

TOWNHALL MEETING ON STORMWATER PROGRAM FEE

A well-attended public information meeting was held on March 21st in Prosser Hall. Materials from the meeting are available on the Borough website. Following is a summary of matters discussed at the meeting.

Resident Bruce Bigelow emphasized to fellow property owners that the Borough **has federally-mandated improvements as well as needed improvements** to address current problems with the stormwater system. A few example photos of flooding illustrated this concern. The Borough has a permit with the Department of Environmental Protection that requires certain operating efforts be completed annually and sediment be reduced by 2023 through various projects.

The Stormwater Stakeholder Advisory Committee asked that the presentation emphasize that something must be done. It is not an option. **If the Borough ignores this mandate, it will end up having to do the same work but also face a hefty fine.**

The Committee also sees the importance of becoming more and more proactive with the stormwater needs of the community rather than reactive. The 17 miles of pipe in the storm sewer system needs to be managed wisely. By coordinating with Borough staff, **\$9.5 Million dollars of needed improvements** have been identified for the next 4 to 5 years.

An annual budget of \$770,000 has been developed that includes debt service for the projects along with stormwater program personnel and operating expenses. The program includes tasks such as street sweeping, drain cleaning, pipe flushing, televising, mapping, Best Management Practice (BMP) monitoring, annual reporting to the Commonwealth, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE), and leaf collection.

A stormwater program fee is to be related to the amount of impervious area on a property. This way the program cost is connected to the amount of stormwater runoff generated.

A fee is more equitable than property taxes. Tax exempt properties will pay a fee, whereas they do not pay a tax. The Committee still needs to review the actual fee structure, but an average residential monthly fee of \$10.70 is possible. Considered annually, this average residential property would pay \$128 in a fee compared with \$179 through a tax. Thus, **this residence pays 40% more if the program is funded by property taxes.** This is because residential properties account for 74% of taxable property values but 53% of impervious area.

The presentation's final topic was about the legal aspects of the fee. The establishment of a stormwater authority was discussed as the best legal mechanism for establishing and charging the stormwater fee.

What's Next is

- (1) establish a stormwater Authority,
- (2) establish fee structure (to be discussed by the Committee in April), and
- (3) adopt credit and appeals policies.

Answers to questions at the meeting are posted on the Borough website. Following are a few questions that were addressed:

1. Will sidewalks be included in the impervious surface calculation? Yes, if they are within the parcel boundary. All impervious area within the parcel boundary will be included.
2. Why do properties without a storm drain have to pay the fee? These properties are still receiving a service. Their runoff is part of the overall Borough MS4 responsibility regardless of whether the runoff passes through a pipe. Also, generally their runoff does affect downstream properties, and in time it may be found that stormwater facilities should be added in that area.
3. How soon will a fee be assessed? The fourth quarter of 2019, at the earliest.
4. Will the Authority be its own entity or a recommending body to the Borough Council? It is a separate governing body. However, the Borough and Authority will have a management agreement between the two bodies.
5. How many elected officials will be on the Authority board? Often, three of the five initial members are elected officials. Thereafter, the Borough appoints (or reappoints) one member each year as their terms expire one per year.
6. Is there a maximum of how many credits can be earned? The credit and appeals policy will be considered by the Committee in the coming weeks, so this is not currently known. However, a maximum available credit of about 30% is typical.

Do you have further questions? Take a look at the Borough website, or contact Sam Robbins, Assistant Manager and Director of Public Works at (717) 737-3456, Ext 6 or srobbins@camphillborough.com