



City of Harrisonburg Stormwater Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

August 6, 2025, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Bluestone Room, 320 East Mosby

Members in attendance: Dany Fleming, Ferwerdin Barzanji, Kurt Schick, Chelsea Thomas, Kent O'Donohue, Wes Runion

Staff in attendance: Keith Thomas, Tom Hartman, Shayna Carter, Austin Shenk, Matthew Huston, Mark Richter

Review and Adopt Minutes

Kent O'Donohue motioned to approve the May 2025 meeting minutes. Chelsea Thomas seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Resident of 1205 Dogwood Drive, Holly McCartney addressed issues she had with the recent culvert replacement project at Dogwood Drive. Molly expressed concern regarding what she described as an increase of water that comes through her backyard now after heavy storms and noted that the water has come close to reaching her new air conditioning unit. Molly asked what evaluation was conducted to ensure that the project did not impact her property.

Tom Hartman informed Holly that there were calculations done to evaluate the pre-existing conditions and the post-existing conditions of upstream and downstream of the culvert project. He noted that the calculations were done within the City Right of Way and did not evaluate her property. Tom also mentioned that the size of the new culvert was the same size as the previous one, and noted the old culvert was replaced due to a hole in the old culvert. He noted that there was no change in the flow of water due to the replacement.

Holly emphasized her concern that water moves faster through culvert since it has been replaced. Kent highlighted a similar experience he had during the recent storms. He explained that more intense storms are hard to contain within adequate stormwater infrastructure and result in overtopped ditches. Wes Runion added that in 2018 the City experienced a similar situation where there was excessive rainfall that overtopped many ditches throughout the neighborhood Holly currently lives.

Tom and Matthew Huston agreed to meet with Holly at another time to discuss her concerns in more detail.

MS4 Program Updates

Keith Thomas notified the committee that JMU recently had an audit conducted by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Keith noted that DEQ had previously stated they wanted to do audits on a five-year cycle. He mentioned that City staff expected to be audited next year. Keith explained that the audit would look over the City's program documents and DEQ staff would do several site visits.

Keith highlighted that staff have begun to work on the Blacks Run and Cooks Creek Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan. He noted that they are required to turn in the plan to DEQ by May 1, 2026. Keith explained that this plan would take several months to develop. He noted the purpose of the plan was to explain to DEQ how the City plans to meet the pollution reduction requirements for Blacks Run and Cooks Creek.

Kent noted that Augusta County recently was audited by DEQ. He asked if staff have talked to Augusta County staff to see how their audit went. Keith advised that he had not.

VESMP Updates

Matthew Huston reported to the committee that Community Development had been working to update their cost estimate spreadsheet for bonds. He noted that staff had compiled information from other localities to make this update. He mentioned that staff are scheduled to present this update to City Council on August 26th. Matthew highlighted that his staff had noticed an uptick in drainage complaints in which several were from failed erosion and sediment control measures. He noted Community Development staff worked with Public Works staff to update the VESMP portion of the annual report. Matthew explained that staff started to review site plans whose approvals had expired on July 1st. He stated that privately owned BMPs needed to be inspected every five years and that staff had reached out to people that had not submitted their inspections. Matthew concluded by introducing the new City Engineer Mark Richter and highlighted that the VESMP program in Community Development was now fully staffed.

Kent acknowledged that the number of private BMPs in Harrisonburg was a long list and asked Matthew how his staff managed those inspections. Matthew advised that if a property has multiple BMPs that came online in different years, staff will lump them into one year so all of them are due for inspection at one time. Wes clarified that the private BMP owner needed to hire their own engineer for the inspections and Matthew confirmed that.

Stormwater Programs Updates

HCAP Updates

Shayna Carter provided the committee with the HCAP Summary of Activities Report that was provided by the Shenandoah Valley Soil and Water Conservation District. This report highlighted the approved and funded practices in the HCAP program for the previous program year. She noted that the largest way people hear about the program continued to be word of mouth. Shayna also announced that the cost share caps for Impervious Surface Removal, Rainwater Harvesting, and Swales increased for the next program year.

Drainage Improvement Updates

Hill Street to N. Mason Street- Keith updated the committee that phase one had been completed and expected to get the final report soon. Keith mentioned that they had received GIS data of the existing conditions. He reminded the committee that phase one was to evaluate the existing conditions of the stormwater system in the neighborhood. Keith explained that phase two of the project would evaluate alternatives to address drainage issues that were found in phase one. He noted that phase two was expected to be completed in Summer of 2026.

Charles to Madison St- Keith updated the committee that staff applied for Congressional District Spending. He noted that the funding announcement would be made later this year. Keith highlighted that

Matthew and his team had begun design work to create a plan of attack if the City was awarded funding. He noted that the anticipated funding would not be enough to fund the whole project so Matthew and his team have started to evaluate what portion would need to be completed first.

Waterman Dr-Keith updated the committee that staff applied for the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Fund grant to complete a project on the south end of Waterman Drive. He mentioned that the project will upsize a culvert between two properties along Waterman Drive. Keith explained that this culvert was where the major bottleneck was along Waterman and was usually where the flooding begins. The project would remove that bottleneck.

Stormwater Projects

Blacks Run South Stream Restoration Update

Austin Shenk informed the committee that the project was nearly complete. He noted that the contractor was expected to come back on site this fall to complete the tree planting and hoped that there would be a higher survivability rate for the trees that were previously planted. Wes noted that this was a good year for tree plantings.

Mountain View Drive Stream Restoration Update

Austin reminded the committee that staff have selected an on-call maintenance contractor, RES. He explained that the crew will be back on site in November to fix some of the structures. Austin noted that letters would be sent to the residents of the surrounding area to let them know that crews will be back out.

Water Sampling Updates

Austin updated the committee on his recent water sampling findings. He highlighted that there were high E. coli counts in June and a couple of locations in July that also had high counts. Dany Fleming asked if there was any correlation between the construction of Purcell Park Kids Castle and the high counts of E. coli. Wes and Austin both explained that there were other sample locations upstream of the construction that also had high counts.

Other Topics

Shayna showed the committee the video created during the recently completed NASA DEVLOP project. The video highlighted the increase in impervious cover and the loss of tree canopy cover throughout the City since 2018.

Next Meeting Dates

2025 Dates

- November 19th