

03/20/2024 Workgroup Meeting Notes by Dan Van Schalkwyk

Attendees from Workgroup: Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager), Jonathan Kranz (Planning Board/Resident/Workgroup), Dan Van Schalkwyk (Ayer DPW), Matt Hernon (Ayer DPW), Beth Suedmeyer (Resident), Jannice Livingston (Selectwoman/Resident), Heather Hampson (Conservation Agent), Emily Scerbo (Tighe and Bond), Natalie Koncki (Tighe and Bond), Jin Hong (Finance Committee/Resident)

Public Outreach Discussion

- Items Completed Since Last Meeting
 - Dan summarized the items completed which included:
 - Provided informational presentations to the Community Preservation Committee, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Finance Committee
 - Revised the Workgroup Outreach Timeline
 - A presentation related to Stormwater “When the Rain Comes: Stormwater & Climate Resiliency in Ayer” was completed by Stefanie Covino on February 28th
 - A social media message promoting the Stormwater presentation by Stefanie was distributed
 - The Draft FAQ document was finalized and posted on the Workgroup’s website
 - The Select Board received an update on March 19th on the Workgroup’s recent work
- Review of Timeline for Changes
 - We will shift the Draft Proposed Rates/Policies 1 Month at this time, and other outreach items impacted by the shift
 - Continue Monthly social media messaging
- Steps to Implement Upcoming Timeline Items
 - See “Assignments” section at the end of this document
- Other Outreach Updates
 - Heather will prepare a one-page informational to be placed at a table at Spring Town Meeting. The one pager will also be used to post in places around Town, such as bulletin boards at Town Hall, Transfer Station, and DPW.
 - Inquire with APAC about development of a highlight video of the Stefanie Covino presentation
 - The Group decided not to distribute a one-page informational to businesses at this time. The main reasoning is the businesses will be focused on rates and policies as opposed to understanding stormwater.

Rate Structure Review

- Tighe and Bond presented options as the Workgroup is “Right Sizing” Ayer’s Stormwater Management Planning Budget
 - 3 Alternatives for funding stormwater management are now presented

- The Workgroup had consensus on Alternative 3, which provides a rate of \$95 per ERU
- Tighe and Bond will confirm the table values are correct (i.e. Salary shown in top half of table is correctly accounted for in bottom half of table for Alternative 3)
- Tighe and Bond also presented a comparison of Ayer versus Other Communities
- The Workgroup would like to show these 3 alternatives that have been developed during public input, the Workgroup is recommending the 3rd Alternative (\$95 per ERU)
- The budget was not front loaded, culvert and drain replacements have been spread out over future time. Therefore, the current rate structure is not exaggerated.

Credit Policy Discussion

- Matt Hernon discussed the memo he provided which summarized a comparison of other communities credit policies.
- The current rate structure has an estimate of 7% of the budget will be reduced by credits and abatements. The Workgroup would like to take a granular look at a handful of the large impervious properties to understand how significant a credit impact may be if these properties were to attain credits.
- The Workgroup liked the idea of having a P.E. complete and stamp applications for non-single family properties
- The Workgroup decided to prepare a draft credit policy and then have further discussion to refine it at the next meeting. Matt will take on this task with any support needed from Tighe and Bond.

Town Counsel Updates (Legality of cap, Procedure for Town Meeting Approval, Discounts for Certain Groups)

- Robert will provide information in writing to Dan who will share with the Workgroup.

Assignments

Assignment 1 – Town Counsel:

Robert will provide Town Counsel's opinions in writing to Dan for distribution to the group.

Assignment 2 - Outreach:

Dan will revise the Workgroup timeline as discussed above.

Matt, Heather, and Dan as the primary members responsible for implementing social media messaging, will distribute the monthly social media message.

Heather will draft a one-page informational to be placed at a table at Town Meeting. Heather will reach out to Town moderator prior to Town Meeting for approval. The one pager will also be used to post in places around Town, such as bulletin boards at Town Hall, Transfer Station, and DPW. Heather will share with the Group once drafted.

Dan will inquire with APAC about preparing a highlight version of the Stefanie Covino presentation.

Assignment 3 – Rates/Credit Policy:

Tighe and Bond will draft regulations. **Robert** will connect Carly Antonellis with Tighe and Bond for access to the Town's General Bylaws.

Tighe and Bond will confirm the staff salary are properly presented in the Right Sizing table.

Matt will prepare a draft credit policy with any support needed from **Tighe and Bond**.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 17th at 4:00PM.