

Watertown Stormwater Advisory Committee (SAC) Minutes

Thursday, July 17, 2025, 4:00 PM - Virtual

In attendance: Nancy Hammett (Chair), Steve Magoon (Asst. City Manager for CDP), Laurel Schwab (Sustainability Manager), Katie Swan (Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent), Tyler Glode (City Engineer), Warren Tolman, Thalia Aoki.

Visitor: Lilia Moscalu

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction of Visitors

2. Acceptance of Minutes

- A. Minutes for the June 12, 2025 Stormwater Advisory Committee were approved (Motion - Magoon, Second - Aoki)

3. Brief Reports / Status Updates

A. MVP grant

- i. Schwab: Year 1 finished June 30. All deliverables submitted, working through reimbursement. Bidding period for construction services on Templeton & Dexter opened and recently closed. Construction currently scheduled to begin in the fall. Also to begin community engagement action w/ abutters in the fall.
- ii. Glode: Just received bids, including alternative with split options (eg one street at a time). Bids came in higher than expected; if possible will still move forward with both. Bids were straight-forward - no questions/addenda. Currently in review.
- iii. Hammett: we should think about ways to advertise and celebrate this with the public. Glode: struggle is to balance outreach efforts with execution demands. Hammett: this makes it a great opportunity for the SAC to support.

B. SAC member status (two resident members currently approved)

- i. Lilia is prospective resident member of the committee; has applied
- ii. Hammett's term has expired - applied for reappointment

C. Stormwater funding needs and resources

- i. Glode: right now focusing on coordinating existing contracts, primarily the MVP grant. Potentially updates on other needs in the future.

4. Education and Outreach

- i. Update from Schwab: Templeton Parkway block party was held 6/21 - attended by Swan. Very successful and popular. Dexter Ave liaison said insufficient interest in block party, but held office hours on the actual block. Good attendance despite heat, including commercial property holders. Excitement for the construction.

A. Overview of target audiences and content

- i. Hammett: what kind of outreach & education each would be interested in. Need to assign people to lead initiatives. Eg specific events/groups/activities/collaborations that committee members may be interested in exploring, proposing O&E actions by the SAC.

B. Potential collaborations

- i. Charles River Watershed Association - will be present at Faire on the Square; opportunity to collaborate. Former key point of contact left; need to update.

- ii. City Sustainability Team - also present at Faire on the Square.
- iii. Watertown Business Group has expressed interest in collaboration in the past.

C. Selection of next O&E projects

i. Faire on the Square

- a. Hammett: Applied for place at Faire on the Square - Sept 13th, 12-5 pm. Approved as a town group for 6 ft table & two chairs. Have materials to use from past. Committee members fulfill requirements to have city employees present.
- b. In past: given away rubber duckies, used borrowed materials from Charles River Watershed to display information.. Thalia, Lilia, Hammett agreed to contribute.
- c. Tolman: can we sell rain barrels at Faire on the Square? At reduced price? Glode: DPW have mini model for demonstration. Recently been selling a lot - large amount over last 3 weeks, possibly from walk through. \$65 for complete set up, with optional diverter valve for additional \$20. Can have them at the SAC table with information on pick-up at DPW.

ii. Event for general public and/or local businesses

- a. Magoon - more effective for SAC to participate in larger existing events, rather than try to create a stormwater specific event - larger audience and addresses goals of wider outreach.
- b. Life Friendly Garden Tours - 9/17 as opportunity to identify stormwater related infrastructure (eg rain barrels, rain gardens, permeable pavement). Hammett has reached out, waiting on response. Swan has contact information that she will share.
- c. Schwab: business association has coffee meetings - not sure on details but potential opportunity. Perhaps hold a themed one. Magoon: Next one is walk about Watertown Square - could potentially incorporate stormwater. July 24th.
- d. Magoon: August 9th: Watertown Arts Market. Lots of vendors, artists.

iii. Identification of future opportunities

- a. Hammett: can we maintain an on-going list of opportunities for signage.
- b. Schwab: future events could have map - "do you have a rain barrel" - residents can add thumbtacks. Both engaging and gives anonymized data. Hammett: this could also include other interventions - permeable pavement, rain gardens, etc.
- c. Tolman: collection for a mailing list? What would we share? Raffle for a rain barrel? Schwab: last year raffled off countertop compost bins via trivia questions. Magoon: city website has existing lists that people can opt in to for information, including on stormwater. Hammett: in that case, don't need to collect our own but we should consider what other information we might want to add to the SAC website/city outreach blasts.

D. Upcoming events

- A. July 24th - Watertown Business Coalition Coffee Connect
- B. August 9th - Watertown Arts Market
- C. September 13th - Faire on the Square
- D. September 17th - Life Friendly Garden Tours

5. Other Business

A. Resiliency Plans

- i. Tolman: what are our resiliency plans for 100 yr storm events, as seen in Texas, NC flooding? Schwab: Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) has done a lot of modeling of the impact of stormwater ordinances - both in Watertown and in other communities, as well as other solutions like improved tree canopy, etc. A lot of information generated, reports issued. Could be valuable to have someone from CRWA attend an SAC meeting to talk through this. Schwab & Swan recently attended CRWA workshop at senior center: discussed climate resiliency tactics - flooding & heat mitigation.
- ii. Tolman - can we develop these materials? Educate property owners? Schwab: a lot of this is being addressed - have updated floodplain maps from FEMA. Also future zoning code review, would be a good opportunity for outreach to property owners. Watertown specifically is less at risk from riverine flooding than dispersed stormwater flooding. The greater area key concerns are the Mystic River & Amelia Earhart Dam; recently lost FEMA funding for improvements. Hammett: would be good if the committee could develop a summary presentation to share with other groups.
- iii. Lilia: have been concerned about rapid rising of Charles water levels. What are boundaries between Watertown & DCR? Glode: depends on mean water line. Eg DCR owns all of Charles River Road.
- iv. Glode: city has been implementing 100 yr planning per ordinance for last 8 years, so we are in very good shape - due to those ordinances. Upcoming CRWA meeting on how to continue to incorporate these concerns holistically in city development. Current development is highly concerned with resiliency - longer time horizons than previously. Currently Watertown is very far ahead of the curve, but new key concern is water quality. For example, only a small percentage of Watertown is affected by the floodplain - but there is an out-standing report on testing for impacts of potential dam removal by Galen St. Bridge on water quality.

B. Housekeeping

- i. Hammett: should develop a list for tracking other groups for potential collaboration.
- ii. Glode has set up Sharepoint; because of security concerns, currently only Chair and city employees have access. Hammett will work with Swan to understand how best to leverage for SAC activities.

6. Announcements

- A. Next meeting to be held on August 21, 2025, @ 4 pm
- B. Adjourn at 5 pm