TOWN OF BLUFFTON MAY RIVER WATERSHED ACTION PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Rotary Community Center, Oscar Frazier Park
Thursday, March 22, 2018

Present: Chris Burden, chair; Emmett McCracken; Eric Montie; Chris Shoemaker
Absent: Wes Jones; Larry Toomer; Al Stokes
Staff: Bryan McIlwee; Kim Jones; Beth Lewis
Guests: None
Media: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL
   1. Members introduced themselves.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
   1. Mr. McCracken moved to adopt the Agenda as presented. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Unanimous ayes.

IV. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 22, 2018 MEETING MINUTES
   1. Mr. McCracken moved to adopt the Minutes as presented. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Unanimous ayes.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT
   1. Mr. Sam Connor, 70 Calhoun Plantation Road, asked Committee members if there was cost sharing between the State, the County, and the Town of Bluffton. He also asked if anyone on the Committee was opposed to doing restorative projects in the headwaters of the May River.

VI. NEW BUSINESS
   1. Adoption of Committee Rules of Procedure
      Mr. McCracken recommended that section C.2 of the Proposed Rules of Procedure be amended to read, “Assist the Chair and Staff in preparation of agenda and supporting material.”

      Dr. Montie moved to adopt the Rules and Procedures as amended by Mr. McCracken. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Unanimous ayes.

      2. Strategic Plan Priority – DRAFT Sewer Connection Program
      Ms. Jones provided an introduction and background information in regard to the Town’s Sewer Connection Program. Ms. Jones also provided a list of currently available funding sources and information regarding the Town’s current sanitary sewer extension program. Ms. Jones reviewed several programmatic options available to the Town for the Committee’s consideration.
The Committee’s feedback regarding a Town Septic to Sewer Conversion Program were as follows:

1. Town staff further explore the option to record a financial security against the applicant’s property for a fixed term. Committee felt a 10 year lien forgiven at 10% per year for 10 years was extensive.
2. Not consider restricting the eligibility of residential properties to three or fewer units regardless of zoning, e.g. multiple applications from a single owner for separate connections is permissible.
3. Not restrict any person or property that has a septic system failure within the last twelve (12) months. The Committee felt these parcels with active failures were important to consider for financial assistance from the Town.
4. Award additional points to property owners living on a Town-defined Ghost Road that agrees to donate his/her/its portion of the Ghost Road to the Town.
5. Award additional points for commitment of multiple owners in an area to hook up – “economy of scale” approach.

Ms. Jones then provided the Committee with a Next Steps Table. The Committee will review and recommend to Town Council a Septic to Sewer Conversion Program at the April 26, 2018 meeting.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Strategic Plan Priority – May River Watershed Action Plan Update

Ms. Jones stated that the Committee had recommended Town staff expand environmental, historical, and social indicators for the May River Watershed Action Plan Update. Following WAPAC direction, Staff met with SC DHEC personnel to discuss hybridizing the 5R option vs. a traditional TMDL for fecal coliform with a traditional watershed-based plan for other indicators. SC DHEC does not foresee a problem with the Town adopting a hybrid approach.

A 5R does not remove the TMDL requirement, which is a federal requirement for impaired waterbodies. Ms. Jones stated that a 5R defers a TMDL as long as significant action is being taken and improvements are being made in a timely fashion. However, a waterbody with a 5R remains listed on the 303(d) List of Statewide Impaired Waters, whereas development of a TMDL removes the waterbody. The May River is not a high priority for TMDL development due to the Town’s current actions via the May River Watershed Action Plan. Thus, if a TMDL was developed by SCDHEC, it would not be until after 2022.

Ms. Jones stated that a local jurisdiction does not need to have a separate non-profit to take a 5R approach; it can be done by coalition, or existing organizations banding together, to commit. This approach is similar to the Town’s approach in writing the May River Watershed Action Plan in 2009. SC DHEC’s recommendation to Staff was to engage Beaufort County from the outset. Ms. Jones has already been in discussion with Eric Larson, the Beaufort County Director of Environmental Engineering & Land Management.

2. Water Quality Monitoring (standing item)

Ms. Lewis provided an update on the following monitoring data:
a. Weekly Sampling Update  
b. Microbial Source Tracking (MST) Update  
c. SCDHEC Shellfish Data

VIII. DISCUSSION

IX. ADJOURNMENT  
1. Unanimous decision to adjourn.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, April 26, 2018 @ 10:00 AM