

VILLAGE OF MARTINS ADDITIONS

STORM WATER TASK FORCE

Minutes : Meeting of April 22, 2010

Present: Mike Zielinski, Boucie Addison, Anne Lieberman, Barbara Bares, Richard Krajeck, Alan Beal.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:45 in the Village Office, as announced on the web site, and posted on the office door and bulletin board.
2. Barbara Bares, of Raymond Street, was welcomed as a new member of the Task Force, replacing Bill Lebovich.
3. Chris Jakubiak reported by e-mail on his contacts with the County. Michael Mitchell, an engineer with the County's Department of Transportation, has confirmed that there is very little information about the system and its design, e.g., there are no as-built plans for the system. There has been no study to determine the system's capability or capacity to handle increased impervious surface area in the watershed. His department, which handles storm drains in the County/Village, does not have an overall plan for addressing storm drains or assessing their status. There are no plans for modernization. Instead the department works to respond to issues as they present themselves.

Mitchell expressed his belief that the system can handle a 10-year storm event, which is the County's standard design and, that when problems do crop up, the County is prepared to step in to restore the functionality of the system. He indicated his sense that what has often brought his engineers into action (for a repair or re-design) has been the impact of mansionization in the older parts of the County and the resulting increase in flow to the storm drain system.

Chris concluded that— there is inadequate technical information available. But professional opinion suggests that the storm drain system was designed for a certain development pattern many decades ago – and as that pattern is intensifying, problems may present themselves. The TF agreed with Chris' recommendation that further contacts with the County should await more definitive information about specific problem areas – information that may be generated by a survey of Village residents.

4. Alan Beal, the Village's Building Code enforcement contractor, reviewed his experiences with storm water issues in the Village and neighboring jurisdictions. The Town of Chevy Chase is in the process of "tweaking" its comprehensive storm water management ordinance to address various issues. Enforceability can be a problem. For example, because increases of 700 square feet of impervious surface area trigger expensive storm water management requirements, the Town has been seeing a lot of 699 square-foot

projects. Lower numbers may be achieved by eliminating walkways and similar impervious surface items from plans – and simply constructing them later – perhaps without permits, if required. Other problems involve maintenance of dry wells, which the Town’s ordinance mandates be inspected every year. If a dry well becomes filled with sediment, the “fix” is to pump in water – stir up the sediment, and then pump the sediment slurry out into the storm drains – thereby flushing all of the collected sediment into the drains – creeks – rivers – bay, in one fell swoop. This results in at least some of the positive effects of such devices being realized only temporarily. Several examples of increased water runoff from new construction resulting in adverse impacts on adjoining property were also noted. Alan believes that such problems with new construction are increasing.

Alan also recounted a recent problem with Section 5’s requirement that new driveways be constructed of material that is at least 80% pervious. One homeowner demolished an existing driveway, intending to replace it with an impervious material – only to be stopped, and with the dearth of materials meeting the regulation’s requirement, has had no driveway for some time.

Differences between various legal requirements were discussed, e.g., TCC’s ordinance is based on increases in impervious surface area, often without credit for existing impervious areas being demolished, whereas the County’s law addresses increases in lot coverage – essentially new structures – possibly with credits for demolished structures. Anne raised a question about the impact of deeper basements in new construction possibly disturbing underground natural water flows. Alan noted that no existing regulation, including TCC’s, addresses such issues, and that they would be difficult to regulate.

The TF agreed that information on construction projects in the Village would be needed to assess the impact of any ordinance provisions that might be recommended or proposed. Alan was asked to review building plans for construction projects receiving Village building permits in the past two years – probably about 24 projects – to tabulate increases in lot coverage and, to the extent possible, increases in impervious surface area.

5. As decided at the March meeting, the TF has determined to survey VMA residents to ascertain water issues experienced by residents in conjunction with storm or natural water runoff, and whether any issues may have been related to nearby construction. A draft of a survey document, prepared by Boucie Addison, was reviewed, and comments on content and possible survey mechanics were discussed.

- 6 The TF determined to take a number of actions:

The survey document will be finalized, with a goal of having it mailed to Village residents before the next TF meeting. Survey mechanics will be determined, including,

possible use of “survey monkey,” a free web-based service, and the Village list-serve in addition to snail mail. Boucie will pilot.

Efforts to identify storm water regulations in neighboring jurisdictions, and to compile comparative information, will continue. Barbara will lead.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.