

The Stormwater Study Committee held a public Zoom meeting on January 12, 2021.

Attendees:

Ellen Globokar (Chair)
Matt Trollinger (Town Manager)
Robin Barr (Council Member)
Franny Peale (Council Member)
Marnie Shaul (Council President)
Steve Surko (Council Member & Liaison)
Julie Abrams
Jack Frink
Julie Greenberg
Haya Hakim
Jan Kaufman
Courtenay Labson
Michael Roarck
Gene Rovak
Shannon Rovak
Brian Smith
Ralph Wooden

Ellen kicked off the SSC meeting at 7:30PM. She introduced Kelley Okleson of Groundsmith Collective as a guest speaker.

Kelley explained that Groundsmith Collective works on residential and commercial projects, and works on sustainable projects in Somerset. SSC had provided Kelley with questions in advance. Stormwater. How suitable are stormwater projects in Somerset? “That’s a loaded question.” US Geological Survey has soil information available on Somerset. But this refers to the original soil.. Soil is disturbed during new construction – so it’s hard to say wheter a specific property can accept a Rain Garden. There is a need for a perc test (water is supposed to drain in 24 hours). MoCo Rainscapes has incredible resources. Conservation Landscaping uses native plants to slow water flow on the surface. A Bio Swell redirects water flow. The technique(s) adopted should be based on the plot’s conditions. MoCo offers up to \$7500 rebate for Rain Gardens. Q&A: If water is pooling, you need to regrade or redirect. Tree roots? “Tree roots actually help with stormwater management.” Tree roots keep soil from eroding. There is a big problem in Somerset with people building to the extent of their lots. The existing landscape cannot handle the stormwater. Dry wells? Operate like a cistern – but with water draining out. Dry wells are designed to handle roof runoff. But siting a dry well in the appropriate location is essential. Innovative engineering/building? LEEDS. Tons of written material. Are there reputable sources for info on tree water absorption? International Society of Arborists (ISA). The Hidden Life of Trees. Every inch in diameter extends the radius of the root system 1 ½ feet from the center of the tree. “You shouldn’t be screwing around in this area.” Trees offer tons of environmental benefits. Rain Garden & Perk Tests. People say Rain Gardens won’t work with our

clay soil. Over time one can improve the permeability of soil. Leaves act as mulch. Ann English – recommended speaker on conservation landscaping.

Ellen summarized SSC status and plan for moving forward. Discussion of stormwater survey. Need to discuss with Town Attorney as a town committee's data – including survey data – is publically releasable. Recommendation to increase increments of spending options in survey. Updates from subcommittees followed:

Impacts on Stormwater. Climate Change, Trees and Vegetation, Topography and Soil Type, Stormwater Gutters & Sewers, Somerset Homes, and Somerset Public Infrastructure. Need to capture historic town data. SSC will build a database.

Construction Impacts on Stormwater. Reviewed houses that did not require waivers. SSC could identify successful projects, documents lessons learned, and orchestrate Open Houses.

Expertise. Arranged for Kelly to serve as a guest speaker. Build a catalog of individuals/companies residents could use.

What's the deal with waivers? Extensive discussion of legacy and new construction drainage systems.

Next meeting on February 9. Ellen closed the SSC meeting at 9:15PM.