



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Booker Creek Working Group Meeting Notes

Chair John Morris
Chair Pamela Schultz
Vice-Chair Jeanette Bench
Doug Frederick
Antonia Sebastian
Shugong Wang

Noel Myers (absent)
Chad Pickens (left early)
Miguel Rojas Sotelo (absent)
Michael Dupree
Louie Rivers

Monday, March 14, 2022

6pm

Virtual Meeting

1 Welcome and Review of the Agenda

The chairs welcomed the group, took roll call, and reviewed the agenda.

2 Announcements

John Morris suggested that the working group start making tentative report ideas. He reviewed the ideas presented by past speakers regarding flooding risk avoidance and stream restoration and identified the need for discussion regarding community rating system and equity.

Urban Stream Stabilization

The working group played [an 8.5 minute video by Mitch Woodward](#), Area Specialized Extension Agent, demonstrating an urban stream stabilization.

4 Presentation on Booker Creek Stream Stabilization and Decentralized Stormwater Project Proposals by Jeanette Bench

Jeanette presented on a traditional versus emergent review regarding stormwater management. The presentation also referenced information in the Lower Booker Creek subwatershed study which rated neighborhoods as candidates for decentralized practices. She reiterated that there is community interest and willingness for decentralized practices such as rain gardens and cisterns on private property.

The proposal was three-part: a green infrastructure cost share program on private property, environmental justice green infrastructure program, and a youth education and jobs program in green infrastructure installation.

5 Open Discussion

There was a lot of discourse around applicability, intent, and scope of the proposal.

The notes capture the main topics of discussion. The group members discussed that these ideas will be redefined and fleshed in the final report.

- Louie stated that the environmental justice program appears to be a subsidy program.
- Michael explained that the Durham County Soil and Water Conservation District (Durham SWCD) offered 100% costs for low-income participants. Although their projects were grounded in water quality, they would install gutters and regrade away from foundations which provided environmental health benefits. Applicants requesting reimbursement had to be landlords. The question raised was that this proposal may work in Booker Creek where there are a high number of landowners but what about neighborhoods with a high number of rental units. How could landlords be incentivized to participate?
- Michael tentatively assumed that 10% of the stormwater budget could be repurposed for the proposal presented. Sue Burke (Town staff) indicated that the budget is already fully utilized. The money for the flood control projects was to be obtained from the bond. Any proposal would need to demonstrate how the money spent would provide a public benefit. The state agency would review the information to determine if it is compliant with the bonds purpose.
- Michael related that Durham SWCD received grants from the state, but these grants specified the money could only be used for water quality.
- Alisha Goldstein (Town staff) asked the group to consider their overall goals that they are trying to address. Urban flooding and FEMA floodplains are not the same. The performance of a decentralized system will vary depending on the design whether it is for water quality or flooding.
- Shugong stated that flooding results from the amount of water and the timing. He suggested that flood risk could be reduced by utilizing ditches to slow down the water.
- Sue Burke (Town staff) pointed out that the entire Town has not been mapped by FEMA. They have a cutoff to their study limits based on the contributing drainage area to a watercourse. She also reminded the group that past presentors indicated that they no longer fund cisterns and downspout disconnect. Michael acknowledged that cisterns have been underutilized but suggested that smart technology be utilized to improve management.
- Pamela raised the question of utilizing money from the surplus from last year, ARPA money, or from the funds allocated to the climate action plan.
- Loryn Clark (Town staff) confirmed that the Council has already distributed all the surplus funds some of which was set aside for climate action. The council will make a decision about ARPA money probably in June.
- Louis suggested that the Working Group report be recommendations without a money allocation. John concurred.
- Lance Norris (Town staff) stated that the Council could increase the stormwater fee.
- Antonia pointed out the need for clarification on green infrastructure

terminology and application.

- Louis wants there to be clarification on whether the recommendations will be made for the Booker Creek watershed or the Town.

6 Preliminary Voting

Maggie Chotas (facilitator) conducted a temperature poll as to how the group felt on two proposals: advancement of green infrastructure and a stream stabilization project. The members were asked to raise their hand and indicate on a 1-5 scale with 5 being the highest their support for the proposals. All eight working group members present indicating a level of support of 4s and 5s to advance a proposal for green infrastructure. The vote for a stream stabilization demonstration received 3s and 5s. Tony stated that the pilot project should have a quality assessment as part of it to demonstrate proof of concept.

7 Public Input

One public member reminded the group that this committee was initiated to address the flooding in response to the flood control projects. He asked that whatever is proposed should consider flooding front and center. The other public member noted that education should be undertaken so that people take action to keep water on their property and not send it all downhill.

8 Adjourn