



# Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group

June 29, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. | Hybrid (Virtual and In-Person) Meeting

## Minutes

### Advisory Group Members Present:

V	John Chapman	P	Howard “Skip” Maginniss
P	Dino Drudi	A	Brian Sands
V	Charlotte Hall	P	Christine Thuot
P	John Hill	P	Katherine Waynick
P	Cheryl Leonard		

P = Present    A = Absent    V = Virtual (on call)

**Staff Present:** Mitch Dillon, DPI; Amanda Dolasinski, T&ES; Jesse Maines, T&ES Division Chief, Stormwater Management; Dan Medina, Stormwater Program Manager; Terry Suehr, Director of Project Implementation; Jonathan Whiteleather, DPI

**Staff Virtual:** Erin Bevis-Carver, T&ES Division Chief; Brian Rahal, Stormwater Program Section Lead, Sabu Paul, DPI

### Action Items are in bold

The meeting began at 6:03 p.m. With six Ad Hoc Group members present in person, quorum was met.

#### 1. **Electronic Meeting Notice**

Mr. Maginniss read the electronic meeting notice (amended for the hybrid meeting) and went over general housekeeping items. This meeting was an in-person meeting with option to listen in/ask questions virtually.

#### 2. **Chair’s Comments**

None

#### 3. **Flood Action Program Update**

Dr. Medina provided a progress report covering updates since the last meeting regarding Large Capacity and Combined Sewer Area projects. See slides for specific notes.

- a. Mr. Hill asked what “in procurement” means. Dr. Medina indicated that “in procurement” refers to when the City issues a request for proposal, reviews proposals, and negotiates scope and fee. When a contract is awarded and signed, the project status changes to “in design”.
- b. Ms. Thuot asked whether a design alternative has been selected for the Pitt & Gibbon project, and whether the selected alternative will cost \$11.5M as shown on the slides. Dr. Medina and Mr. Whiteleather indicated that an alternative has not yet been selected. Alternatives will be evaluated under the contract that is currently under procurement. Ms. Suehr indicated that \$11.5M is earmarked for the contract based on very high-level studies. The cost estimate will be refined as the alternatives are evaluated.



- c. Ms. Waynick asked if the process of earmarking money is the same for other projects, such as the Commonwealth /E. Glebe & Commonwealth & Ashby project. Dr. Medina indicated that generally the process is the same, though the costs for the Commonwealth /E. Glebe & Commonwealth & Ashby project are further developed than the Pitt & Gibbon project since the project is more defined.
- d. Ms. Leonard asked when the Commonwealth /E. Glebe & Commonwealth & Ashby design contract will be awarded. Dr. Medina indicated the contract is under scope and fee negotiation and will be awarded within a month.
- e. Mr. Drudi asked what happens if a scope and fee cannot be agreed on. Ms. Suehr indicated that if agreement on price negotiation cannot be made, then price negotiations with the second highest ranked firm from the proposal solicitation will begin.
- f. Ms. Thuot asked whether the City must award a contract to the lowest bidder when procuring contractors. Ms. Suehr indicated “yes” for construction contracts, but “no” for design contractors. Vendors for design of large capacity projects are based on qualifications only. Once the most qualified firm is selected, price negotiations begin.
- g. Ms. Thuot asked whether the projects are design-bid-build. Ms. Suehr indicated yes (as opposed to design-build). Design-build works better for projects when the solutions are better known.
- h. Mr. Drudi asked whether the \$11.5M allocated to the Pitt & Gibbon project covers both design and construction. Dr. Medina indicated yes.
- i. Mr. Maginniss asked how RK&K’s contract works. Dr. Medina clarified that RK&K is contracted under an on-call task order contract for the Flood Action Alexandria program.
- j. Councilman Chapman asked if price agreement cannot be met for the highest ranked firm for Commonwealth /E. Glebe & Commonwealth & Ashby project, how long will negotiations take with the next highest ranked firm. Dr. Medina indicated that each negotiation takes at least a month, but varies based on the number of iterations.

Mr. Dillon provided a progress report covering updates since the last meeting regarding Spot Improvement projects. See slides for specific notes.

- a. The total number of spot improvement projects and allocated cost has not changed.
- b. Two additional areas have since been identified as potentially needing spot improvement projects – Valley Drive and Beverley Drive.
- c. In-motion updates:
  - i. North Overlook Drainage Improvements has advanced from planning to design.
  - ii. Hume Avenue Bypass is under procurement, but is slightly delayed due to the limitations of a 10-year old contract that is being modified accordingly. The City believes that the design and construction schedules may not need to shift.
  - iii. Procurement has proceeded with three other Arlandia projects: Edison Drainage Improvements, Reed Inlets, Dale Overland Relief Channel.
  - iv. A purchase order has been obtained for construction of the East and West Del Ray Inlet projects.
  - v. A \$20,000 purchase order has been obtained for construction of additional inlets at the Clifford and Fulton Manning project, after the need for additional inlets was identified during construction of the original spot improvement project. Ms. Waynick asked where



the additional inlets are located. Mr. Maines indicated the inlets are close to Commonwealth Ave.

Mr. Maines provided a progress report covering updates since the last meeting regarding grant funding. See slides for specific notes.

- a. Federal funding includes a recent Clifford Fulton Manning green alley award of \$420,000.
- b. The City anticipates hearing back in August 2022 regarding the April 8, 2022 CFPF submission for the inlet program and partial funding for the #7 Large Capacity project.
- c. The City recently applied for \$1.1M in FY23 HUD funding for Four Mile Road and anticipates hearing about the award in spring 2023.
- d. The City is looking to add dry floodproofing and existing mature trees to the list of items for which owners can obtain stormwater utility credits. The City is working with the City's legal council to interpret new stormwater rules and could potentially push for revised legislation if the current rules do not allow for it. A concurrent goal is to reduce paperwork and documentation of maintenance involved with obtaining certain credits, and lengthen the period over which credits can be applied.
- e. The City has worked through the backlog of applications for the Flood Mitigation Pilot Grant Program. **The City is also working through expansion of the program for multi-family buildings and condominiums, as well as assessing the grant cap of \$5,000 for applications. Changes will be vetted with the Ad Hoc Group, then City Council in FY23.**
  - i. Ms. Thuot asked whether the funds for the Flood Mitigation Pilot Grant Program expire. Per Mr. Maines, no, they roll over to the next fiscal year.
  - ii. Ms. Thuot asked whether \$5k is an adequate cap. Per Mr. Maines, based on applications, a number of residents have spent more than the cap. The City is evaluating whether to raise the cap and whether residents will need to reapply or just get a check if the ceiling is raised in the future.
  - iii. Mr. Drudi asked if City Council needs to approve raising the cap. Per Mr. Maines, approval would likely be needed from City Council. **The Ad Hoc Group requested data on the number of applications where the cost has been over the \$5k cap. The Ad Hoc Group will make recommendations on the cap.**
  - iv. Per Mr. Maines, the pilot program currently focuses on properties that have flooded. The City is considering relaxing the requirement for application to incorporate homes that have not already flooded, but are at risk of flooding. Mr. Maginniss asked why. Per Mr. Maines, there is high variability in storm events across the city, so some homes may be at risk of flooding even if they have not yet flooded. Ms. Waynick suggested that the City establish a tiered approach to prioritize assistance for homes that already experience flooding. Mr. Maginniss reemphasized reaching out to residents who have called 311 to let them know about ways to protect their homes and the grant program.
  - v. Ms. Thuot suggested using a consolidated dataset showing flood prone areas in the City that could help prioritize funding applications, and help residents know their risk and provide feedback to the City.
  - vi. Mr. Drudi indicated that he does not believe the City will receive grant applications from residents who do not currently experience flooding, but could see getting applications from residents who see stormwater flowing across their property.



- f. Mr. Maginnis asked whether the City is seeing a reduction in the number of 311 requests or reduction in flooding through anecdotal evidence after flood mitigation projects are completed. Per Mr. Maines, the anecdotal evidence obtained through engagement with communities does provide feedback on project efficacy and the City is looking to expand this outreach. Ms. Waynick noted that the City has not seen major storms recently during which spot improvement projects could be evaluated.

Ms. Dolasinski provided a progress report covering updates since the last meeting regarding Flood Action communications. See slides for specific notes.

- a. The City has seen increases in the number of social media and newsletter subscribers. Additional social media and newsletter posts are upcoming. Ms. Dolasinski reminded the group that @alexandriaVATES is the correct social media handle.
- b. The City is making improvements to the website, including a “meet our leaders” section.
- c. The City recently participated in a TV interview (DC News Now) during which Ms. Suehr explained the evolution of flooding and what the City is doing about it. **The City will distribute the video to the Ad Hoc Group.** This TV interview was a great way to share information with a non-digital media audience.
- d. **Ms. Dolasinski asked for feedback from the Ad Hoc Group regarding the newsletter.** The next newsletter will be released in August.

#### 4. Flood Action Alexandria Project Dashboard Demonstration

Mr. Whiteleather demonstrated the functionality of a new ArcGIS online Flood Action Alexandria Project Dashboard. The intent of the dashboard is to show a comprehensive list of current and upcoming Flood Action Alexandria projects, where they are located, key master baseline schedule dates, and their description. Users can search for their address to find nearby projects. Users can also turn on and off layers, including the City’s boundary, watersheds, and streams. A link to the dashboard was provided to the Ad Hoc Group ahead of this meeting for review.

- a. Ms. Thuot asked whether the watersheds match the CASSCA report and whether the combined sewer area is its own watershed in the dashboard. Per Mr. Maines, yes.
- b. **Ms. Waynick and Ms. Thuot provided additional suggestions on the dashboard, which the City will consider:**
  - i. Provide a version that can be used on mobile phones.
  - ii. Make the layer feature more obvious and more robust. For instance, River Renew projects, rain gauge, and stream gauge information can be added. Prioritization and impact analysis for each project could be shown. Dr. Medina indicated that it is difficult to show impact by project since that data is not currently available.
  - iii. Commonwealth /E. Glebe & Commonwealth & Ashby is listed as a spot project and should be updated to a large capacity project.
  - iv. Attach images and videos to projects to see the work that has been done. Dr. Medina clarified that this is something that will come in the future, but is not currently included since photos are not available for all projects.



- v. Provide a popup window for a project when a user clicks on the list of projects. **Per Mr. Whiteleather, the City is working to see if the software platform used can support this request and will add some notes with directions for users.**
- c. Mr. Hill emphasized that most of the public will be looking for status of projects in their location, and that additional features may not add value. Getting the map out ASAP should be the main goal, and the Project Dashboard appeared close to complete at the time of the meeting.
- d. Mr. Maginniss asked when the dashboard will go live. Mr. Whiteleather indicated that the **dashboard will be released once comments from the Ad Hoc Group are resolved and final QC is complete.**
- e. **The City is working on embedding the story map in the City website.**
- f. Mr. Maginniss asked how the City will promote the dashboard rollout. Per Ms. Dolasinski, rollout will occur with the next newsletter since there is a spike in website hits when the newsletter is released. Mr. Maginniss indicated that the newsletter audience is limited, and recommended promoting rollout through other mechanisms like the regular newspaper and Councilman Chapman. **Per Ms. Dolasinski, the City will also work directly with neighborhood organizations and through Ad Hoc Group contacts. Councilman Chapman will promote rollout in the Mayor's newsletter.** Ms. Thuot asked whether Flood Action updates could be sent through the Alexandria e-newsletter. **Ms. Dolasinski will coordinate with appropriate offices to push rollout notifications.**

## 5. Summary of CASSCA CIP Analysis

Mr. Hill presented a recent report he developed reviewing funding allocation for the Flood Action Alexandria program using publicly available financial data and the CASSCA report. The intent of the analysis is diagnostic to evaluate the current allocations and identify red flags. The intent is not to use this report as a management tool.

- a. Per the CASSCA modeling analysis, there are 130 miles of storm sewer, but half are not adequate in diameter. Most of the inadequate pipe are in the Four Mile Run and Hooff's Run watersheds. This corroborates known flooding issues.
- b. City Council has addressed flooding by investing. The Stormwater Capital Improvement Program (CIP) shows quadrupling of funding between FY18 and now.
- c. About 70% of the FY23-32 Stormwater CIP is for new infrastructure, 22% is for maintenance, and 7% is for compliance. The focus is now more on design and construction to mitigate flooding, whereas the focus was previously maintenance and compliance with MS4 requirements. This major transition in the focus of the Stormwater CIP program takes time to implement.
- d. From a very high-level, Stormwater CIP funding appears to be allocated proportionally to watersheds based on percentage of inadequate pipe per the CASSCA study.
- e. Mr. Drudi questioned whether the Four Mile and Hooff's Run watersheds are being underfunded compared to the magnitude of flooding. Mr. Maginniss pointed out that smaller projects for other watersheds have smaller economies of scale and given the high-level nature of the analysis, the percent allocation matches the needs well.



- f. **Mr. Hill noted that moving forward, the Ad Hoc Group can track if funding is being allocated correctly where there is need, and verify that money is being spent in accordance with the allocation.**
- g. **Mr. Hill would like to finalize and make the report available to the public.**
- h. Ms. Thuot asked if the combined sewer watershed is included in the analysis. Per Mr. Hill and Ms. Bevis-Carver, no; the CASSCA study and the Stormwater CIP do not cover the combined sewer area. The combined sewer projects are funded under a separate Sanitary Sewer CIP. **Mr. Hill may amend the analysis to include some combined sewer analysis with City and Ad Hoc Group assistance as needed.** The inclusion of combined sewer projects is complicated by the fact that the CASSCA study does not include the combined sewer. *Note: Analysis memo was updated to include combined sewer area on 7/19/22.*

## 6. Summary of Draft Annual Report

Mr. Maginniss discussed the annual report developed by the Ad Hoc Group, which includes everything the group has accomplished and explored since inception. Mr. Maginniss asked for further comments from the Ad Hoc Group:

- a. Ms. Waynick requested that in the Next Steps section, add the suggestion of working with City staff and developers to evaluate current stormwater ordinances for work that impacts more than 2,500 square feet. The idea is to understand where the current regulations are working and where they are not working to provide adequate stormwater reductions, while balancing cost of development. **Mr. Maginniss will incorporate language provided by Ms. Waynick.**
- b. Mr. Maginniss also believes that evaluation of ways to encourage responsible stormwater management for projects which disturb less than 2,500 square feet and do not require a special use permit is also a worthwhile effort. Mr. Maines indicated that there is precedent with the City working with developers to incorporate more green infrastructure within developments, memorialized through a memo to industry that was approved by VA DEQ. Mr. Maginniss asked whether City building code reviewers and inspectors provide comments on projects that disturb less than 2,500 square feet. Mr. Maines indicated that erosion and sediment control and grading is reviewed, but otherwise comments are limited.
- c. Mr. Maginniss asked what review measures the City can take to prevent poor building practices that result in flooding. There are many renovations occurring in the City that do not implement best flood mitigation practices, such as backflow preventors. The City may ultimately pay for these issues through the Flood Mitigation Grant program. Mr. Maginniss recommended updating building codes and reviews for additions and new construction to address flood mitigation.
- d. Mr. Drudi made a motion to adopt the Annual Report with Ms. Waynick's amendment. Mr. Hill seconded. The Ad Hoc Group members present voted unanimously in favor.
- e. **Mr. Maginniss will provide the final version of the Annual Report to the Ad Hoc Group.**
- f. Mr. Maginniss asked whether the City has reviewed the Annual Report for errors. Dr. Medina indicated that the City did an informal review and did not have comments.

## 7. Chair and Group Succession

The Ad Hoc Group discussed the continuation of the Group through the next fiscal year.





- a. Mr. Drudi asked whether the results of the Ad Hoc Group will be well received by City Council and whether the Group will be renewed. **Councilman Chapman will talk with the City attorney to discuss the Group and its continuation.**
- b. Mr. Drudi asked whether current memberships in the Ad Hoc Group expire with the fiscal year. **Councilman Chapman will get clarification from the City attorney.**
- c. The Ad Hoc Group decided to provisionally elect a new chair assuming the Group is authorized for another year and there is continuation of current members. Mr. Hill was nominated by Mr. Drudi. Ms. Thuot seconded the nomination. The Ad Hoc Group members present voted unanimously in favor.
- d. The Ad Hoc Group decided to provisionally elect a new vice chair assuming the Group is authorized for another year and there is continuation of current members. Ms. Waynick was nominated by Mr. Drudi. Mr. Hill seconded the nomination. The Ad Hoc Group members present voted unanimously in favor.

## **8. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Drudi asked whether all comments were incorporated for the February 16 and April 19 Ad Hoc Group meeting minutes. Mr. Maginniss and Mr. Medina indicated yes. Mr. Drudi motioned to approve both sets of minutes. Mr. Hill seconded. The Ad Hoc Group members present voted unanimously in favor.

## **9. Public Comments**

- a. Jan Rivenburg lives at Pitt & Gibbon. She asked the City to prioritize projects in the combined sewer area given contact with combined sewage during flooding. She also would like the Ad Hoc Group to continue. Dr. Medina indicated that the City is prioritizing projects where residents come in contact with sewage. Ms. Thuot emphasized that sewage overflows are a chronic issue and a health issue. Ms. Waynick also emphasized that sewer backups and contact with sewage is also occurring in separated storm sewer areas. Ms. Leonard expressed that floodwater is often contaminated regardless of location.
- b. Mr. Hill asked whether the combined sewer projects are funded by the Sanitary Sewer CIP and whether the projects are shown on the dashboard. Mr. Maines indicated yes.
- c. Ms. Hall asked if someone from the health department should participate in the Ad Hoc Group meetings. Dr. Medina indicated that the City already understands that contact with floodwater and combined sewage is an issue, so it is not necessary to bring in this representative.
- d. Ms. Waynick asked whether residents should be reporting contact with floodwater and sewage backup through 311 or another mechanism. Mr. Maines indicated that contact with sewer backups within a home can be reported to VADEQ. For flooding outside the home, Mr. Maines recommended using 311.

## **10. Adjourn 8:08pm**

Mr. Drudi moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hill seconded. The Ad Hoc Group members present voted unanimously in favor.