 was not done well and a lack of long-term public outreach was part of the reason a utility was not passed.

Lyon agreed the messaging is paramount, but noted the committee charge is to come up with recommendations to City Council, not to put forward any one particular funding mechanism for adoption. Lyon added that outreach will likely need to be a separate project with additional resources and support.

5. CITIZENS' FORUM

No members of the public were present to speak.

6. CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE, TOPIC, AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Shanahan asked committee members to evaluate the funding options Sweeney presented using the S.A.F.E. (Secure, Adequate, Flexible, and Equitable) criteria and to identify any funding options that should be discarded.

Next meeting scheduled for February 22, 2021.

7. ADJOURN

Chairman Shanahan Adjourned Meeting at 7:25 PM