

STORMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
February 29, 2016

Members Present:

Jack Minner
Kelly Tracy
Larry Trucano
Lori Daiber
Rick Macho
Mayor Allen Adomite
Robert Pollard
Richard Worthen
Dennis Weber
Rick Fancher
Marty Reynolds

Members Absent:

Brenda Roosevelt
Gussie Glasper

Others Present:

Matt Brandmeyer
Steve Brendel
Andi Campbell Yancey

Call of Meeting to Order:

Chairman Jack Minner called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes:

Rick Fancher made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 30, 2015. Seconded by Dennis Weber. Voice vote. All ayes. Motion approved.

New Business:

Steve Brendel and Matt Brandmeyer updated the Commission on the severe flooding that the County experienced in December 2015. Steve praised Larry Ringer and the Madison County Emergency Management Agency for their handling of the situation. Matt stated that, in order to qualify for federal disaster relief, there had to be \$900K in assessed damages. Matt stated that our department, along with EMA and Community Development, coordinated with the townships and municipalities to estimate flood damages and determine the areas worst hit by the flooding. Matt said the final damage assessment was between \$8 and \$10 million for Madison County. Steve stated that the December storms were classified as a 200-year event, and that FEMA had made two grants available for areas affected by the storm – a pre-disaster mitigations grant and a flood disaster mitigation assistance grant. Steve stated that it would be made available through EMA and the State and would need to be submitted by June. Matt stated that in order for a project to qualify for one of the FEMA grants, the project would have to be listed in the Hazard Mitigation Plan completed by EMA a few years ago. Matt said the department will conduct outreach in order to ensure all jurisdictions are aware of the grant opportunity and how to move forward with applying.

Matt stated that he would like to pick up where our discussion left off in November 2015 – funding the stormwater management plan. Matt stated that he had looked into funding options and researched what other counties are doing to fund their programs. Matt said that state statute provides for a process to let constituents vote on a property tax increment in order to pay for stormwater programs, but that no place has implemented such a tax increment to date. Matt and the Commission agreed that the property tax increment is a non-starter as no property tax increases will be approved. Matt stated that another possibility is a county-wide sales tax, but that the distribution of the sales tax revenue to address stormwater projects could be an arduous, politicized process. Matt stated that home rule cities could also levy a stormwater fee on every property without voter approval.

Mayor Adomite stated that he thinks a levy tax extension makes the most sense, as was discussed at the November meeting. Mayor Adomite stated the extending the levy tax to fund County stormwater initiatives would provide the County's eastern bluff communities with tangible benefits from the levy sales tax. The Commission further discussed the extension of the levy tax, with everyone agreeing that this was the best option moving forward.

Steve Brendel notified the Commission that when he met with the mayor of Edwardsville to discuss the Cahokia Creek Plan the topic of utilities came up, and Mayor Patton immediately expressed concerns about Edwardsville getting their "Fair Share" of funds considering that they could levy their own utility fee and fund their own projects. Mayor Adomite stated that eastern portions of the County have been burdened with the levy tax for years without directly benefitting from the levy project and that Edwardsville didn't seem concerned about fair distribution when they were proposing the levy tax to protect the Gateway Commerce Center. Mayor Adomite stated that we need to think regionally. Mr. Adomite stated that the effects of a county-wide stormwater plan would benefit all the citizens of the County.

Matt Brandmeyer suggested to disperse potential tax revenues based on watersheds instead of a distributing funds based on municipal population or land mass. Matt stated that areas within the same watersheds share the same stormwater challenges, which is the very principle guiding our stormwater planning process. Mayor Adomite then recommended, if we were to go that route, to have a board or Commission comprised of representatives from each watershed.

Matt Brandmeyer shifted the conversation to explore what the Commission thinks the County's role should be once the plan is complete. He stated that people sometimes conflate the term utility with a funding source, but utilities have more of an organizational aspect with staffing and services. He stated that he does not necessarily see that as the County's role moving forward. He stated that he thinks the County's role will primarily be to maintain the natural infrastructure within unincorporated areas, such as log jams and creek bank erosion, and working with the SWCD to assist farmers and citizens. Matt stated that municipalities would likely do their own projects with the County providing technical support where necessary. He stated the County's role within municipalities would be to create the regulatory environment, determine best practices, and provide relevant ordinances. The County would also handle out-reach and education components and continue to do the MS4 program, and likely expand it to include all the cities.

Mayor Adomite stated that we'd essentially be a disbursement agency, and Matt agreed. Mayor Adomite stated that this would be a change from how the levy programs are currently funded and he could see the potential for municipalities to pick their stormwater projects based political needs instead of importance. Mayor Adomite stated that he thinks the County should have a more centralized role concerning the prioritization of projects. Mayor Adomite stated that he'd be fine with the municipalities taking over and maintaining projects once they're completed, but that he does not want to see the process of addressing storm water problems politicized.

Kelly Tracy inquired if the stormwater funds would be allocated similar to a grant application process so that they could be scored based on certain indicators – this could ensure the prioritization of projects is needs-based. Matt stated that as long as we are following a plan or program, we could do a 5 or 10 year CIP program, so that municipalities aren't required to apply for funding year after year. Mayor Adomite reiterated that he thinks we should follow the current levy model by prioritizing a list of projects without municipalities having so much input and the County having a more centralized role. Matt stated that he would be concerned that municipalities would opt-out if this were the case. Rick Fancher and several Commission members agreed with Mayor Adomite that we should try to stick to the current model regarding the distribution of tax revenue. Kelly Tracy stated that the Madison County Soil and Water District seems like the appropriate entity to oversee such a program. Rick Macho stated that many municipalities already have solid ordinances in place, the challenge is enforcing the measures put forth in the ordinances. Matt stated that code enforcement could be established as a qualifier for stormwater funding. Rick Macho reiterated that lax enforcement and a lack of maintenance are the largest issues at hand. Jack Minner agreed that funds should be dispersed in a manner that prioritizes projects by importance and who is enforcing stormwater ordinances.

Larry Trucano inquired whether there would be grant opportunities to clean out the canals within the easements that the townships maintain. Matt stated that he believed there would be grant opportunities for such projects and that we need about \$3 million to clean out the County Ditch and that he is looking into funding opportunities. Matt stated that he was gathering from the discussion that the Commission would like to see a more centralized model similar to the MSD model. Many Commission members agreed. Matt said he would need to explore that direction further, but it's something to be looked at. He stated that he believes that the MSD model would be the most effective option.

Matt Brandmeyer stated that the Silver Creek Plan is very close to completion, but there is some additional work to be done – especially in light of the discussion that had just taken place.

Matt Brandmeyer stated that they had finished the public forums and flood surveys for the Cahokia Creek Watershed Plan and that they received a 20% response rate on the surveys and that 25-30% of the respondents had received flood damage in some capacity. Steve Brendel discussed some of the outreach efforts conducted to collect data for the Cahokia Creek Plan. Matt stated that we'd be waiting several months for the Corps of Engineers to complete their portion, and that we may have a draft during this fiscal year.

Matt Brandmeyer stated that the Corps of Engineers was willing to partner with the County on the Judy's Branch Watershed project which is The American Bottom, which is the next step in the plan. The Corps of Engineers is offering a 50/50 match through a grant being offered. The Corps of Engineers will utilize the information from the hydrologic study they conducted a few years ago.

In regard to the FEMA grant, Matt stated that he may ask the Commission to make a project recommendation at the following meeting on the application.

Steve Brendel stated MS4 has just approved a new general permit that they are currently going over with their contractor, Gonzalez. Steve informed the Commission that the next MS4 meeting will be in mid-March and that they would need a new NOI to correspond with the new general permit. Steve said that the annual report will be available May 31.

Larry Trucano and Jack Minner commended the discussion that had taken place.

Adjournment

Larry Trucano made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Kelly Tracy. Voice vote. All ayes. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned.