

Minutes: Nov. 12, 2020 meeting, Somerset Waste Water Study Committee

Attending: Ellen Globokar, Dorset Ave. (Chair), Julie Abrams, Trent St., Julie Greenberg, Falstone Ave., Haya Hakim, Greystone St., Jan Kaufman, Trent St., Courtenay Labson, Falstone Ave., Michael Roark, Dorset Ave., Ed Schwartz, Essex Ave., Brian Smith, Uppingham St.

Steve Surko, Somerset Town Council, Robin Barr, Somerset Town Council, Barbara Zeughauser, Somerset Town Council, Matt Trollinger, Somerset Town Manager

Action Steps:

- Each committee member should indicate a first and second choice for working in several of the subcommittee areas identified below
- Ellen will arrange for Mark Etheridge (Manager, Water Resources Section, Department of Permitting Services, Montgomery County) to speak with us about the county's regulation of stormwater through building permitting.
- Jan will consult with American Planning Association about an expert who might speak with us about best practices in suburban stormwater management
- Matt will set up a googledrive for all committee documents; members will upload documents and when they do so, provide an accompanying abstract indicating what relevance or value the information has for the Committee
- Ellen will schedule meetings monthly on a Tuesday evening; the next meeting will be on Tuesday, Dec. 15th at 7:30 pm.

Council Member Surko welcomed the Committee and expressed appreciation for taking on this task. He said that he will serve as the liaison to the Town Council. He indicated that if the Committee requires the services of a consultant, it can make a request to the Council through him. He also indicated that if the requirement that the Committee complete its work in one year proves difficult, a request for an extension can be made through him.

Each member of the Committee introduced themselves, summarizing any relevant professional expertise and why they chose to volunteer for the Committee. With the exception of some former professional experience in urban planning and water resources management, the members do not have a wealth of expertise on stormwater, they universally are community-spirited and they have a range of professional skills in data analysis and operating in a complex regulatory environment that can be brought to bear. Several indicated that they have experienced problems with stormwater run-off that are beyond their own capacity to resolve.

The Chair then reviewed possible subcommittees, summarized below:

- Other impacts on stormwater (climate change, tree canopy)

- Construction impacts on stormwater (nonpermeable surface of all types, footprint expansions, how lot coverage is calculated, waivers)
- Rules and regulations (current, pending, proposed at the county and town levels)
- Resources (programs for homeowners, Somerset case studies)
- Expertise (county and town studies, hydrologists and engineers, landscaping)
- Town survey of residents to measure attitudes about stormwater issues and management

Matt advised that if subcommittees do not have more than four members (five members represents a Committee quorum, their meetings) can proceed with formal open meeting procedures.

Ellen indicated that subcommittees would begin work simultaneously and would report back to the full committee at each meeting.

There was discussion of how establishment of some shared background information would be helpful. In the course of the discussion, the 2009 Center for Watershed Protection study done for Somerset was raised and Robin Barr indicated that he would provide it to the Committee.

Some guest speakers were also suggested to help members better define the problem, including

Given the time needed to get a survey underway, there was suggestion that it be made a priority. Also, that it might be useful to do it in two stages, first to assess community sentiment on the problem and then to get community reactions to proposed solutions and their cost. The suggestion was made that we ensure that the survey address community-wide issues and not just issues relating to the respondent's private property. The age of the respondent's home and loss of trees was suggested as relevant data.

It was suggested that we do backwards mapping of the necessary starting dates for our work in order to arrive at endpoints on schedule. Ellen indicated that she would provide a timeline at the next meeting.