

2A Stormwater Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting Minutes

2-4 p.m., August 17, 2023

Location: 401 Large and Teams

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m. by Matthew Johnson. Previous meeting minutes were approved in a motion by Councilor Donelson and a second from David Havlick. The SAC did a round of introductions: Matthew Johnson- the Chair of the SAC, Doug Conlon, Councilor Dave Donelson, Brenda Roy, Richard Mulledy, Tim Biolchini, Councilor Dave Lienweber, Maren McDowell, Gayle Sturdivant, Erica Schmitz, David Havlick, Bobby Ingels. Online attendees included Sam Acosta, Christina Aragon.

Elections were held to fill the Vice Chair spot. Doug Conlon volunteered and was nominated by Matthew Johnson and a second from Councilor Donelson. Conlon was approved in a unanimous vote.

Richard Mulledy started the meeting with a discussion of proposed changes and the direction of SAC moving forward. He discussed the purpose of SAC: to inform City Council about the ongoings of stormwater. Matthew Johnson brought up: we've gotten to the point where things are mostly steady state. Program is established. We receive consistent overviews. Rather than spending long amounts of time talking about the financial statuses, let's brainstorm more, talk about what we would like to see implemented, help drive the direction from that side and the citizen perspective. For those of us who have been on the committee for years, it's mostly the same.

He presented some ideas: let's look at the direction we want the City to take and the idea of vibrant waterways. What do people want to experience, and how can Stormwater assist with that and what citizens want?

Another thing Council could help with is brainstorming key principles for the SAC in terms of principles that will be good for the City of Colorado Springs Stormwater program to include flood control, etc. That way, when there are decisions to be made, we can look through this SAC-inspired lens to see if the principles align with the decisions.

David Havlick suggested that the committee consider an aspirational vision of our stormwater infrastructure and take a long-range approach to what stormwater is doing for the next several decades. What do we want to make sure stormwater is doing over the short, medium, and long term? He suggested a shift from reactive management to active management.

Councilor Lienweber talked about a series of items that he would like to see, and talked about if activities could be encouraged.

Mulledy stated that the reporting out of projects and funding is absolutely required for the committee. There was a discussion of the ballot language/requirements of the committee.

Matt said any future input should be seen purely as recommendations, similar to the process that the committee undertook regarding input for the Green Infrastructure Manual. He said he was not implying that oversight should be removed, but that input could be additive. He expressed a desire to expand the advisory function.

Councilor Donelson recommended that at next meeting the committee look at the ballot language and the ordinance. Citizens want their elected officials to know where the money is going and what is being spent. That's the essence of what we must do as this committee.

Note: Michael Montgomery, Deputy Director for City Council and overseer of Boards and Commissions, will attend the next meeting.

The committee was provided the financial overview and update from Brenda Roy. Funds are right on track where the Enterprise would expect to be in the various funding categories. Financial slides are included. Dashboard of what has been completed was provided; channel inspections are up. A question was posted as to why the pipe repair numbers were relatively low for the year. Mulledy explained that much of the pipe repair has been included in 2C operations already this year and that they should expect those numbers to jump back up by the end of the year.

Brenda next provided an overview of Capital Projects; the enterprise is holding \$6.3M in reserves, \$3.6M expensed, and planned/contracted is at \$25.771M. Discussion of how/why reserve funds are used.

Billing and Revenue update: year over year billed and collected had increases in both categories because we added properties and there was a fee increase; overall collection rates hold strong at just over 97%.

Discussion of Utility bills verses third party billing company; 96% of bills are on currently billed as part of utility bills. The number of past due bills continues to decrease. The enterprise will go before council to lien properties if necessary. Overall, our collection rate is high when going through the treasurer.

Donelson asked if delinquent accounts have anything in common. So far, we have not found common denominators as to reasons behind late bills. It's an interesting split but no discernable patterns of non-payments have arisen.

The next item was a current and future projects discussion, led by Tim Biolchini. He talked about projects were going on at the time of the meeting and the delays caused by the summer rains. Presentation is included with these minutes.

Discussion of construction projects planned for later in the year. Some of the projects potentially waiting on FEMA funding. Discussion of funding sources, what projects will entail, project limits, some stakeholders. Information was provided regarding the FEMA disaster declaration; June storms- individuals can apply for FEMA help if their properties were damaged. Stormwater will use FEMA dollars for the East Fork of Sand Creek at Wildflower Park. FEMA funds are specific that projects can be restored to their prior levels, but not improved. The caveat is that you can do what is called "betterments," but that is based on codes and standards if those have changed previously (and we have). FEMA gives 75%; Stormwater funds the remainder. Sometimes the state can help with the remainder. Also, betterment means the organization ultimately receives get fewer funds. Stormwater received \$5-6M from FEMA.

Tim discussed how well the projects installed since 2016 held up during the summer rainstorms.

Sam Acosta inquired if a water quality credit program and if it could be implemented. Richard said it's an option and an option the Army Corps of Engineers favors, but it can easily become administratively prohibitive.

Donelson asked if any projects can become multi-use, like Constitution. Richard said sometimes, yes, we can work in design/usability functions to a project that is also doing stormwater management. We did not spend any additional money for the multi-use elements. Sometimes the multi-use will be multi-group for funding/functionality purposes.

Tim discussed the maintenance/access to creeks; Stormwater's first coordination is always with Parks, Streets, and Colorado Springs Utilities. We only spend our money on Stormwater, but we are setting it up for everyone else to succeed on top of it.

David Havlick said we need to continue to capitalize upon moments of opportunity where you can capitalize on what the needs or desires are. Bobby Ingels said the organization needs to determine how to fund maintenance in the long haul and that ongoing maintenance costs need to be prioritized.

Discussion of wetland banking occurred and will be discussed more in future meetings. Discussion of Grading and Erosion control permits and delays/drop in numbers due to weather, building, etc. Bobby Ingels said there is still a lot of uncertainty about when the homebuilding economy is going to turn the corner. Discussed some activities on new lots/builds.

Matt suggested that it might be helpful to see an overview of the creek plan and how the City is coming alongside other partners to accomplish that. Richard explained how Stormwater has met with the Creek representatives, met with the Corps, and how he has submitted a grant for stormwater corridor improvements from America the Beautiful Park down to Nevada. If received, the grant would amend and significantly add stormwater infrastructure, reconstruct the Templeton Gap infrastructure. A grant has been submitted requesting \$1.2B toward these efforts. Discussion of the grant, the process, federal implications, government official support.

Adjournment at 3:35 p.m. by Matthew Johnson with a second from Sam Acosta.