



Legislation Text

File #: 16-311, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

Discussion of Possible Establishment of a Stormwater Utility Enterprise Fund

PURPOSE: The purpose of this item is for the Board to discuss the possibility of establishing a stormwater utility enterprise fund to assist in expanding stormwater management services.

DEPARTMENT: Manager's Office, Public Works Department, Planning, Zoning and Inspections Department

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INFORMATION: The Town has been analyzing different approaches to address stormwater challenges we are faced with today and into the future. This agenda item is presenting the option of establishing a stormwater utility enterprise fund. Establishing such a fund would allow the Town to increase and improve stormwater management efforts.

The report in Attachment A describes current stormwater management practices and outlines a potential enterprise fund, the services that could be provided through the creation of a stormwater utility enterprise fund, other important factors to be considered, and a potential plan for implementation.

The Town has decades of experience with stormwater management during which its land area has grown from less than one square mile to over six square miles and its population has increased from a few thousand residents to over twenty thousand. Significant portions of the land around the tributaries that flow into Bolin and Morgan creeks are largely developed. The Town has set high standards for development and level of service and maintains a strong commitment to environmental stewardship. Increased state and federal regulatory demands, increasingly complex stormwater management systems, and recent and projected variable and unpredictable storm events, however, compel consideration of this new approach.

Improved stormwater management service delivery is needed to respond more quickly to concerns in neighborhoods like Old Pittsboro Road, Webbwood, and Plantation Acres, to evaluate conditions and identify responses. Changes to the Town's role in management of stormwater structures in newer neighborhoods where homeowners' association bear significant responsibility for inspections and maintenance of stormwater devices are also being considered. Information gathered during the neighborhood walkabout in the Tom's Creek area identified problems that range from inspections, maintenance, and capacity of existing public and private infrastructure (i.e. ditches and culverts associated with streets, detention pond at Lloyd Square) to property-to-property runoff that has been exacerbated by infill development. Quick follow-up on comments received in interviews resulted in repairs to a detention pond and significant reduction in stormwater flows to Tom's Creek.

Other action has included examination of culverts and clean-up, inspections of CHCCS infrastructure and communication with facilities management staff, active monitoring of systems during storm events and detailed analysis of the potential implications relating to the Lloyd Farms requested rezoning. Administration of the Department of Public Safety/FEMA grants for acquisition and elevation of properties in the area has also been underway. These actions fall within the normal workload of staff in various departments and prioritization for follow-up is necessitated by the level of demand for services from all areas of town, deadlines associated with project management, and other circumstances. There is clearly much more that can be done. An enterprise funded utility for stormwater management would involve concentrating and coordinating existing efforts and adding new resources and services. Among those could be detailed capacity analysis for locations where stormwater could be detained for volume control or water quality enhancement - as part of improvements to existing ditches or other new structures. Such an undertaking would involve increasing the scope of baseline information on impervious surface, discharge locations, and patterns of overland flow within the drainage area. Management options for private property, as well as programs or incentives for owners to participate in larger solutions could also be included in a utility framework. There are numerous examples throughout the nation and nearby to inform any steps the Town contemplates taking in this regard.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: The process of establishing an enterprise fund has a nominal fiscal impact. If a fund is created, it would allow for a dedicated source of funding to pay for stormwater management and related infrastructure investments. It is anticipated that a new position of Stormwater Utility Manager would be created in the upcoming fiscal year with any fiscal impact to be described at that time.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Board discuss the option of establishing a stormwater utility enterprise fund.