Community Services Advisory Commission
(Virtual Zoom Meeting)
September 8, 2020
Minutes

Commission Members:	**Present:**	Steve Dritz, Vivekanandan Arunachalam, Tom Strup, Alice (Dee) Kanonchoff, Elizabeth McClain, Gary Gassin, Jim Snider
	Absent:	None
Staff Members Present:		Nick Plouck, Management Assistant Kirby Dearth, Intern Cyndy Barney, IT Project Leader
Guests:		None

I. Call to Order
Mr. Dritz established that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

II. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
With virtual assembly, meetings are advertised and the public has the ability to submit public comments in advance of the meeting. No comments were submitted for this meeting.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes
Minutes from the August 11th meeting will be distributed via email for review upon completion.

IV. Stormwater Management Funding
Prior to the meeting, Mr. Plouck distributed a Maintenance of Residential Stormwater Management Basins Memo for the commission members to review. Mr. Dritz reviewed the document and submitted comments on the memo prior to the meeting.

Mr. Plouck asked if other Commission members had questions or comments. [In reference to the pilot grant program], Mr. Snider asked what is the total dollar amount contained within the grant bucket and is it all used each year? Mr. Plouck said he was not sure of the total dollar amount of the grant bucket but would follow up and get back to the Commission with a response. He could not recall the exact amount allocated for the Beautify Your Neighborhood Matching Grant Program. He did say the total amount allotted is not always used every year. It is an application approval process, done either every 6 or 12 months. The number of applications can vary. There

may be several applications, only a couple or none at all, so the money doesn't always get fully utilized and goes back into the general fund from which it came. The other program, similar to what was discussed, is the relatively new program the City implemented, the Commercial Façade Improvement Program. Under this program, businesses that would like to make aesthetic improvements to their business's facade can apply for this money. It is not limited to a specific type of business so any business in the Historic Dublin area can utilize funds from that account. Mr. Plouck believes the amount for the Commercial Façade Improvement Program is $50,000 with an up to 50% match.

Referring to the memo, Ms. Kanonchoff asked if the Bowling Green program is a projection of what might be done in the City of Dublin. Mr. Plouck said the City's program would look similar. He noted that Mr. Dritz made a comment on the memorandum about providing the numbers and the match in the recommendation to Council. Mr. Plouck said that he doesn't think the Commission should include numbers with the recommendation. He added that if Council ultimately wants to accept the recommendation, they will have a reviewing body, similar to those who handle the Commercial Façade Improvement Program and the Beautify Your Neighborhood Grant Program. One of those committees would work with staff to solidify the parameters of the Commission's recommendation. We can report that we discussed an amount between $30,000 to $50,000 with a 50% match, but ultimately the amount would come from collaboration between staff and council.

Mr. Plouck proceeded to address Mr. Dritz's comments on the memorandum, noting the changes would be incorporated. Noting *Option 4 – Phased Approach* on page 3 of the memorandum, there is no detail. The detail will provided in the minutes from the August 11th Community Services Advisory Commission meeting. The meeting minutes are not yet complete.

Mr. Plouck reiterated that the Commission was tasked to explore different nuances that exist with funding stormwater management and offer those as recommendations, keeping them broad and straightforward. From there, Dublin City Council can choose to move forward or not. Currently, they are going through the budget process and if the idea of a grant program is acceptable, they can look at what amount can be allocated.

Mr. Plouck stated if there are no other questions or changes we can move forward to advance the memorandum. Mr. Dritz made the motion to advance the memorandum. Mr. Snider seconded the motion. All in favor raised their hands in agreement to move forward. Motion approved.

Mr. Dritz asked when the recommendation would go to City Council and by whom. Mr. Plouck responded saying a member from the Commission would present it, preferably the Chair. September 28th could be the tentative date to present the recommendation to City Council as long as the meeting minutes from August have been completed and approved by the Commission since much of the detail of the process is included in those minutes.

Mr. Arunachalam asked if he could join the Dublin City Council meeting for the presentation. Mr. Plouck said only one person would speak on behalf of the Community Service Advisory Commission but all Commission members are invited to the virtual meeting.

Mr. Plouck said he would follow up and identify a way for the Commission to approve the August minutes. Afterward he would move forward with presenting the recommendation at either the September 28th or the October 12th City Council meeting. He added that he and Mr. Dritz would collaborate and provide a thorough overview of all the Commission has done to identify a long-term funding solution for the City's stormwater management needs.

V. Future CSAC Topics

Mr. Plouck spoke to Mr. Rayburn in the City's planning department and identified a couple of mobility projects that they would like to have feedback on. Mr. Rayburn could address the Committee in October. In November Tom Hirschy can provide an overview on policies and procedures the City has been participating in during the pandemic and answer questions. We can have someone from public works come talk about the City's snow removal plan and process. We can invite residents to come forward and use the CSAC meeting as a question/answer platform. This topic should be covered prior to the snow season.

Mr. Dritz asked if the new food composting program is a pilot program or a permanent service. Mr. Plouck responded saying the City received a small grant from SWACO (Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio) for 500 buckets. Over 300 people have signed up for the program. The drop off location is at the Dublin Service Center. If there is interest, Mr. Darling who manages the program can come speak to the Commission about the program.

Ms. Kanonchoff said she has a friend who has issues with the Darree Fields Dog Park. Mr. Plouck asked her to forward the information to him so he could have the proper department address the issue.

Mr. Arunachalam inquired about a bike path connector to downtown Columbus. He said he would share the detail at the next meeting. Mr. Snider said Glick Road seems to be a logical spot to discuss regarding bike path connectivity. Mr. Plouck asked them to share the info so he can pass it along to other cross-functional groups that work on capital-related bike path projects. He added, that group meets once per year.

Mr. Arunachalam asked if Mr. McCollough, Dublin's Chief Information Officer be a guest speaker. Mr. Plouck said he could possibly come speak about the City's Connected Dublin innovation projects at the beginning of 2021. He is currently working through his budget cycle. Some of the items currently in progress will be coming forward after they are officially approved.

Mr. Dritz said he would work on organizing the CSAC ideas and putting together a calendar.

VI. Other Items of Interest

Mr. Snider offered an idea about educational or descriptive signage about various points of interest or outdoor resources around the City. He said it would be wonderful to have signage describing the locations. He gave the following examples:

- Ferris Wright Park - the earthworks or history of the farm
- The Scioto River - history, rock formation, info on fish and wildlife species
- The Amberleigh Park/Deer Run area – a hidden gem
- Leather Lips - history

Mr. Snider proposed working with Forever Dublin and the Senior Center at the Dublin Recreation Center to actively recruit local instructors in order to expand the number of classes offered to seniors such as fly fishing, guitar lessons or other enrichment activities.

VII. Next meeting: October 13, 2020

The next meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2020

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Dritz adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sandra Pickens

Sandra Pickens, Administrative Support III

Attachments: STS Pond Maintenance – CSAC Recommendations (DRAFT)

City of Dublin

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Memo

To: Members of Dublin City Council

From: Community Services Advisory Commission

Date: September 8, 2020

Initiated By: Megan O'Callaghan, Deputy City Manager/Chief Operating Officer
Paul A. Hammersmith, PE, Director of Engineering/City Engineer
Matt Stiffler, Director of Finance
Nick Plouck, City Management Assistant
Kirby Dearth, City Management Intern

Re: Maintenance of Residential Stormwater Management Basins

Background

Dublin City Council requested the Dublin Community Services Advisory Commission (CSAC) review the City's past and current practices regarding the maintenance of stormwater management ponds/basins (either wet or dry) in residential areas. At the September 10, 2019 Community Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) meeting, staff presented an overview of the City of Dublin's Stormwater Master Plan and an inventory of stormwater management assets throughout the community. The Dublin Geographic Information System (GIS) identifies 305 stormwater basins within the City. Of the 305 residential basins, 154 are located on property owned by the City of Dublin. Stormwater basins on 46 of those properties are owned by the City, but are privately maintained by the Home Owner's Association (HOA) associated with the neighborhood in which the basin serves. The maintenance of these basins is the focus of the CSAC's review of the City's stormwater management program. After careful consideration, the commission recommended that the City of Dublin assume the maintenance of the forty-six (46) City-owned stormwater basins currently being maintained privately. In consideration of the recommendation, the CSAC advised the City to review the funding mechanism to support the maintenance of the basins.

Staff returned to the Commission in June and August to present proven funding and program administration strategies. To establish a foundational understanding, staff utilized the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Municipal Stormwater Guidelines to illustrate what best-practices are commonly utilized to fund stormwater programs. Staff also highlighted several examples of municipalities leveraging EPA best practices and an example of an innovative programmatic model.

Stormwater Management Best Practices

The EPA sites general revenue and capital improvement appropriations as the most common funding sources of stormwater management projects. By utilizing general revenues, project management responsibilities are embedded within current operational units, and minimimal administrative burden is created. Additionally, the sources of general revenues and capital improvement funds are generally understood and accepted by citizens and business interests. However, because no new revenue streams are established, stormwater management projects have to effectively compete for funding against other city priorities during the annual budgetary process. The EPA claims that stormwater management projects have historically struggled to

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acquire these funds and that major reallocations of general fund revenues or capital improvement funds for stormwater systems are rare.

Creating a Special Improvement/Assessment District (SID) is another funding option identified by the EPA. An assessment funding model appropriates costs to the properties that directly require or benefit from the provision of services. This model can be particularly useful in generating adequate levels of revenue that cover the cost of services. At face value, this option seems to be a good fit for the City of Dublin. However, if current HOAs are unable to collect enough revenue to fund maintenance, a SID is likely to achieve the same outcome. Additionally, government entities must pay prevailing wage. Therefore, SID fees would need to be more expensive than current HOA fees to generate self-sustaining revenues.

Lastly, the EPA identifies stormwater utility fees as an appropriate funding mechanism for stormwater programs. Fundamentally, stormwater utility fees effectively tie stormwater creation to financial burden by utilizing designated impervious areas as the basis for fee collection. There are currently more than 116 municipal stormwater utilities throughout the State of Ohio, with an average monthly fee per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) of $3.73. Within Central Ohio, there are 13 municipalities who utilize stormwater utilities as a funding mechanism. Central Ohio monthly fees typically span from $2.00 to $3.00 per ERU, with the typical ERU spanning from 2,000 to 3,000 square feet.

Ohio Statistics		
Average Monthly Fee	$	3.73
Highest Monthly Fee	$	13.00
Lowest Monthly Fee	$	0.25
Average Population		66,764
Largest Population		2,000,000
Smallest Population		1,148.00
Average ERU (ft2)		3,247
Largest ERU (ft2)		9,669
Smallest ERU (ft2)		648

Stormwater utility fees are a relatively stable revenue source capable of covering projects costs. This allows for long-range planning of capital improvements and operational maintenance with reasonable assurance. Establishing these user fees also frees general revenues and other resources to be used for different priorities. The disadvantages of stormwater user fees are the

Central Ohio						
Community	State	Fee Type	ERU (ft2)	Monthly Fee	Year Created	Population
Buckeye Lake	OH	E	2,700	$ 4.00	2013	2,703
Columbus	OH	E	2,000	$ 4.68	1994	797,434
Delaware	OH	E	2,773	$ 2.50	1998	35,541
Gahanna	OH	E	3,064	$ 4.33	2004	32,636
Groveport	OH	E	2,760	$ 2.00	2008	5,363
Hilliard	OH	E	2,000	$ 2.35	2009	28,435
London	OH	E	2,766	$ 4.00	-	9,896
Marysville	OH	E	2,700	$ 4.50	2004	22,288
Mount Vernon	OH	E	2,900	$ 6.00	2019	16,659
Newark	OH	E	2,600	$ 6.50	2005	47,790
Pickerington	OH	E	2,530	$ 4.50	2001	18,408
Upper Arlington	OH	F	-	$ 3.75	1991	34,223
Zanesville	OH	E	2,300	$ 3.00	1987	25,531

high visibility of the charges and the cost of its development and implementation. The cost of implementing a stormwater utility fee is a function of the costs associated with the number of accounts, the establishment of a billing department, the completion of financial and engineering analyses required by law, and the creation of information technology systems related to stormwater projects. These requirements create a significant administrative burden that will result in new spending on staff. Additionally, those with large impervious areas on their properties will pay significantly higher monthly fees. These properties tend to be commercial businesses which already manage private stormwater basins due to City Code. However, the financial burden of stormwater utility fees can be reduced by the provision of stormwater credits to properties managing private basins.

In Bowling Green, Kentucky, there are several private stormwater retention basins in need of maintenance assistance that cannot feasibly shift from the responsibility of private owners to that of the public. Available labor and fiscal resources are already committed to various aspects of public rights of way maintenance and there is currently no appetite for the implementation of a stormwater utility. To reduce the financial burden of maintenance on these private properties and protect the City's stormwater management system, the City of Bowling Green operates an annual stormwater maintenance grant program. To qualify for the grant program, a resident must nominate a stormwater basin that has lost at least 20 percent of its capacity, has eroded to the point that there is a water quality threat, or is a public safety hazard. The City may provide one-time funds to a program if the private parties agree to match the support allocated. The City can fund up to 50 percent of the project's total cost and a maximum of $3,000. The budget for this program varies from $20,000-$30,000 annually, dependent on the number of applications the City receives in a given year. Additionally, this program does not have a self-sustaining revenue source. It is funded by annual capital improvement appropriations.

After presenting all of the above information to CSAC, Staff developed several options for the maintenance of the fourty-six (46) basins moving forward:

- Option 1 - Absorb responsibility with no new dedicated funding stream
- Option 2 - Absorb responsibility with a supplementary funding stream
    - SID/Impact Fees/ Development Fees
- Option 3 - Establish a Stormwater Utility
- Option 4 - Phased Approach

- Option 5 - Grant Program
- Option 6 - Do Nothing

No public comments were received at the August meeting and the CSAC members concluded their review and discussion with the following recommendation.

Recommendation

After careful deliberation, the CSAC recommends the establishment of a pilot grant program. This program can be tailored to the needs of the community, while adhering to budgetary limitations associated with adding additional maintenance responsibilities without a new revenue stream. City staff and Council can limit qualifying maintenance activities to specific maintenance projects, allowing for the strategic apportionment of support. By establishing a merit based program, the City can provide the assistance HOAs require when expensive, inconsistent expenses arise. Additionally, CSAC recommends that the program have a matching requirement and maximum allotment, similar to other grant programs operated by the City. Establishing a pilot program will allow the City to identify the scope of need throughout the community. By establishing an application and review process, the City will acquire a greater understanding of stormwater needs and challenges. At the completion of the pilot, the City will have the opportunity to alter the program or City policies accordingly. In addition to this recommendation, the Commission would like to acknowledge the usefulness of a stormwater utility as a long-term stormwater management strategy. While the Commission does not view a stormwater utility as a proportionate solution for the 46 basins in question, it does believe that a utility is an optimal funding solution in addressing the long-term stormwater needs of the City.