

Community Advisory Group Notes

Thursday, September 29, 2016 from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Community Advisory Group Members

Present

Senator James N. Robey (conference)
Frank Durantaye
Andy Hall
Timothy Kendzierski
Lori Lilly
Gary Maule
Ken McNaughton
Ron Peters
Bruno Reich
Angela Tersiguel
Beth Woodruff

Not Present

Tammy Beideman
Kevin Bloom
Simon Cortes
Reverend Joan King
Don Reuwer
Debbie Slack Katz

County Staff

Jeff Bronow
Jim Caldwell
Lisa Crow
Mark DeLuca
Joseph Herr
Jessie Keller
Phil Nichols
Kristin O'Connor
Councilmember Jon Weinstein

Discussion Topics

Welcome – Senator, James N. Robey

- Jim is on the phone, still recovering from ankle surgery and will be in-person at the next meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Senator, James N. Robey

- Minutes from last week's meeting on 9/22/16 were approved.

Follow-up from Last Meeting – County Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

Weather Update

- Office of Emergency Management is continuing to monitor the forecasted rain closely.

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- Additionally, OEM and Recovery Manager conducted an assessment of Ellicott City to mitigate any potential issues in anticipation of the forecasted weather.

Compiled CAG Follow-Up Items

- County support staff compiled all of the status of all the follow-up items from each meeting as well as questions posed by a CAG member into one document.
 - This document will be updated for each CAG meeting to help with time efficiency.
- Staff reached out to a lot of people to get significant feedback.
- It should be noted that a lot of staff work goes into the running list of items addressed each week.
- The County Recovery Manager reviewed the County's Recovery Framework which shows where the CAG integrates with the overall system.
 - The system includes the County Executive, Senior Policy Group (Department Heads), Recovery Manager, Taskforce, and the respective Recovery Support Functions (comprised of various departments and subject matter experts).
 - Senator Robey is part of the Senior Policy Group and speaks on behalf of the CAG.

Future Meeting Schedule – County Administration, Phil Nichols

- CAG members received a draft schedule at the last meeting.
- Let Phil know if you have any additional ideas or suggestions.
- Spoke to Housing Commission Director who is going see if someone from Storm Water Controls at Burgess Mill can attend a future CAG meeting.

Inspection Reporting Process and Q & A— Department of Public Works, Mark DeLuca

- CAG members wanted to review the inspection reports from DPW.
- Mark DeLuca from DPW attended to explain the inspections process and reporting information contained on the website.
- Mark is the Chief for the Environmental Services Bureau and oversees the Stormwater Management Division in the Department of Public Works.
- CAG mentioned the desire for more information on pond locations and inspection reports.
 - This information will be distributed electronically.
- Mark noted that there is so much data put into a database that it's hard to put into a more readable form.
- When viewed as a whole database reports are complete, but when looked at as individual files they seem incomplete.
- DPW offers that their inspectors could accompany any group members wishing to inspect any ponds in order to better explain requirements and answer any questions.
- Mark reviewed a typical inspection report with the CAG.
- BMP in the report stands for Best Management Practice (BMP- it's really a storm water facility).
- All ponds are on a 3 year inspection cycle.
 - The State regulates the cycle year and ensures the Dept. follows this schedule.
 - A 3 year cycle does work and is used statewide.
- Some owners have storm water facility in front of building and take really great care of their pond.
- Other owners have ponds located in the back of their building and don't maintain them as well.
- DPW does not have experience with anyone not correcting their pond.
- DPW's Office is located at Gateway.

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- Indication of a “Plan” is the construction plan.
- Storm water report goes to Dept. Planning and Zoning for review.
- State comes in and looks at the database.
- If a pond does not meet regulations, a letter is sent to the owner giving them 30 days to correct the issue.
 - After a third letter, a notice of violation where a fine can be given.
 - The fine amount is in the County code.
- DPW has about 10 inspectors, not all are county employees some consultants are used.
- The dept. has a rolling list of inspections out of the 3, 000 ponds.
- DPW has more than adequate staff to do inspections, if not, EPA would fine.
- Pictures of the specific area that needs to be repaired are taken.
- CAG member had question regarding visible trees in a pond.
 - The reason you take trees out of the base of a pond.
 - When they are sapling you cut them off right at the base.
 - They passed the previous inspections.
 - Trees will get cut, or fix trash rack, perfect example.
- CAG member had a question about green alga visible in some ponds.
 - Mark explained that it’s not always algae,
 - Some ponds are meant to hold water.
- There are a lot of issues that can occur with storm water ponds, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t functioning.
- Going out with an inspector is the best way CAG members can get a better understanding of what they see and if there are any issues.
- A CAG member wanted to know how much water some of the ponds are designed to hold.
 - The McCormick Taylor study will identify how much water ponds should hold, see what’s in place, and what’s in the drainage area.
 - During the storm, there were 2 that were very close to failing.
- Mark showed pictures to the CAG on some problem areas in Historic Ellicott City.
 - Mark noted that the drainage area is old and was constructed a long time ago.
 - Culverts that are small and buildings that are obstructive.
 - DPW is looking at the areas showed.
- Records Mark mentioned are available online.
- There are things in the watershed that are very difficult to fix.
- Note these critical areas that need to be addressed.
- DPW is working on repairing some of these areas.
 - DPW can get into that for a different presentation.
 - List areas that are problematic and prioritize based on need and affordability working along with Flood Working Group.
 - Group requested more information that needs to be done now to make a difference.
- Comment from a CAG member that another study is not needed.
- Group is eager to do work now that could mitigate issues.
- DPW has a list of projects that they are working on.
- The bigger question is to do everything, how much funding does it cost to complete all of the projects?
- One project that came out of the S & S study surrounded the stream walls.
- Almost all of the walls DPW was in the process of designing did fall during the storm.

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- Corp of Engineers is working on a project to produce an overarching guide on how buildings could be flood proofed. This will be a review of certain properties that will produce information that could be extrapolated for all of the buildings in Ellicott City.
- Stream maintenance for bigger projects was funded.
 - 1st year totaled 2.5 million, and where DPW was working and prioritized the most critical.
 - Received 2.5 million in funding July of last year.
 - There was a strategy in place, needed to make sure current infrastructure was maintained properly.
- Flood in 2011 was because of lack of maintenance in the stream, but can't say that about this storm.
- Ready cleaned from Toll House road down.
- Did the stream inspection report, knew where the worst walls were located.
 - Started to design those walls.
 - Storm did the demo for those walls.
 - Taking permanent easements of the wall.
 - It's the only mechanism available.
 - Probably going to take 5 with the walls identified maybe 6. In the process of taking those.
- Flood Work Group was tasked with finding an acceptable way for the County to work with the community.
 - To keep this in the community's hands.
 - Method could include suggesting a policy, a cost-share, or ownership of the stream.
 - A lot of different options could be recommended to be evaluated by decision makers in the County.
- CAG member commented that Austin plans to spend 9 million on a big pipe.
- Discussion on how these projects take time.
 - For example, Joe and Phil took a trip to Frederick.
 - The culvert took 5 years to design then 5 years to construct.
 - Also, they had soft terrain they were digging into.
- Comment that West End is where the flooding issues come from.
 - Again, one reason the FWG was created was to assist with County work on private property.
 - Wanted help from the FWG to give County that feedback.
- Comment on the McCormick Taylor Study on the Hudson Branch needed 261 acre feet, which is 5 football fields 26 feet deep.
 - Could we actually get to that number?
 - Or is it worth pursuing?
 - Complex set of parameters that you have to look at.
 - What storm are you trying to design for?
- Storm drains are designed for 10 year storms.
 - The opening on a typical storm drain, calibrated will still catch water.
 - Got the equivalency of a 1,000 year storm.
 - Know storm drains don't work for this type of storm, they only carry a portion of the water.
- Have to store the water from a ten year storm and another event.
- Reducing the flow is really important but we need to wait for the study to be complete.
- Is the BGE corridor is off limits?
 - Need to approach them to get their approval.
 - Senator Robey commented that the CAG should put this in the final recommendations.
- What year did the water retention ponds change?

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- There were storm water regulations put in place in '85.
- In 1985, the state came out with specifications that codified on what new development had to do with big ponds.
- Don't need legislation for public ponds.
- Need to do the studies for each of these ponds to see their capacity.
- The procedure for mitigating issues for public ponds is to conduct a study then initiate a capital project.
- Private land can be a complication.
- There needs to be a method to compel the private owner.
 - Office of Community Sustainability had a taskforce of commercial property owners to discuss this topic.
 - Basic conclusion was if the County paid for the project and drop storm water fees so they can maintain it, private owners would be okay with process.
- A discussion regarding the process for moving forward occurred.
 - For any new direction, projects could be tossed up, prioritized, and compared to the priority that's already there.
- Public Engagement Associates (DPZ's contractor) tasked with working with the community on the process moving forward, was going to discuss this very item today.
 - PEA is beginning to involve other aspects of the community into the recovery strategy.
 - PEA was going to discuss the process for engaging with the community through public meetings.
 - PEA was also going to generate some ideas from the CAG and talk about areas that will feed into Non-Master Plan projects and those that will be part of the Master Plan process.
- DPW had inspectors walking out the past couple of days and taking pictures, CAG members are thankful for taking proactive steps in anticipation of the rain.
- Education on storm drain cleaning is also needed.

Closing – County Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- Next meeting, Public Engagement Associates will present on the recovery process and generate ideas from the CAG.