

**SEEKONK PLANNING BOARD**  
**Joint meeting with BOS**  
**Selectmen Meeting Room**  
**February 15, 2023**

---

Present: Ch. D. Sullivan, B. Hoch, D. Roderick, P. Dunn, S. Escaler, S. Foulkes, and John Aubin (Town Planner)

Absent with cause: P. Aguiar

**General Business:**

**G. Joint meeting with Planning Board: Stormwater Advisory Committee presentation with southern New England Program Network Technical Assistance Team**

J. Sullivan introduced the next item on the agenda which was the joint meeting with the Planning Board. D. Sullivan stated that there was a quorum so the board would take roll call.

**D. Sullivan made a motion to call the meeting to order, seconded by B. Hoch.**

**Roll Call: All Members present said AYE.**

J. Aubin then stated to the BOS that they were there in follow up to some of the discussions had with the stormwater advisory committee. J. Aubin informed everyone that there will be a few presentations in the next few months that will introduce the Board to the idea of stormwater utilities and also provide a way to pay for Seekonk's growing stormwater maintenance and repair costs. He stated that there will be a presentation this evening from Anna Patterson with the UNC Environmental Finance Center. J. Aubin then highlighted why this is important for the betterment of the town and its stormwater management. He stated a number of factors are driving this for the town such as MS4 compliance and the cost of maintenance for Seekonk's stormwater system.

Anna Patterson from NC Environmental Finance Center introduced herself and her organization and their main focus for the presentation will be to talk about stormwater financing. Anna explained what the Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network is and the items they deal with such as stormwater management, financing, water quality, green infrastructure, low-impact development and restoration. Her presentation then covered topics like what a stormwater fee is, the difference between a tax and a fee, when a fee is legal or not, how a municipality pay for a stormwater fee if it does/doesn't have a utility or fee, and factors that directly affect a stormwater budget. A. Patterson then opened it up to questions.

J. Sullivan then asked the Planning Board for some of their thoughts on the subject.

D. Sullivan then emphasized that the Planning Board and Town Planner, J. Aubin, agree that there are areas in town that have not been regularly maintained and need to be, therefore that is why they have decided to bring this to the attention on the Board of Selectmen (BOS).

J. Aubin restated that this is born out of the discussions had between the Planning Board, BOS, and Stormwater Advisory Committee. Particularly with regards to the Stormwater Advisory Committee, looking at the costs related to our stormwater system and MS4 compliance, which Dave Cabral can explain more. This discussion is more so focused on our public system in regards to what the town is dealing with for volume on a big-picture scale. Year by year, there are

additional requirements for testing and solving any issues. There are around 3,000 structures located in town that are part of the structures that need to be maintained/tested each year.

S. Cadime stated that back in October, the board had appropriated \$440,000 to try and give the town a leg up on some of the requirements coming through with the testing and MS4 permitting. He stated that the town is currently budgeting \$25,000 and are going to be adding an additional \$200,000 to the budget this fiscal year to maintain that. Moving forward, there will be significant budget increases. He stated that D. Cabral and the Conservation Agent, Jennifer Miller, had previously shown the board a presentation with a graph that showed the steep incline in the budget. D. Cabral had also mentioned in that presentation the number of outfalls and catch basins that need to be maintained or addressed/improved upon in some way. This has a very significant cost impact to the Town of Seekonk being that it is only at step 4 in the MS4 permitting. This emphasizes why it is important to budget the proper maintenance moving forward.

D. Cabral then went on to explain in more detail the background and numbers involved in the MS4 permitting. He explained that the MS4 permitting is state mandated and part of the Cleveland Water act under the federal government. He then went on further to offer an idea of what to expect each year for the budget. He also talked about what work has already been done and what else needs to be done.

D. Andrade asked a question in regards to the presentation and asked how a resident can opt out of a stormwater management fee. S. Cadime answered his question by stating that the resident can opt out by putting their own stormwater management system in place. This can be very costly for the resident. D. Andrade asked a second question directed to D. Cabral asking how much of the Town doesn't have stormwater management systems like catch basin in place. D. Cabral answered by stating that the stormwater management systems range from not only things like catch basins but structures like swales, ditches, pipes, culvert crossings, river crossings. He stated that it includes everything that carries water and not just closed range systems or a physical structure. J. Aubin stated that it is not only the structures themselves, but it is also the quality of the water and went on to explain and offer examples of different impacts on how the quality of water is affected.

J. Sullivan then asked D. Cabral to explain a point he made about how there would be no flat rate per resident and how it would be different for each resident. D. Cabral mentioned that he didn't want to go into too much detail as there will be another presentation on that specific question. He did state that there are different fee structures. S. Cadime then also mentioned that it depends how the fee is established. J. Aubin then went on to explain it further.

J. Sullivan stated that there will be further explanation in great detail for the residents so that everyone understands how the fees will be calculated. More discussion and questions about the fees were had between members.

S. Cadime wanted to go on the record to clarify that is just a discussion about whether or not the BOS would like to consider creating an enterprise fund together for MS4 permitting to help offset any additional costs. The Town is required to do the testing and improvements for infrastructure and if the Town had to pull money from the general fund, then there would be a difficult decision to pull money from another department to meet state requirements.

D. Sullivan asked J. Aubin what he sees as far as an impact for the Planning/Zoning Boards in regards to plan reviews and just looking forward. J. Aubin stated that unless there are significant changes to the Massachusetts stormwater handbook, which is ultimately what the stormwater by-laws are tied to, then the Planning/Zoning Boards should not expect to see any significant

changes. A small conversation about lot sizes was had. Lastly, J. Aubin thanked Anna and Martha from NC Environmental Finance Center for all of their assistance on this project.

**Adjournment**

**D. Roderick made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting. Seconded by B. Hoch.  
VOTE: 6-0-0**

---

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Stephanie Iagatta, Secretary  
Planning Board

---

*Formally accepted on 3/14/23  
6 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstention*

**Full Video available to view on TV9 Seekonk Community Access Television**  
**Link: <http://tv9seekonk.com/>**