

Springfield/Greene County, Missouri Stormwater Management Task Force Meeting #2 Meeting Notes November 15, 2012

Welcome & Introductions

The Springfield/Greene County, Missouri Stormwater Management Task Force met in the Greene County Public Safety Center. The meeting commenced at 5:00 p.m.

Co-Chair Fred Palmerton welcomed the committee members, discussed housekeeping items, and asked if there were any objections to the Meeting Notes from October 25 or any additions to the agenda for tonight. None were noted. Each task force member and attendee introduced themselves.

Task Force

Stacey Armstrong	Ronda Headland	Matthew Pierson
Matt Bailey	Dan Hoy	Rick Scarlet
Bill Bretall	Jerany Jackson	Daniel Beckman
Geoffrey Butler	Chris Macioce	Fred Schlegel
Eric Dove	Dave Murray	Harlan Hill
Tiffany Frey	Fred Palmerton	Tom DeWitt
Casey Haynes	Brian Perdue	

Absent: Aaron Wahlquist, Karen Spence, Dana Elwell, Patrick Harrington, Patty Hamilton, Erik Fjeseth, Chris Carson, King Coltrin, Andy Hosmer, Tom Kissee

City and County Staff

Kevin Barnes	Barbara Lucks	Tim Smith
Vanessa Brandon	Cody Marshall	Todd Wagner
Phil Broyles	Fred Marty	Kimberly White
Chris Coulter	Sheila Shockey	
Carrie Lamb	Jon Williams	

Community Stakeholders:

Tammy Trantham
Amos Bridges
Emily Austin

Facilitator Sheila Shockey introduced the topic of discussion which was Flood Damage & Risk Reduction and presented the results of the Guiding Principles survey that task force members took after the last meeting. A total of 24 task force members responded to the survey. The results showed agreement on the following survey topics with some of them showing "neutral" responses: Innovation/Planning, Understandability/Public Education, Public Acceptance, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship.

Question: Is there going to be another avenue to get public input besides the task force?

Response: We would like the task force's input on the level of public input we should get and how.

The survey results showed some disagreement on the following survey topic: Public Benefit

Comments:

There was discussion about rewording the Public Benefit guiding principle.

- The benefit doesn't need to be to me personally, but to the community as a whole.
- Public won't actually be able to see the benefit from maintenance of underground system.
- We need more education of the public about the benefits and should focus on tangible benefits such as greenways.
- Perception is important. The public should perceive a benefit from their investment.
- Sometimes the benefit is the absence of something, such as no flooding.

There was general agreement to change the wording. Instead of "the public should see benefits", it should say "the public should benefit from."

Sheila Shockey summarized the members' comments that were received in the survey about the biggest stormwater challenges. The comments generally fit into the following areas:

1. Public education about stormwater issues and water quality
2. Policies that allow sustainable development
3. Aging infrastructure
4. Effective technology and Best Management Practices(BMPs) for maintenance and water quality
5. Funding

Sheila asked if there were any additional challenges not submitted in the surveys.

Comments:

- A challenge is that the public is sometimes uncomfortable with new methods of managing stormwater because of their aesthetics. Educating them about the function may help. An example is a swale with tall native grasses. The perception is that it's just not being mowed, when in reality it's intentional because the grasses are providing a function.
- A lot of the public is just not interested in stormwater. How do you reach them and get them to vote.
- Who will be educating them?
- Even if you educate them about the benefits, they still may not want a naturalized or native landscape because of the way it looks. Need design flexibility for them.
- The public needs to be educated that stormwater is not an isolated issue, it is connected with economic development and public health.
- Stormwater funding has other competing needs such as public school system and traffic.
- Who should be the messenger in educating the public -- government or non-profits? Sometimes there is suspicion of government.

Sheila asked what are the challenges related to funding?

Response: Getting people to vote for it.

Response: Promise of no new taxes for five years.

Response: Those at the top of the hill don't perceive that there is a problem and that they are contributing to it. Convincing them that their share in funding the needs is equitable to their contribution to the problem.

Response: The wish list is overwhelming and we can't fund all of it. We need to figure out what we should fund and how. Life safety and mandates should be priorities. Prioritizing the list is where we should start.

Response: What are the challenges to reallocating existing taxes/funds that are being spent on other things to fund stormwater? Is there a mechanism to do that?

Response: A challenge is not creating new problems. I know people who didn't use to have flooding problems and now they do because of new development upstream.

Presentation on Flood Damage & Risk Reduction

Todd played a KSPR TV news clip from a 2009 flood at Chestnut & National. He explained what the City and County are doing to address flooding and prevent new problems from being created. This includes ordinances/regulations/standards, good planning, acquisition of flood properties, participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and building improvements. He explained that unlike water quality which is strictly regulated by federal/state law, the state laws related to flooding are based on "Reasonable Use" and case law. Cities establish ordinances/standards that are reasonable and we look at the national standard of practice to do that.

The City/County requires stormwater detention. There are 4 progressive levels: Flood Control, Channel Protection, Water Quality, and Low Impact Development (LID). Currently, the City and County require the first three and LID is voluntary. The first three address peak flow and water quality but do not address stormwater volume. LID addresses stormwater volume. Todd gave a local development example where it is being voluntarily implemented to prevent downstream flooding in a sinkhole area. Todd described the standards and common design storms for each of these 4 levels and how they affect peak flows and volume compared to pre-development runoff on a hydrograph. The City/County are both facing the following future requirements which are largely being driven by federal/state water quality regulations but will affect our flood control/detention requirements as well: Redevelopment standards, LID, BMP construction inspections, and long-term BMP operation and maintenance.

Our practices related to good planning at the site and watershed level include applying codes/regulations, development review, permits and inspections. Planning at the watershed level has been limited but may become more important if our focus is on building projects that address multiple issues.

Question: What scale and partners would you use for watershed planning?

Response: Some might be small-scale for watersheds wholly within the city limits but we may look at a larger scale that would involve Greene County and perhaps Christian County.

Question: Would those plans be different than the EPA 9-element watershed plans?

Response: Yes, they would be more specific and address the three elements we are talking about – flood damage & risk reduction, water quality, and infrastructure maintenance.

Todd discussed flood acquisitions, explaining that over \$10 million had been expended on purchasing flood prone properties and floodplain/riparian corridors for trails.

Kevin Barnes explained that NFIP is an insurance program that the City and County have participated in since the 1980s. It requires that municipalities adopt and enforce a floodplain ordinance. By participating, any citizen is able to buy federally-backed flood insurance regardless of what flood zone they are in. The maps were updated in 2010 and the City and County have helped affected citizens with elevation certificates and Letters of Map Amendment.

Todd discussed building improvements to address flooding and showed a list of major projects that are currently funded with remaining funding sources and reserves. What remains to be accomplished includes:

1. Federal/state water quality requirements for volume reduction, redevelopment, and BMP inspections/maintenance are anticipated or proposed and we will need to adopt ordinances to address those. A stream buffer ordinance is not anticipated to be a requirement but is a good practice that we would like to see and is common in other areas.
2. Watershed master planning to identify riparian areas for protection, flood-prone areas to be addressed, maintenance needs, and areas to retrofit for water quality.
3. Continued acquisition of floodplain structures, continued pursuit of FEMA grants, and more education of public about flood risk and insurance.
4. Continuing to address services requests related to flooding in a prioritized way. It is estimated that 400 of 4,100 requests have been fixed. Our latest assessment of unfunded needs after removing what has been fixed is \$650 million.

Kevin discussed that the County's 2005 estimate of unfunded needs was \$25 million. We don't have updated figures at this time.

Todd discussed the Renew Jordan Creek project and an area of Fassnight Creek that floods as examples of projects that could be designed in a way that addresses all three objectives of flood damage & risk reduction, water quality, and infrastructure maintenance, while reducing project cost.

Todd showed a graph of the City's annual stormwater funding from 1995-2013 and its decline to current minimal levels.

Open Discussion

Question: What's being done to address Infiltration/Inflow of stormwater into the sanitary sewer which causes backups into homes?

Response: At the recommendation of the Wastewater Task Force, sewer rate increases were recently passed to fund the City's consent judgment to address this issue. It is a \$50 million program over 7 years is currently underway including lining sewer pipes, fixing leaky manholes, and disconnecting private downspouts and sump pumps from the sewer.

Comment: It's good to have flood insurance no matter where you live because flooding can occur from blocked culverts, etc. and homeowners insurance doesn't cover it.

Question: What is the best direction to go for funding?

Response: Options are property tax, sales tax, and user fee. Many programs use a combination.

Sheila asked the members what things we should do going forward.

Comment: More signage at street crossings which are prone to flooding should be installed.

Response: We only have 1 bridge in the City with a sign. It's the Bennett Bridge at Fassnight Creek which floods pretty frequently. The frequency at other crossings is so low that the public may not take signage seriously.

Comment: We should acquire more properties since it is usually a lower cost solution than building a project that would protect the property.

Question: What is the average age of homes that flood?

Response: 1920s-1960s

Question: Why do we have to do anything to address those? It's been happening for years.

Response: One consideration is reduction in property values from repetitive damages.

Comment: In some cases, maybe they didn't used to flood. It was brought on or worsened by development upstream.

Comment: There are public health issues with flooding.

Comment: It's better to address our flooding problems locally rather than being reactive to disaster and need federal aid.

Comment: Some homes obviously should not have been built there in the first place.

Comment: Property owners may have purchased without knowledge of flooding issue because there was a lack of disclosure.

Comment: It's an issue of public welfare.

Comment: It's a question of community ethics. Government's purpose is the protection of human health, safety and welfare.

Question: Is there a way to incentivize good behavior?

Response: There is a rain barrel rebate program but the community would need a lot of rain barrels to make a difference.

Response: Larger scale rainwater harvesting at each house would help but is expensive.

Response: There is a way to use incentives through a stormwater utility but it would have to be above and beyond what is required.

Response: That doesn't address existing development.

Response: These are community problems with a regional scope. We all live downstream. Blighted homes are a problem for future generations.

Response: We need staff to help us understand mandates as part of prioritizing the wish list.

Comment (Sheila Shockey): We will talk more about mandates and water quality at the next meeting, followed by infrastructure maintenance, and more about funding options.

Meeting adjourned at 7pm.