



2A Stormwater Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting Agenda

2-4 PM, February 18, 2021 Meeting

Held Remotely

In attendance: Richard Mulledy, Brenda Roy, Tim Biolchini, Maren McDowell, Jeff Besse, Erin Powers, Travis Easton, Councilman Don Knight, Councilman Tom Strand, Gary Nesbit, Terry Schooler, Emily Magnuson, Christine Lowenberg, David Havlick, Matthew Johnson

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Terry Schooler at 2:02 p.m.

Motion made to approve by Gary Nesbit and seconded by Christine Lowenberg to approve the previous meeting minutes.

The year-end financial overview was provided by Stormwater Business Administrator Brenda Roy. Due to the pandemic, and with no knowledge of how COVID might affect the budget, the Stormwater Enterprise cut back on operating expenses and delayed hiring. The balance will carryover to 2021 to help meet obligations.

Operating will have a nine percent carry over into 2021. Councilman Knight asked if Operations money carries over. The answer is that yes, it does because it is funded by Stormwater Enterprise fee dollars and does not come from the general fund.

The Stormwater Enterprise billed about 2.5% more than the previous year, and collected about \$534k more in revenue than the previous year. In 2020 the Enterprise collected more revenue than was billed, both because payments were received for prior year amounts on late accounts certified to the county for collections, and because people pre-paid.

Mayor Suthers asked for percentage of collection; 2020 was 103%, 96 percent overall since the start of the enterprise.

Brenda showed billed and collected by the City's third party billing contractor, as well as totals collected by Colorado Springs Utilities.

Terry Schooler asked if there are any patterns prevalent in the delinquent accounts. Brenda said the number of delinquent accounts are slightly up from December of 2019, but they are smaller amounts. The Enterprise will review their policy with CSU to look at delinquent accounts as we move forward.

Stormwater fee increase update:

Stormwater Division Manager Richard Mulledy provided a review of the proposed Stormwater fee increase. He went over the Fee Options previously presented to City Council, which showed how the fees would increase over time. Gary Nesbit stated that actual residential growth seems higher than projections. Richard said this growth can be difficult to model but we were using the data we have

had over the past few years and shared some reasoning behind the projections. Richard said his team is working on a model to more accurately project future growth.

Mayor Suthers said he has seen only limited amounts of calls/complaints to his office, but the proposal had only been in work session so far. Might see more after the next council meeting although the projected increases are relatively moderate. Councilman Tom Strand had received fewer than 10 unhappy comments.

Terry Schooler asked, "If we're going to raise additional funds, how is that going to be spent?" Richard said that the Enterprise has to do certain projects within certain years, so we must have the revenue to meet the requirements.

Terry suggested that the Enterprise tell the public about the type of projects that are going to be done and put a price tag on them.

Richard showed property size comparisons to other large cities in Colorado, where Colorado Springs was less in almost every scenario. Terry said to still show the type of projects. He said the success of items like 2C will demonstrate to residents what the Enterprise is going to do.

Terry also asked how maintenance costs compared to other communities. Richard said it is difficult to determine exactly but we will look into it.

David Havlick said it looked as though there's no choice but to increase the fee. Mayor Suthers said that at this point, these are legal obligations and we'll have to take from other budgets (like Police and Fire) if we don't increase the fee. In 2021 there was a kick up in obligations due to the settlement.

The fee would not be increased until July. There are increases both from the IGA and the Consent Decree. Colorado has higher stormwater residential fees across the nation due to requirements and terrain, many other factors

There was then a discussion of the Fountain Creek Masterplan. This is not a City-led project, although they have asked the City to be involved. Following was an explanation from Mayor Suthers and Richard about the scope of the project and what may be involved, but it is largely non-City at this point

The next discussion point was the City approach to maintenance of concrete channels.

Senior Stormwater Engineer Tim Biolchini said the Enterprise does the majority of their work on concrete channels in colder months because it is not raining.

Throughout the year, multiple groups (Public Works/Parks/O&M groups) watch concrete channels for potential issues. Everyone keeps separate lists of what channels have issues and beginning-late Dec, we compile the lists, including the Operations and Maintenance inspection list. We determine which have immediate needs or what needs can be programmed out. In Spring, we halt channel work because the rains start in May. Then we start again in October. Issues can range from voids beneath concrete (requiring an immediate fix) to cracks, to spalling. Our typical repair is to cut two feet up the side of the channel and to pour monolithically so seams do not jeopardize the channel in the future.

Tim said we do investigate the potential to turn a concrete channel back into natural channel. We look at it from a water quality perspective and a grant perspective. Are there any grants that could pay for this? The majority of concrete channels were created because people wanted the land around them, so we cannot rip them out because they are in the backyards of many properties. We can gain

water quality credit by restoring concrete channels, so we are looking at them to see what can be done.

Camp Creek coming out of Garden of the Gods is an example. We have looked at some concept designs, but we would have to take out a lane of traffic because we have to spread out the flow. There were options investigated several years ago and at the time they were \$35 million. A partially vegetated concrete channel does contribute to water quality and looks better than pure concrete.

Councilman Knight asked about natural vs concrete channels and if you show how well past projects are performing? Especially areas like North and South Douglas. Tim said they have a grant for the channel across Sinton and will be going out to bid (n douglas). Next topic included discussion of history of that project and old EPA audit.

Matt Johnson said that as the design life of a channel expires, let's cut in a green, low flow channel. Tim said we do always consider this route for the sake of long and short term costs. The majority fall into category of not having room to install. We are not putting in any new concrete channels. David Havlick cautioned to remember the energy output downstream.

Richard Mulledy then provided a settlement update. The settlement is done and the 15-year agreement timer has started. Significant documentation is underway.

Next topic was LID Manual development, which the Enterprise is calling the "Green Infrastructure Manual," as presented by Stormwater Engineer Erin Powers. Muller Engineering has been selected as the contractor to put together the manual. They are looking at how green infrastructure could be part of development plans. They are also looking at manuals from other US cities. They will then be performing infiltration testing, will help to calculate credit. Their aim is a first draft by Fall 2021, and they will do a presentation on this once they are further along. The goal is to get the SAC involved with this effort as well.

Mayor Suthers and Travis Easton lauded the Stormwater Enterprise for their momentous work, alluding to the cover of the Colorado Public Works Journal, which featured one of the channels that won an award in 2020.

A motion was made to support the fee increase by Gary Nesbit and seconded by Emily Magnuson. All other members voted to approve, minus David Havlick who abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

Next meeting: May 20, 2021