

Rochester Stormwater Funding Source Meeting #1
October 11, 2022

Meeting Attendees

- Consultant Team
 - Renee Bourdeau– Geosyntec Consultants
 - Bella D’Ascoli– Geosyntec Consultants
 - Dave Fox– Raftelis
- City of Rochester
 - Peter Nourse – Director of City Services
 - Shanna Saunders– Director of Planning & Development
 - Peter Lachapelle – Deputy Mayor
 - Katie Ambrose – Deputy City Manager, Director of Finance & Administration
 - Mark Sullivan – Deputy Finance Director – Budget Management & Purchasing
 - Jenn Marsh – Asst. Director of Economic Development
 - Daniel Camara – GIS
 - Mark Collopy – Chair, Planning Board
 - Blaine Cox – City Manager
 - Michael Scala – Director of Economic Development
 - Michael Bezanson – City Engineer
- Other Participants
 - Josh Dame - LDI Solutions
 - Barbara Holstein – Member of SRPC

Opening discussion

- **LACHAPELLE** - 2nd Thursday preference noted for meetings
- **NOURSE** - opens with why Rochester needs to consider SW utility by EPA Great Bay Settlement
- **LACHAPELLE** - asks if Planning Board is involved
 - **BOURDEAU** – Not at this stage. We envision this project occurring in two phases
 - Phase 1: Feasibility, Financing, Etc
 - Look at range of options to distribute funding: Fee based, or rate/scale based
 - Prepare report for recommendations. Present recommendation to city council to decide next steps
 - Phase 2: Public Education and Outreach through rollout
 - This phase would look at preparation of educational materials and a broader rollout of the results of the feasibility study to the public. This phase would also include looking at a credit system, billing framework, and refinement of the fee structure, and developing an ordinance for impact of the fee
- **COX** – what is the status with Dover?
 - **BOURDEAU** - they completed a feasibility study. They did apply for grant funding for a second phase to do outreach and education to the general public.

The City of Rochester received \$100,000 for Phase 2 of this study for public education and outreach

- **COX** – why the focus on flood reduction as a part of this study
 - **BOURDEAU** - the City has flooding issues, and it would engage public. Flooding connects people to the problem and is easily relatable for residents
- **BOURDEAU** and **FOX** - present presentation. See attached presentation for more details.
- **NOURSE** – Dover’s rate structure seems high for single family
 - **BOURDEAU** - confirmed and stated it can increase over time, not one initial jump to full fee

Round Table Discussion

- Next meeting - Thursday December 8th @ 4pm
- Question: How long are fees good for?
 - **BOURDEAU** - can be annually or biannually, ultimately up to the City as needed
- **LACHAPELLE** - Important to consider inflation, blue collar workers, and totality of financial hygiene and status of the City
 - **BOURDEAU** - ways to communicate that the fee/funding will provide opportunities for other projects that haven’t been implemented. Important to move away from “Rain Tax”. Messaging is crucial
- **SULLIVAN** - Is annual amount estimated?
 - **NOURSE** - \$300,000 general fund for MS4 support, but does not include future costs and costs not incurred by consultants
 - **BOURDEAU** - ultimately, we don’t know, but important to consider all aspects of what stormwater touches and then start subtracting to what is reasonable
- **SCALA** – how do we enforce the fee?
 - **FOX** - hard to enforce when not on city water, can structure to be top of bill for water such that it acts a portion of not fully paid bill on water
- **SULLIVAN**—Community buildings and schools would be included in the fee?
 - **BOURDEAU**: yes, those will be included
- **SCALA** – what are our average rental rates?
 - **FOX**: part of the customer impact study when analyzed
- **SCALA** —Does this get more stringent as time ensues?
 - **NOURSE** and **BOURDEAU**: rates are likely to increase, but including public helps with transparency and is defensible (strictly paying for stormwater)
- **SCALA** – Will there be credits? Where does that money come from?
 - **FOX**: fees have to increase to offset credits, similar to tax exemptions
 - **BOURDEAU**: load requirements may be coming from EPA, need residential buy in so that that is not a huge hit to the budget later on
- **COX**: selling to community and council, easy to show Vac trucks and other budgets, BMPs will be a tough sell.
 - **BOURDEAU**: people do not have to participate in credit system if fee is palatable enough and equitable
 - **FOX**: credits can be only for commercials

- **DAME:** Is there an alternative other than the fee? Is this being driven by Great Bay Settlement?
 - **FOX:** comes down to cost recovery
 - **AMBROSE:** sounds like there is some catch up, and requirement to retrofit and maintain BMPs in addition to new requirements
 - **BOURDEAU:** BMPs can be considered deferred maintenance to find budget and funding for
 - **NOURSE:** product of negotiation between the cities
- **DAME:** Careful about saying delay expenses, public outreach has to be careful
 - **NOURSE:** agrees, also notes that the catchment investigations provide an unknown of budget and what they will find in pipes
 - **BOURDEAU:** MS4 permit will not get less stringent
- **COX:** Will this feasibility study touch on other cities around Rochester?
 - **BOURDEAU:** We can include this in the report if we find that necessary, stormwater is the neglected utility and a lot of communities struggle with finding budget to support the needs. Lots are behind in requirements due to budget disparities
- **LACHAPELLE:** if we get full council buy in, move forward, do we need an ordinance? Do you help provide guidance?
 - **BOURDEAU** and **FOX:** yes, we can assist but that is far down the road. We would likely form a new committee in Phase 2 with the majority residents to get direct feedback and buy in
- **AMBROSE:** Outreach is important to emphasize that there are two permits at play on different permitting cycles
- **DAME:** if we are trying to find a way to close gap in funding, are you going to see the cost of updating the WWTF in benefit to nitrogen loading?
 - **BOURDEAU:** MS4 requirements would still exist as that would only cover the Nitrogen permit requirements, MS4 permit can legally change to be regulating point source stormwater (Total Maximum Daily Load)
 - Everyone in the watershed the total allowable Nitrogen for the City
 - **BOURDEAU:** does not think we will get into the nitty gritty of nitrogen in this initial study, focus on budgeting for what is known today, and we can always go back and revisit requirements
- **AMBROSE:** Will we include PFAs funding in the budget?
 - **BOURDEAU:** separate funding, but there is potential to include in future if necessary
 - **FOX:** mainly on drinking water regulations
- **SULLIVAN:** How do we find percentage of salaries for stormwater?
 - **BOURDEAU** and **NOURSE:** taking percentages of dedicated portion of salary
 - **FOX:** only putting explicit costs in initial fees, then start tracking costs to see how
- **SAUNDERS:** Is Geosyntec to help with outreach?
 - **BOURDEAU:** yes there will be assistance with public outreach
- **HOLSTEIN:** Stafford Regional Planning Commission is working on stormwater innovations and grant applications are out for Lamprey River Advisory Water Plan, Sunrise Lake Watershed, Town of Milton Nitrogen, Rollinsford Nitrogen, Cochecho River Management. Stating we are not alone in this. Thinks Dover fee is high

- **BOURDEAU:** Dover may get pushback, however most of that committee was community and business owners
- **HOLSTEIN:** emphasized that webinars are helpful and good education on why fees are necessary