



**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
STORMWATER TASK FORCE**

MONTHLY MEETING

Minutes of the May Meeting

May 15, 2024

The meeting began at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was a hybrid with participants attending both in person and via Zoom.

Task Force Members Present

Jason Bailey
Scott Jeffers
Gabe Pankratz
Ray McKeeman

Township Personnel Present

Pam Gural-Bear, Township Manager
Jennifer Keller, Operations Manager
Jim Rieben, Public Works Director
Ed Culp, Public Works Operations Manager
Wyatt Williams, Sustainability Coordinator
Justin Smiley, Capital & Special Projects Manager

Township Consultants

Mark Stabolepszy, SSM Group
Nick Szeredai, SSM Group

I. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 20, 2024; minutes as presented.

II. NEW BUSINESS

1. Township Responsibilities to Regulate Stormwater vs. Eliminating Flooding

Mr. Stabolepszy said SSM met with Staff and re-evaluated where energies should be directed given that the Township's responsibility is to regulate stormwater, not eliminate flooding. Regulating stormwater can minimize flooding, but it is not the Township's responsibility to eliminate flooding nor is that really feasible. The Township regulates stormwater by:

- Enacting a stormwater ordinance (following DEP model ordinance) and keeping it current;
- Maintaining stormwater facilities on Township-owned property such as roads, parks, etc.; and
- Monitor compliance of private development implementing and enforcing Stormwater Management Facilities Maintenance Agreements.

Mr. Stabolepszy asked Taskforce members to look over the Agreement for any suggested revisions. It was noted that the Agreement has only been in existence for approximately 15 years and is not in effect for older developments.

2. Strategy

The Township is currently implementing its Pollutant Reduction Plan as required by the MS-4 permit and includes a number of specific projects designed to meet the 10% sediment reduction required. Exton Park was initially excluded from the MS-4 area, but Ms. Gural-Bear said Mr. Szeredai is currently looking at the calculations to see if it is worth including Exton Park.

Mr. Stabolepszy said a number of PRP projects are on privately-owned property, and cooperation from the HOAs has not been great. Over the next 3-6 months, Staff and SSM will be re-evaluating what PRP projects are feasible and will seek input and feedback from the Taskforce members.

While initially considering stream restoration of Valley Creek, this idea has been “put on the back burner” believing that Valley Creek flooding is not the Township’s responsibility and recognizing that it would not have a positive impact on existing flooding in the very near future.

Staff will be meeting with the Civic Association of Meadowbrook Manor to discuss how the property owners can be proactive. Mr. Rieben said the pond has not been maintained. It should be 5-6 feet deep and is only about 1 foot deep, is filled with sludge, and the inlets need maintenance. Dredging the pond is the first step, and this is the responsibility of the Civic Association. Mr. Szeredai suggested when talking to the Civic Association, let them know that the old study recommends taking of some of their property to restore the stream. He imagined they will not be in favor of this, but the amount of owner buy-in needs to be gauged before going further. Mr. Szeredai further maintained that stream restoration will affect water quality, not necessarily reduce flooding. It was suggested to look at the detention basins in the area and evaluate their effectiveness and perhaps retrofit them. Mr. Szeredai said the basins are an older design and do not hold a lot of water. He added that it is difficult to get property owners to commit to retrofitting basins.

Mr. Stabolepszky said while PRP focuses on sediment reduction only, there may be possible projects that could increase basin capacity as well.

A member suggested that while the problem begins with Valley Creek, a focus on smaller problem areas further away from the Creek may make a difference, noting that every little bit helps.

It was suggested to develop a storyline on a graphic/map showing the big picture of Valley Creek and why the issue is so complicated, adding timelines of both maximum and minimum impacts and long and short-term projects associated with various timelines. Better educational materials will help residents understand the complexity of the problem. Before and after graphics could be used showing for example, how a particular stream ran before a house or driveway was constructed and how it runs now to help residents understand why flooding is happening.

It was further noted that sometimes residents do little things that can create bigger problems. Staff is currently working to help residents understand what their responsibility is with regard to stormwater basins and SWMFA’s.

It was pointed out that residents need to know the truth about how complex the issue is, so that they can adjust their expectations and perhaps develop a different set of tools to manage the

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problem. They also need to understand the importance of filing their insurance claims so that FEMA has a record of how many times a property was flooded resulting in a greater chance of offering grants for buy-out.

Mr. Stabolepszky said Staff has developed a comprehensive spreadsheet of resident complaints and problem areas and is in the process of determining what is on private property and what can be managed/fixed focusing on more localized issues; prioritizing what the Township can do and then working out costs and showing all options.

Ms. Gural-Bear said other areas that have major stormwater issues besides Meadowbrook Manor include Whiteland Crest and the Katie Way area – developments that were built before stormwater regulations were put in place. She noted that Evian is undertaking a basin remediation that can provide a good opportunity for on-site education.

Mr. Stabolepszky suggested members look at the Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance to see if anything should be modified going forward. Reducing the amount of required parking was suggested to reduce impervious cover.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wyatt Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Wyatt Williams
Recording Secretary

