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

Present: Chris Burden, chair; Larry Toomer, vice-chair; Al Stokes; Emmett McCracken; Eric Montie; Chris Shoemaker

Absent: Wes Jones

Staff: Bryan McIlwee; Kim Jones; Beth Lewis

Guests: Councilman Dan Wood; Eric Larson, Beaufort County

Media: none

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL
   1. Members introduced themselves.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
   1. Dr. Montie moved to adopt the Agenda as presented. Mr. Toomer seconded the motion. Unanimous ayes.

IV. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 26, 2017 MEETING MINUTES
   1. Mr. McCracken moved to adopt the Minutes as presented. Mr. Toomer seconded the motion. Unanimous ayes.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT
   1. None

VI. NEW BUSINESS
   1. Discussion of Strategic Plan Priorities to establish new partnerships with USCB for long-term monitoring of natural resources and climate change endpoints in the May River

   Dr. Montie delivered a proposal to the Committee to meet the Strategic Plan Priority stated above (Attachment 1). He submitted a Conflict of Interest Statement for the official record and recused himself from all voting activity. He noted that he personally would not be funded via this request, but did not want to have a perceived conflict of interest.

   Mr. McCracken made a motion to formally recommend that Town Council support an USCB-MOU amendment in the amount of $27,919 in FY19 for natural resource monitoring in the May River in support of the May River Watershed Action Plan Update. Mr. Stokes seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Ayes – Burden, Toomer, McCracken, Stokes and Shoemaker. Nays – none. Abstain – Montie.

   This work is in addition to the existing MOU for water quality monitoring and MS4 compliance, and the recently adopted amendment in support of Microbial Source Tracking ability. Mr. Toomer inquired if Dr. Montie had also approached
the County for financial assistance and recommended a request be made if he had not. Dr. Montie confirmed he had not approached the County for support of these new monitoring efforts, but would.

2. Discussion of Strategic Plan Priority to Update the May River Watershed Action Plan

Staff requested guidance from the Committee on the scope and approach (or framework) to inform the May River Watershed Action Plan Update including policies, programs and projects (Attachment 2).

**SCOPE:** Staff first covered several alternatives that the scope of the May River Watershed Action Plan Update could take. The options of potential watershed health indicators that were discussed included the following:

- Fecal coliform only – The current May River Watershed Action Plan addressed fecal coliform only.
- Additional environmental indicators – The Committee just recommended funding via an amendment to the USCB-MOU to include additional parameters presented by Dr. Montie.
- Other indicators of watershed health such as culture/economic/social

The Committee consensus was that the scope of the Update should include not only “Additional environmental indicators,” but also cultural/economical/social indicators to provide important context for the challenges and opportunities for watershed management. The basis for this decision was the Strategic Plan Work Plan Priorities.

Staff reported that community involvement would be sought in addition to further guidance from the Committee to develop appropriate watershed health indicators for the May River Watershed Action Plan Update.

**APPROACH:** Staff then discussed two (2) EPA-approved approaches that the Update process could take including:

- EPA Watershed Planning
- EPA Long-Term Vision for Clean Water Act Section 303(d) 5R Process

Staff reviewed that the Town followed the EPA Watershed Planning process (below) when developing the May River Watershed Action Plan in 2010.

**Steps to Effective Watershed Management**

This section uses six basic steps to describe how to develop and implement an effective watershed plan. These steps provide a road map for you to follow to achieve your watershed goals.

![Steps to Effective Watershed Management Diagram](image)

The Town has completed Steps 1 – 6 and can continue with an adaptive management approach to “make adjustments” in the Update.
Staff then provided information on the EPA Long-Term Vision approach which is illustrated below as the 5R approach.

Ms. Jones shared that during a 319-grant site visit in December 2017, she inquired of the 319 program administrator and the watershed manager how the Town might apply the May River Watershed Action Plan to avoid a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for fecal coliform in the May River. SCDHEC staff referred Ms. Jones to recent 5R examples in the Savannah River Harbor, led by BJWSA, and Reedy River, led by a nonprofit. Following discussions with BJWSA and SCDHEC, Ms. Jones reported that creation of a nonprofit is not necessary to take a 5R approach to prevent a fecal coliform TMDL. However, the 5R approach would not include other watershed health indicators as the Committee desired. Ms. Jones suggested that a hybrid approach might be possible and that Staff can work to gather further information to bring back to the Committee.

The consensus of the Committee was for Staff to continue conversations with SCDHEC and come back to the committee with more information, especially enforcement, as we move forward with the Update, including pro’s and con’s of each approach.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. **Draft Revision to Code of Ordinances Chapter 12. Article V. Sewer Connection**

Ms. Jones reviewed proposed amendments to the Sewer Connection Ordinance based on the Sewer Connection Policy (Attachment 3). Mr. McCracken inquired if the Sewer Connection Program was forthcoming. Ms. Jones responded that Staff is currently working on a draft policy to guide that program and will be bringing it forward to the Committee.

Mr. McCracken made a motion to recommend to Town Council to amend the current Sewer Connection Ordinance as presented. Dr. Montie seconded. No discussion. Unanimous ayes.

2. **Update on Letter of Support for Dr. Montie’s grant application**

Ms. Jones reported that Town Council accepted the Committee recommendation and submitted a letter of support to Dr. Montie.

3. **Update on revision to USCB MOU to include support of Biomeme**
Ms. Jones reported that Town Council accepted the Committee recommendation and is processing an amendment to the USCB MOU in support of Biomeme for microbial source tracking.

4. 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 - Ms. Lewis clarified that public rumors of an anticipated extension of the closure were not supported by the SCDHEC data and the Town has received no such notification from the SCDHEC.

VIII. DISCUSSION
   1. none
IX. ADJOURNMENT
   1. Chairman Burden called the meeting adjourned.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Proposal for Strategic Plan Priorities to establish new partnerships with USCB for long-term monitoring of natural resources and climate change endpoints in the May River
2. Strategic Plan Priority to Update the May River Watershed Action Plan
3. Proposed Draft Revision to Code of Ordinances Chapter 12. Article V. Sewer Connection

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, March 22, 2018 @ 10:00 AM