

**City of Champaign, Illinois**  
**Minutes of Meeting**

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**Stormwater Utility Fee Advisory Committee Meeting**

**August 13, 2012**

**Advisory Committee Members Present:** Clif Carey, Steve Cochran, James Creighton, Karen Foster, Jim Jesso, Vic McIntosh, Carol Jo Morgan, Barbara Ramsay, Seamus Reilly, Andrew Timms, Anna Maria Watkin

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:** Eliana Brown, John Pope

**City Staff Present:** Alex Nagy, Dennis Schmidt, Jamie Vermillion

**Consultants Present:** None

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**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

**Introductions**

Committee members were introduced.

**July 16, 2012 Stormwater Utility Fee Advisory Committee Minutes**

The minutes from the July 16, 2012 Stormwater Utility Fee Advisory Committee Meeting were reviewed and accepted.

**Draft Stormwater Utility Fee Credit and Incentive Manual**

Schmidt indicated the July meeting focused on the components of the Draft Stormwater Utility Fee Credit and Incentive Manual. He asked the Committee if there were any questions. There were none.

**Public Participation**

Sarah Tufte, FedEx Ground and Home Delivery, indicated the FedEx site has approximately 1.2 million square feet of impervious area equating to an annual stormwater utility fee bill of approximately \$26,000. Their staff have explored methods to decrease the fee and looked into collecting rainwater from the roof, funneling it into storage tanks and then using the water for toilet flushing. Tufte said this plan was presented to the City and representatives from FedEx were told the site would be eligible for a 5% rate reduction incentive. The improvements proposed would cost FedEx \$200,000, meaning they would not reach a return on their investment for forty-five years. If they could get an incentive of 15% they would see a return on their investment in six years.

Patti Petrie of the John Street Watershed addressed the Committee. She raised concern about imposing a regressive tax on the citizens of Champaign. She suggested making it a progressive tax by charging residents based upon their income. If a progressive tax is not possible, she suggested charging residents in tiers based upon site square footage. She recommended contacting Council members and

encouraging them to curtail sprawl in order to mitigate the need for fees. She also noted that the City needs a comprehensive stormwater management plan that integrates several sustainable approaches to stretch the use of fee money generated. Petrie also would like to have an ordinance that states that when residents change a permeable surface to an impermeable surface, mitigation needs to occur on the site to eliminate additional runoff. Additionally, Petrie would like a provision allowing staff to revisit the stormwater utility fee ordinance after 18 months.

Eric Green, 308 N. State Street, Champaign, would like the Advisory Committee to consider increasing monetary incentives. Educating residents on the benefits of decreasing runoff combined with a higher monetary incentive would encourage residents to make changes which affect runoff from their properties.

McIntosh thanked the audience for their participation. He noted the Credit and Incentive Manual is a living document. He suggests that Council review the Manual after one year to see if any changes need to be made to the manual.

### **Stormwater Utility Fee Credit and Incentive Manual – Proposed Changes**

Schmidt asked the Committee for suggested changes to the Stormwater Utility Fee Credit and Incentive Manual.

Creighton made the following suggestions:

1. Give an incentive for every rain barrel purchased rather than one barrel per household
2. Grant FedEx a higher percentage credit for utilizing rainwater for toilet flushing as a rate reduction
3. Give school districts three credits – 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades for the curriculums taught rather than allowing them to zero out their balance by receiving a credit for each student enrolled in Unit 4

The Committee discussed the number of rain barrels on a property which would be eligible for an incentive. Alternatives of four rain barrels, eight rain barrels and an unlimited number of barrels were discussed. It was noted that any properties with rain barrels already installed would be eligible for the incentive as long as they have not already received one. Timms made a motion that a resident be eligible for an incentive for an unlimited number of rain barrels. Carey seconded the motion. All members approved unanimously.

The Committee discussed Creighton's proposal that schools be limited to a credit to students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Schmidt suggested an option of making the 50% credit for all other properties apply to schools as well. Four members of the Committee voted to allow school districts to receive the credit for all twelve grade levels. Six members voted to limit credit eligibility to less than twelve grades. Zero members voted to allow schools to be allowed to zero out their bill.

The Committee discussed expanding an education credit to beyond schools to businesses, the university, etc. Watkin pointed out that there was a suggestion at the July 16 meeting to extend the credit to the Champaign Park District. Schmidt indicated that Normal, Illinois is the only other community in Illinois

which offers credits to schools, and no other communities with stormwater utility fees offer credits beyond schools. Timms suggested that by extending the credit to businesses, the City would not be singling out a specific group (schools) and any commercial enterprise would be eligible to receive the education credit. Morgan expressed concern over how manageable it would be for staff to approve a curriculum for every business in the City. Cochran asked if schools in Normal were permitted to zero out their stormwater utility bill with the education credit. Schmidt does not recall the ordinance specifically addressing that issue, and will research. Ten members voted against expanding the credit to anything other than k-12. Nine members recommended a 50% maximum reduction in a school's fee regardless of the number of children studying stormwater management.

Carey asked which method of stormwater reduction is most effective. Nagy explained that a detention basin can impact water quality, volume and rate reduction. Schmidt added that the credits associated with large properties with a lot of impervious area probably are the most beneficial in reducing stormwater runoff.

Creighton commented that he believes commercial properties should be incentivized at a higher percentage.

Foster said the City will be willing to look at special instances of unique improvements and these can be addressed on a case by case basis. The manual has been developed in an effort to be fair and reasonable to citizens and if there is something that has not been addressed, changes can be made. Schmidt elaborated by adding the Credit and Incentive Manual was not included as part of the stormwater utility fee rate ordinance in order to allow the Public Works Director to revise the Manual with no limitations. The Director will notify Council of any changes and the revisions will be effective 15 days after Council notification.

Timms expressed concern that the credits and incentives are not lucrative enough to influence residents' behavior.

#### **Next Meeting (September 10, 2012)**

The Committee decided not to meet in September. Staff will distribute minutes of this meeting to all Committee members via email.

McIntosh thanked the panel for their participation as members of the Stormwater Utility Fee Advisory Committee.

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.