



TOWN OF AGAWAM

Department of Public Works

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Christopher J. Golba • Superintendent

August 31, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

The Agawam Department of Public Works (DPW) is reaching out to business owners, residents and property owners within areas of the Town that suffer from flooding due to stormwater runoff. It is the Town of Agawam's ongoing mission to educate the public about the stormwater infrastructure and improve and upgrade the Town stormwater drainage system. The current stormwater budget is funded through the general fund (taxes). These funds are reserved mostly for stormwater activities related to routine maintenance and requirements associated with federal regulations including, but not limited to: street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, materials for public education and illicit discharge detection. The current stormwater budget does not include funding for large-scale capital projects necessary to correct the numerous flooding problems throughout Agawam.

The Town, in conjunction with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and Wood Group, formerly Amec Foster Wheeler (Wood), has spent the last year discussing various funding options to increase the DPW's stormwater budget. In 2017, the Town formed a Citizen Stormwater Advisory Task Force comprised of Agawam residents, local small & large business owners, clergy members, elected Town officials and DPW employees. The purpose of the Task Force was to explore the stormwater management program for the Town of Agawam and identify its major needs, priorities, and costs as well as provide recommendations for possible funding sources. Additional funds would not only allow the DPW to begin correcting the flooding areas within Agawam, but would also enable the DPW to be proactive in preventing further flooding by systematically replacing the Town's aging stormwater infrastructure and developing a more comprehensive stormwater management program.

Since its formation, the Stormwater Task Force has held six meetings to discuss various funding options researched and presented by Wood. In addition, the Task Force has participated in public workshops with local business owners, senior citizens and City Council candidates during the 2017 election period. These workshops allowed the Task Force to receive feedback from the community about the Town's stormwater needs and available funding options. More information about these meetings and workshops can be found on the Town of Agawam website: <http://www.agawam.ma.us/479/Citizen-Stormwater-Advisory-Task-Force>.

Based on the research performed by Wood and feedback from the public, the Stormwater Task Force is recommending funding stormwater related expenses by treating the stormwater system like a utility (such as a water or sewer utility) with a dedicated enterprise fund and revenue from user fees. There will be a City Council meeting on September 17th to discuss the issue. Please note that the Council will NOT be voting on the implementation of a utility fee at this meeting. If the Council approves the Task Force's recommendations, the Town will proceed with the creation of a stormwater utility fee structure – including costs for residents and businesses and possible credits – to be voted on at a later date.

The Town of Agawam is looking toward the community to help support the Task Force and the stormwater utility fee by asking residents and business owners to attend the City Council meeting on September 17th. Rich Niles from Wood will be presenting a summary of the Task Force's research and recommendations. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the stormwater utility fee prior to the meeting, please feel free to contact the Town Engineer Michelle Chase or Assistant Town Engineer Michael Albro at (413) 821-0600.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Golba
DPW Superintendent



Michelle C. Chase, P.E.
Town Engineer



Michael F. Albro, P.E.
Assistant Town Engineer