

Stormwater Authority Tabled

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HARRISONBURG — Nearly every seat available was filled during the Board of Supervisors' Wednesday public hearing, which featured the opportunity to adopt a resolution to create the Lake Shenandoah Stormwater Control Authority.

More than 70 people attended the hearing, with 25 people either speaking in favor of creating the authority or voicing concerns over the scope the authority would have.

After nearly two hours of discussion, the Rockingham County Board of Supervisors voted 4-0 to table the resolution to create the authority with no time specifics given on when the resolution would be heard again. Supervisor Bill Kyger was absent.

The authority in question was proposed due to properties within the authority area being subject to urban flooding for several years. Property and structural damage occurs frequently, with recent years having multiple damaging runoff events, according to the county.

After an extensive study by county staff, engineering consultants and a citizen stormwater advisory committee, it was determined that Rockingham County government should implement improvements to the capacity and function of stormwater infrastructure within this area.

The authority would encompass all areas within the watershed of Lake Shenandoah, including: Barrington Subdivision, Briarcrest Subdivision, Bridlewood Subdivision, Chestnut Ridge Subdivision, Congers Creek Subdivision, Crescent Ridge Subdivision, Cullison Creek Subdivision, Hamlet Hill Estates, Highland Park Subdivision, Kentshire Subdivision, Lake Pointe Subdivision, Lake Pointe Village Subdivision, Lake View Golf Course, Lakewood Subdivision, Massanetta Springs Conference Center, Massanetta Springs Cottage Community, Preston Lake Subdivision, Quarles Business Park, Spring Oaks Subdivision, Sunnyside Retirement Community, Taylor Grove Developments I and II, Taylor Spring Subdivision, Town and Country Landing and Wellstone Subdivision.

The list is not comprehensive.

The northern boundary is set by Harrisonburg/ Rockingham County line with approximately 0.73 miles of boundary on the southwest side of Spotswood Trail and roughly 0.34 miles on the northeast side of Spotswood Trail.

A list of all tax parcels included in the authority is available on Rockingham County's website and at County Administrator Stephen King's office at 20 E. Gay St.

Those who spoke during Wednesday's public hearing came to a consensus that the authority should not be limited to one area, but should be countywide. Kathy Koch said she saw the flooding issue as a "countywide problem," suggesting the board reconsider the authority to cover the entire county.

Supervisor Pablo Cuevas said a third of the county is federal land and it would be difficult to receive funding from the federal government.

For Michael McGinning, a resident in Highland Park, he was in support of creating the authority.

"Sometimes we do stuff for the greater good and what people don't understand is that it may not affect property value this year, but it will [in the future]," McGinning said. "Something has to be done because the problem is going to get worse."

Robert Shehane told the board that they were addressing a small problem and not the large problem, being overdevelopment in the county.

"I don't believe the authority should limit itself to Lake Shenandoah," Shehane said.

Many of the concerns looming during the hearing were how to fund capital costs.

Preliminary estimates of capital costs were stated to be \$3.16 million, but it is a rough estimate, according to County Attorney Thomas Miller. The amount of capital costs will depend on numerous factors that have not been determined by the board of the authority after consultation with engineers.

Assistant County Administrator Casey Armstrong said the estimate does not include state and/or federal funding that may be available in the future.

Lisa Perry, the environmental manager for the county, said during a work session in April that there were different ways the county could go about allocating funding, such as grant funding, the Virginia Department of Transportation revenue sharing or funding from the county's general fund, which the committee recommended.

No determination has been made concerning when and how fees will be assessed, but fees will likely be related to the amount of impervious area on each property, according to the county's website.

Further engineering analysis will be conducted to determine a cost-effective method for improvements to the stormwater system. A combination of new detention facilities and increased capacity in ditches and pipes will also be evaluated.

Exact locations for improvements have not been finalized at this time, but will be made publicly once determined by the county.

Jean Peterson told the board that more studying and information needs to be gathered before making a decision on whether or not to create the authority.

Supervisor Mike Breeden asked attendees to raise their hands if they were either in favor or against the authority. Only one person raised their hand in favor of creating the authority while half of the room agreed not to be in favor.

After hearing from those who wished to speak, the board agreed that more time needed to be taken to address comments made and access what steps need to be taken next.

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