

MINUTES

MS4 Advisory Committee – September 18, 2018

The fourth meeting of the MS4 Advisory Committee of Lower Swatara Township convened at 6:00 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

Nancy Avolese	Chris DeHart	Tom Eubank
Chuck Garber	Bruce Harter	Tom Harvey
Lester Lanman	Betsy McBride	Ron Paul
Mary Lou Witmer		

Also in attendance, representing engineering firm, HRG, were:

Bruce Hulshizer	Adrienne Vicari
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Recap, News & Updates

Brief discussion took place on past meetings. A memo received from the Dauphin County Conservation District, dated September 17, 2018, regarding an MS4 poster and a newspaper ad for MS4 permit requirements was distributed to the committee and a copy is attached.

Bruce Hulshizer and Adrienne Vicari guided the topics of discussion and used a presentation, a copy of which is attached.

Public Outreach

It was agreed that: the Lower Swatara Township website should contain information that can be cursory but can also allow for links to more detailed sites such as DEP and EPA. The Derry Township site was suggested as a reference. A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) should be included on the website and as a mailing to property owners / residents in Lower Swatara in the very near future. Mention should be made that a committee of residents and affiliates of township businesses is working through this mandate and studying various options for funding. It was noted that most efforts will be on residences since farms are not included in the requirements / measurements. Discussion on issuing a Lower Swatara Township newsletter took place and it was agreed that the Township Commissioners would be contacted and asked if they would support this.

Proposed Level of Service for fee development

There are five levels of service with the top two being Exceptional, and below that, Comprehensive. It was agreed that Lower Swatara Township would strive toward Comprehensive and when that is reached, would focus on Exceptional for those areas where manpower and equipment allow. The Stormwater Budget predicts \$1.53 million in costs as an average of the coming five years. Using that five year demand, estimates were discussed for funding with various options, real estate taxes, flat fee, tiered fee based on impervious area measurements. Residential areas are measured property line to property line and do not include public streets. It was acknowledged that some township stormwater run-off goes to the airport and separate discussion would have to take place with the airport personnel regarding this and possibly reducing their fee because of it. It was also acknowledged that other

properties in the township, that owned by Penn State University was cited as an example, would also have to be addressed separately.

Impervious Area Data

The obvious was acknowledged, that is, stormwater runoff occurs from all properties, even those that are real estate tax exempt. Over 30% of the parcels in Lower Swatara Township are real estate tax exempt. The average square foot for residential parcels is 3750.

Rate Models / Fee Types

Because it is estimated that over 30% of the parcels in Lower Swatara are tax exempt, it was agreed that funding MS4 requirements by real estate taxes would not be equitable. It was acknowledged that residents would pay almost double towards the stormwater program in taxes than they would pay if a fee was imposed. It was agreed that a fee is more equitable since it includes all properties including those that are exempt from real estate taxes.

To avoid one flat fee for all properties, it was agreed to consider tiers. Since the average square feet of impervious area for residential parcels is 3750, tiers were suggested as follows:

1 – 499 Sq Feet	500 – 2499 Sq Feet	2500 – 4499 Sq Feet
4500 – 6499 Sq Feet	over 6500 Sq Feet	

Consideration was given to exempting parcels less than 500 Sq Feet and to suggesting the following monthly fees:

\$ 4.90	500 – 2499 Sq Feet
\$ 9.80	2500 – 4499 Sq Feet
\$15.30	4500 – 6499 Sq Feet
\$ 2.90	per 1000 Sq Feet of 6500 and over (example (6500 sq ft / 1000)x\$2.90=\$18.85)

Questions were raised as to (a) how keep current on parcels where changes, such as additions to original structure, occur, (b) how to apply partial payments on sewer bills which include the fee, (c) how to bill and enforce fees for parcels not using the sewer system. It was suggested that over time, using building permits, residences can be updated and the appropriate fee can be applied. Partial payments can be prorated by crediting the sewer charge for its portion and the fee for its portion of the total billing. Those without sewer use, will be billed for the fee. Lack of payment may result in a lien on the property. Also, it was suggested that this fee not be finalized until Spring 2019.

Credits

It was agreed that even though credits increase administrative costs to the township, credits need to be made available to property owners. Actions that property owners are now doing can be studied and savings can be passed along to property owners. At the October meeting, further discussion will be had on types of activities that may qualify for credits. Emphasis was placed on trying to partner with the owners of large lots so they can get credit and the township would be aided in fulfilling MS4 requirements. Discussion also took place on an appeal process; it was agreed that no fee should be required to submit an appeal.

Closing Questions and Discussions

The next meeting has been scheduled for October 10 at 6:00 at the township building.

