



City Council Work Session
JULY 17, 2023
UNOFFICIAL MINUTES
Office of the City Clerk
ALPHARETTA CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS | 2 PARK PLAZA | 5:30 PM

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

- Mayor Gilvin called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL**

• **Council Members**

- Mayor Jim Gilvin
- Donald F. Mitchell
- Douglas J. DeRito
- John Hipes
- Jason Binder

• **Council Members Absent**

- Mayor Pro Tem Dan Merkel
- Brian Will

• **Staff**

- Chris Lagerbloom, City Administrator
- Molly Esswein, City Attorney with Jarrard & Davis
- James Drinkard, Assistant City Administrator
- Lauren Shapiro, City Clerk
- Ryan Thomas, Municipal Project Manager
- Pete Sewczwicz, Director of Public Works

3. **PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

4. **WORKSHOP ITEMS**

A. Alpharetta Stormwater Management Program

Presentation and discussion of the proposed Alpharetta Stormwater Management Program.

- Assistant City Administrator, James Drinkard, and Director of Public Works, Pete Sewczwicz, came forward to present this item.
- As part of its stormwater management program, the City of Alpharetta has a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which is the technical name for the network of storm drains, pipes, ditches, outfalls, and other facilities that convey and treat stormwater. This system works in conjunction with private detention ponds and other infrastructure and management practices to form a holistic stormwater management system that is the backbone of Alpharetta's stormwater management.
- In early 2022, as Alpharetta began seeing significant redevelopment of single-family home sites in older neighborhoods, the limitations of those old stormwater management practices became increasingly evident. As a result, the City began analyzing its stormwater management program to identify means for improving the overall system in terms of infrastructure, policy, and public education.
- The draft of the Stormwater Management Program is attached hereto as "Exhibit A."
- The costs for stormwater are estimated to be about \$45 million every 10 years, and Mayor and Council have allotted about \$4 million every year for this.

B. Tax Digest and Millage Rate Levy

Presentation and discussion of the tax digest and millage rate levy.

- Chris Lagerbloom came forward to present this item.
- Because of our fiscal year, we make assumption based on what the tax digest may look like. This year we projected very conservatively, and we anticipate that additional money will come to City of Alpharetta in the general fund. As such, we will have additional readings of the budget at public meetings in August.
- Tonight, staff is looking for the Mayor and City Council to have a discussion of how to allot the additional funds within the budget.
- Council Member Binder shared that he would like to see funding allotted for the North Point Parkway Lane Diet and fire station deferred maintenance costs.
- Council Member Hipes shared that he agrees with Council Member Binder and would be curious to know what items were on the edge of being included in the budget, but ultimately were not included.
- Council Member Mitchell shared that he would also like to see a list of budget items that were close to be included in the budget, but were not selected for funding. He

would also like to see if we could add in maintenance funding on a third fire station and funding for the North Point Parkway and Brookside areas.

- Mayor Gilvin shared that he would like to see funding allocated to capital projects.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NECESSARY)

- There was not an executive session.

6. RATIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS (IF NECESSARY)

- There was not an executive session.

7. ADJOURNMENT

- With there being no further items to consider or discuss, Mayor Gilvin adjourned the work session at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren Shapiro, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A

Stormwater Management SWOT Analysis and Recommendations

This document outlines some of the major functions of the Public Works Stormwater Team along with a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and recommendations. The major functions of stormwater include:

- Asset Management
- Regulatory Compliance
- Private Pond Inspections
- Flooding
- Streambank Erosion
- Public Education/ Outreach

Asset Management & Good Housekeeping – Maintenance of the public stormwater conveyance system including the rehabilitation of aging pipes and preventative maintenance. Asset management can prevent stormwater-related sinkholes in streets and yards and provides for an efficient conveyance system.

Category	Description
<i>Strengths</i>	Alpharetta has very good system maps and inspects publicly maintained assets once every 5 years. Alpharetta’s stormwater system is relatively “young” and comprised of better pipe material, with fewer issues compared to other cities.
<i>Weaknesses</i>	Adding stormwater system data from new developments is slow and/or data is incomplete. There are some missing legacy assets.
<i>Opportunities</i>	Improve the process for importing stormwater assets from new developments by ensuring electronic as-builts are submitted and that they comply with data requirements. This is for stormwater conveyance system and GI/BMPs/ponds. Expand street sweeping program to collect debris before entering the stormwater system.
<i>Threats</i>	Pipe failure is non-linear, and inspections don’t see 100% of pipe (buried structures, etc). Currently it is difficult to get contractors for repairs, although this is expected to be temporary.

Recommendations:

- Increase GIS support (both Public Works & Planning).
- Developer education on GIS submission requirements and reject non-compliant GIS data.
- New contract for CIPP may need to be issued if inflation increases.
- Evaluate purchase of a street sweeper (full size and/or smaller version) to increase pollutant and leaf removal.

Regulatory Compliance – Maintain compliance with stormwater-related regulations at the federal, state, and regional levels. This includes addressing impaired waters, industrial/commercial inspections, and enforcement.

Category	Description
<i>Strengths</i>	Alpharetta has a long history of regulatory compliance and a good reputation with regulators. There are very good watershed improvement plans that cover the city. The city has been progressive in the installation of GI/BMPs on city-owned properties.
<i>Weaknesses</i>	Some of the compliance items take time/resources but don't necessarily improve conditions. Streams are not "close" to meeting state standards.
<i>Opportunities</i>	There will be a new state stormwater permit in late 2023/early 2024 and chance to review SWMP action items. Alpharetta can streamline the current water quality sampling program to collect data that is helpful. Add watershed improvement items to the capital improvement plan in coordination with other projects and/or as funding is available.
<i>Threats</i>	Alpharetta has a new EPD auditor following the retirement of the long-time auditor. The new permit may add/change regulations. Water quality standards for bacteria are difficult to meet in urban streams.

Recommendations:

- Streamline sampling program to collect data required by regulation and/or that informs local decision-making.
- Merge recommended watershed improvement projects from individual plans into one prioritized list to make it easier to identify timely projects during the annual budgeting process.

Private Pond Inspections – The city periodically inspects private ponds and requires maintenance, if needed, to protect the city's conveyance system and downstream properties. Newer private ponds have private maintenance agreements.

Category	Description
<i>Strengths</i>	Most HOAs and businesses have been compliant when notified of deficiencies to private ponds.
<i>Weaknesses</i>	The time needed to follow up on compliance issues can be challenging for existing staff, due to other responsibilities. Some older ponds are not in the cities GIS system. For older ponds, as-builts to verify design standards are not always available. Older ponds weren't designed to current standards and don't always maximize stormwater benefits.
<i>Opportunities</i>	Add staff in Public Works dedicated to stormwater-related enforcement who coordinates with existing Code Enforcement officers. Routinely educate residents and businesses on the importance of pond maintenance and a pond-maintenance "sinking fund" for HOAs.

<i>Threats</i>	Pond maintenance can be expensive for some owners/neighborhoods. Enforcement when there isn't an established HOA may be difficult.
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Recommendations:

- Hire a Public Works Stormwater Compliance person, dedicated to stormwater-related enforcement.
- Continue to identify unmapped ponds during routine system inspections and assign an asset number.
- Educate property owners and HOAs on the advantages of creating a sinking fund for future stormwater facility/pond maintenance.
- Create a defined and consistent application-based grant and/or loan program to support HOA maintenance of older ponds that are not governed by a maintenance agreement. In return for support, the city would require the creation of a HOA and execution of a maintenance agreement. Consider offering a grant program for ponds that could be retrofitted to provide a greater public water quality or flood mitigation benefit and a loan program for ponds that cannot be retrofitted.

Flooding – Reducing flooding that impacts structures (homes, businesses, roads, etc.) is beneficial to the city. This includes policies and actions to minimize and address repetitive property losses.

Category	Description
<i>Strengths</i>	The floodplain maps are very good and future conditions floodplains are mapped to the 100-acre drainage basin. Development standards protect the mapped floodplains and stream buffers, which mitigate future flooding. The city has strong stormwater regulations for new developments.
<i>Weaknesses</i>	There are several properties in the city that flood or have floodwaters very close to the structure.
<i>Opportunities</i>	The upper portions of the watershed (<100-acre drainage basin) floodplains are not currently mapped, and mapping could protect these areas. The city can apply for FEMA hazard mitigation buyout grants on behalf of frequently flooded properties (10% local and 90% federal grant).
<i>Threats</i>	Storm intensities appear to be changing with higher intensity storms occurring more frequently. New development stormwater standards are based on regional storm event data. Portions of the public greenway are within the floodplain and must be closed during and immediately following heavy rains.

Recommendations:

- Map the future conditions floodplain in the upper reaches of each watershed (<100-acre drainage basin).

- Create a cooperative and consistent program for working with homeowners to apply for FEMA hazard mitigation grants to permanently remove flooded properties from flood risk. Participate in cost-sharing of local match for homeowners who were not originally in the 100-year floodplain or who are only in the future condition floodplain.
- Evaluate elevating portions of the Alpharetta greenway to mitigate flooding impacts.

Streambank Erosion/ Stream buffer Management – There are areas in Alpharetta where streambanks are eroding and private property owners are looking for assistance to address these issues. Streambank erosion on private property is outside of the city’s current service policy.

Category	Description
<i>Strengths</i>	The city’s ordinances historically have protected and preserved stream buffers during development, which protect against erosion. There are strong stormwater management requirements for new development. The city offers one load of rock to homeowners each year for stabilizing eroded streambanks.
<i>Weaknesses</i>	Some homeowners have removed vegetation from the stream buffer to “maximize their backyards” which limits the erosion protection benefits.
<i>Opportunities</i>	Install monitoring stations to collect weather data that could be used to guide changes in storm intensity within development standards and compare rainfall to stream levels in major watersheds. Distribute educational materials to homeowners explaining the protections afforded by vegetated stream buffers and proper stream stabilization techniques.
<i>Threats</i>	Apparent changes in storm intensities may not be reflected in the current regional stormwater standards, used in Alpharetta. Infill development is increasing overall impervious area and the stormwater standards manage runoff through the 100-year storm event; so, the increase in impervious area may result in increased runoff during very large events.

Recommendations:

- Research options for weather and flow monitoring stations in major watersheds and then install selected technology. Track data and work with community development to update ordinances, if supported by the data.
- Distribute educational materials on the importance of stream buffers and proper stream stabilization techniques.
- Create a live staking program, similar to the rip rap program, that provides access to live stakes and installation education to landscape companies working with Alpharetta homeowners.

Public Education/ Outreach

Category	Description
<i>Strengths</i>	Alpharetta has a very strong outreach and education program and social media platforms that are well used by residents.

<i>Weaknesses</i>	
<i>Opportunities</i>	Expand on existing messages to include pond maintenance and streambank stabilization messages.
<i>Threats</i>	People are busy and not all residents engage in social media or the city's outreach efforts. Personal interests may be placed ahead of public benefit and/or short-term benefits may be placed above long-term benefits, even when information is distributed.

Recommendations:

- Create and distribute new messages on pond maintenance and streambank stabilization messages.
- Coordinate with the NRC on natural landscape certification programs such as NWF Certified Wildlife Habitat or Georgia Audubon Certified Wildlife Sanctuary or tree sanctuary program.