Stormwater Advisory Committee  
Minutes of October 24, 2019 Meeting  
Location: Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Meeting Room A

Members Present: Robert St. Germain, Leah Lester, Jeanne Walker, Brian McGrattan, Maeghan Dos Anjos (ex-officio), Evan White (ex-officio)  
Absent:  
Public: Eddy Luttmer

Meeting opened at 6:35 pm

New Business

Mr. St Germain introduced Mr. Luttmer as a potential candidate to fill the vacant Stormwater Advisory Committee (SWAC) position. Mr. Luttmer informed the SWAC of his desire as a resident of Ashland who wishes to contribute to the town. By training, Mr. Luttmer is a Civil Engineer and would be able to provide technical expertise to the town in the area of stormwater management. The SWAC members reviewed the mission and objectives of the committee. All agreed to continue discussions with Mr. Luttmer at a future meeting.

Election of Secretary

Mr. St Germain noted in the recent election of committee responsibilities, the committee inadvertently omitted the position of Secretary. A motion was made to elect Mr. McGrattan as secretary. The motion passed 3-0-1, with Mr. McGrattan abstaining.

Public Commentary

The committee noted in various communication channels that some town residents were dissatisfied with the application of a stormwater fee to assure compliance with Ashland’s existing discharge permits. Specific comments were observed on how rates are set, on how the rate setting mechanism between residential and businesses was determined, and the expectations for senior residents and other stakeholders for full or partial relief of the fee. The committee reviewed its the recommendation to create a stormwater enterprise to fund the compliance with the town’s existing MS4 permit. Amongst other items, the MS4 requires additional mapping and testing of existing discharges, additional street sweeping and catch basin cleaning, and culvert inspections. Compliance requirements are an unfunded mandate from the federal and state government, and non-compliance can lead to significant fines. Proposals were made at the November 2018 town meeting to either establish the enterprise fund or to fund the activities through the existing budget process. At the Town Meeting, the resident voters approved the establishment of the enterprise fund.

The committee also reviewed its process of determining rates per the guidance of the Select Board. Initially, the committee had recommended a higher rate ($10.00 per quarter residential and a flat rate plus a component for impervious area for businesses) rather than the rate eventually agreed on. The recommendation was based on a desire to have a stable rate over
several years despite a few one-time compliance costs and generally increasing costs. The Select Board wished to have a reduced, albeit more temporary rate, with discounts or abatements made available to fixed income seniors and other individuals and businesses.

The committee recommended that Rob St Germain and Brian McGrattan to attempt to meet with the Select Board (or its members individually) for additional guidance.

OARS Reported Pollution

During its regular assessment of the quality of the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Rivers, OARS detected elevated bacteria counts where the Sudbury River intersects Union Street immediately east of Homer Ave / Chestnut St. Mr. White has directed his staff to identify potential sources of the pollution.

Catch Basin Medallions

Mr. White described medallions to be placed on or near catch basin grates to remind residents of the impact of placing trash or other materials in the basins. A motion was made for committee approval to install 200 medallions in FY2020. The motion passed 4-0-0.

2020 Objectives

The committee began discussions of 2020 objectives. Among the items to be discussed are:

- Updated or revised fee structure
- Abatements
- Annual report due in June
- Expected costs of compliance with MS4 permit
- Public education (school engagement, Farmer’s Market)
- Public participation as regards compliance
- Regulation for IDDE
- By-law change in enforcing BMPs
- Understand and check compliance with Y2 MS4 requirements
- Advocating BMPs in town and water quality standards
- Training and education of SWAC

Previous Minutes

Motion to accept as amended the minutes of the August 27 meeting. Passed 3-0-1 with Ms. Walker abstaining.

Motion to accept as amended the minutes of the September 24 meeting. Passed 4-0-0.

Next meeting date: November 18, 2019, at 7:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn passed 4-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.