

## **Storm Water Task Force Public Hearing**

July 25, 2019

6:00 p.m

City of St. Marys

Council Chambers

### Members Present:

Tommy Sailors – Chairperson

Grace Ashcroft

Larry Newton

Dave Reilly

Gregg Marx

### City Officials Present:

Bobby Marr, Public Works Director

Alise Pate, Public Works Senior Admin

### **Call to Order**

Mr. Tommy Sailors called the Storm Water Task Force Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Roll Call**

Mr. Sailors conducted a roll call confirming a quorum of members present for the meeting.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Reilly made a Motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Marx seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

### **Opening Remarks**

Mr. Sailors reviewed the Vision, Mission and Goals of the Stormwater Task Force. Mr. Sailors stated the objective of the Public Hearing is to receive input on stormwater issues and that input will be used as the Task Force moves forward with developing a White Paper recommendation to the City Council.

### **Goodwyn, Mills, Cawood ( GMC) Presentation – Courtney Reich**

Ms. Reich presented an overview of a stormwater program including the City's 2008 Stormwater Master Plan. Ms. Reich reviewed potential solutions, capital projects, extent of services, financial needs, funding sources, user fees, an enterprise fund and user credits. Ms. Reich stated a public survey had been made available to gather input to help develop a White Paper recommendation. Ms. Reich reviewed the data collected from the surveys.

### **Dave Reilly – General Fund vs. Enterprise Fund**

Mr. Reilly provided an overview of the City General Fund revenue streams including millage rates, SPLOST, insurance, and FEMA reimbursements. Mr. Reilly reviewed how a Utility Fund or an Enterprise Fund revenue stream is created from a specific service such as water, sewer or stormwater. Mr. Reilly stated those funds are audited every year and all funds have to be spent on the same specific use from which the funds were collected.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Tom Canning, 410 Point Peter Place, St. Marys, Georgia spoke on the need to ensure that if a Stormwater Program is implemented that it be done right the first time to avoid damage control later. Mr. Canning stated there are three types of properties within the City, residential, commercial and unincorporated areas and also properties that are not currently connected to City water and sewer. Mr. Canning requested the information on how the rate structure will be determined and the facts as to how the conclusion was obtained for those rates are published for public review. Mr. Canning expressed his concern that Public Works labor is not task specific but

is responsible for multiple areas of service and it would be difficult to divide up the labor and equipment specifically for storm water tasks.

Jay Moreno, 511 Victoria Circle, St. Marys, Georgia spoke regarding a dedicated Public Works crew specific for stormwater issues to maintain the City's 120 miles of ditches. Mr. Moreno commented on the user fee and user fee credits specifically regarding the gated communities of Osprey Cove and Cumberland Harbor. Mr. Moreno expressed concern that gated communities might receive an exemption from user fees due to their privately owned and maintained drainage systems. Mr. Moreno recommended every property be charged a base rate user fee and additional fees be added to the base fee depended upon the impervious surfaces on that property, even undeveloped properties with no impervious surfaces still should have a minimum user fee. Mr. Moreno discouraged the idea that any property be totally exempted for being assessed a user fee. Mr. Moreno stated rain gardens and rain barrels are options of ways to get a user fee credit. Mr. Moreno asked if the ditches from the incorporated areas of the City that belong to the County drain into the City ditches and if so, the County should contribute financially to their maintenance.

Mark Fautz, 312 W. Bryant Street, St. Marys, Georgia expressed his concern of projects from the 2008 Stormwater Master Plan that were never completed due to a recession but the City purchased the Gateway property in 2010. Mr. Fautz stated those funds should have been used to complete some of the stormwater projects identified in the 2008 Stormwater Master Plan. Mr. Fautz stated the City has been notified of culverts on Bartlett Street that have been clogged for a year and nothing has been done to correct it. Mr. Fautz stated the City has to be held accountable for work that needs to be completed.

Robert Moore, 509 Westgate Circle, St. Marys, Georgia stated the City had previously increased the millage rate to pay for the additional Public Works dedicated storm drain crew and the new City radio system. Mr. Moore stated a dedicated crew is necessary for clearing ditches and the City needs to prioritize their needs on storm drain maintenance and not beautification projects. Mr. Moore stated his street has an inverted crown and doesn't have a ditch so the taxes for road maintenance should be used for drainage maintenance.

Cody Smith, 309 Madison Avenue, St. Marys, Georgia expressed his concern of user fees being assessed twice if a person owns residential property and commercial property. Mr. Smith questioned how rental properties would be assessed.

Jane Porter, 404 Bailey Street, St. Marys, Georgia stated she had been paying taxes for years and the ditches on Mahan Street have only been cleaned one time in fourteen years. Ms. Porter said she had complained to the City Manager, John Holman, and nothing was done. Ms. Porter said the City raised taxes last year for maintenance to the City but the City isn't holding up to their responsibility. Ms. Porter asked questions about obtaining user fee credits. Ms. Courtney Reich, GMC, stated a property owner may be eligible for user fee credits for reducing run off from their property but those items would need to be completed within the compliance of any regulations. Ms. Porter stated the City needs to think before throwing on more fees to property owners.

Mr. Larry White, 102 Sylvias Court, St. Marys, Georgia stated properties with wetlands need to be eligible for user fee credits.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.