

Booker Creek Working Group

June 6, 2022 Agenda, 6-8 pm

Desired Outcomes

What would we like to see accomplished because of this meeting?

Group exploration of recommendations to address Mayor Hemminger's framing questions:

- Where is it flooding in our community and by how much? (in layman's terms - 6 inches, etc) how many homes, streets & businesses?
- What ideas can help reduce flooding during big storm events - and by how much?
- How to get the community engaged on their own properties with stormwater reduction
- How long do you think it will take to come back with short term & long-term ideas?
- What role do our existing bottomland forests play in mitigating large stormwater events?

Agenda

Roll Call & Announcements: Pamela Schultz (5 minutes)

Spotlight on Environmental Equity: Shenekia Weeks (30 minutes, including discussion)
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer Shenekia Weeks helps connect the Working Group's thinking to the equity framework for Orange County.

Possible Recommendation regarding regulatory options for managing impervious surface:
Judy Johnson (Town staff) and Jeannette Bench (20 minutes)

Break (5 minutes)

Possible Recommendation inspired by Cary example: John Morris (20 minutes), see pages two and three of this document for the draft text

Working Group Timeline & Report Planning: John Morris (25 minutes)

Public Comment (10 minutes)

Adjourn

Community and Staff Engagement in Stormwater Policy Improvement

Drafted by Co-Chair, John Morris

Summary

The Mayor's Booker Creek Working Group is preparing recommendations to go to the Council in the fall. The charge to the Working Group is to develop general policy recommendations for stormwater management to substitute for the construction of six flood water storage projects now disapproved by the Council. The small Working Group has operated without a close working partnership with the Town's technical staff and without interaction with a range of stakeholders. For these reasons the Working Group has not been able to go beyond broad recommendations to redirect some parts of the Town's stormwater program.

After receiving the Working Group recommendations, the Town can carry the effort further by assigning responsibility for stormwater program improvement leadership within the Town staff and engaging a wide range of stakeholders to work directly with Town staff members to develop detailed program changes and action plans. The Town of Cary has provided an example of how this broader effort can be very effective. Chapel Hill could choose to follow their example as adapted to meet our needs.

Initiation and Operation of a Community Effort

The Cary initiative began with strong leadership by the Town Manager. The town established three objectives for stormwater management improvements: restoration of open space, flood mitigation, and reduction of flood losses. To pursue these objectives, the Town established six committees:

- Steering Committee
- Stakeholders
- Basin Modeling
- Town Ordinances
- Open Space
- Maintenance

On most of these committees Town staff members from several departments worked closely with such stakeholders as home and business owners and developers. Having staff members work directly with stakeholders built mutual understanding and led to recommendations that had consensus support.

The Committee recommendations have led to many specific policy and program improvements. Some examples are:

—Changing Town ordinances to require mitigation of the 100 year flood and making grants to help developers meet this standard.

—Developing a dynamic flood model to allow flood damages to individual structures to be evaluated. Consideration of a range of measures determined the most cost-effective method to reduce damages in each case. In some cases the Town has bought structures with repeated flood damages and converted the sites to open space.

—Setting priorities for acquiring Town owned open space to meet both recreation and flood damage reduction purposes.

—Higher standards for floodplain management to reduce future flood losses and to give residents lower rates on flood insurance through entry into the FEMA Community Rating System.

—An innovative program that can pay developers to install stormwater management improvements with significant public benefits as a part of their own construction contracts. The Town benefits by getting quicker construction and lower costs.

Differences from the Current Chapel Hill Approach

Under this recommendation, the Town staff would work directly with stakeholders and outside experts in committees with specific assignments, such as improving Town ordinances and using basin models to find the most cost-effective flood damage reduction measures. Collaboration between the staff and stakeholders would build mutual respect and understanding and produce consensus recommendations with a good chance of adoption. Leadership by the Town Manager would guide follow up and implementation.

Supporting Documentation

[Cary's Adaptive Stormwater Journey](#)

[Adaptive Stormwater 5.1.18](#)

[The Path to the Community Rating System](#)