

# CRATER PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monument Professional Building • 1964 Wakefield Street • Post Office Box 1808 • Petersburg, VA 23805  
Phone: (804) 861-1666 • Fax: (804) 732-8972 • info@craterpdc.org • craterpdc.org

## Crater PDC Environmental Resource Management Task Force

FY22 CZM & FY23 WIP Phase III

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

1:00pm to 3:00pm

Digital Meeting and Conference Call

## MEETING MINUTES

*In attendance (26):* Rhonda Russell (Charles City County); Marianne Pitts, Jess Robinson (Chesterfield County); Michael Poarch (Sussex County); Horace Wade (Surry County); Angela Blount (Prince George County); William Johnson, Matt Culbreath, Michael Rae, Melvin Prince, Jeffrey Davis (City of Emporia); Stephen Edwards (City of Hopewell); **Darryl E. Walker**, **Reginald Tabor** (City of Petersburg); Joseph Carter Jr., Prarthana Rao (City of Colonial Heights); Mary Jacobs (DEQ); Danielle Simms (DEQ-EJ); Toinette Waldon (VDH); Heather Barrar (FOLAR); **Justin Doyle** (JRA); Mary-Carson Stiff (Wetlands Watch); Jay Ruffa (Crater PDC); **Luke Peters**, Lindsay Edwards, **Nadya Syazsa** (Berkley Group);

### Meeting Summary:

The February meeting of the Environmental Resource Management Task Force (ERMTF) includes a presentation of BMP implementation in Petersburg communities by the James River Association and the City of Petersburg; an overview of available grants and funding opportunities; and a roundtable discussion with the ERMTF members.

### **Introduction and Regional News and Updates – Luke Peters (BG)**

- Petersburg & Hopewell are going through the RAFT process – hope to incorporate some lessons learned into our own meetings.
- Crater PDC plans to develop templates to help localities apply for a variety of grants.

### **CZM Training/WIP Topic: BMP implementation in Petersburg – Justin Doyle (JRA), Darryl E. Walker and Reginald Tabor (City of Petersburg)**

#### *Improving Drainage in Petersburg's Lakemont and Whitehill Neighborhoods*

- James River Association's Community Conservation Program

- Approach to better management of stormwater runoff and mitigating environmental stressors: localized flooding, urban heat, lack of green spaces
- Community engagement leads to community-led plans to address and mitigate.
- Petersburg Walkable Watershed Concept Plan
  - Engage with the Lakemont and Whitehill neighborhoods
  - 4 goals:
    - Improve chronic flooding in areas identified by residents
    - Add on-street features to reduce speed, litter, flooding
    - Increase community connection to nearby destination, park
    - Engage and educate residents to celebrate nearby waterways and natural resources
- Timmons conducted drainage study in 2019.
  - Residents identified the priorities.
- Implemented projects:
  - Culpeper Ave Storm Sewer Extension – *completed*
  - Final designs (from Timmons Group) for the N. Whitehill Drive Drainage Improvements Project – *completed*
  - Construction of N. Whitehill Drive Drainage Improvements – *work begins this year*
    - Potential grey + green infrastructure implementation.
- These 3 projects were the top priorities identified by the community.
- CFPF will be playing a big role in new projects, as well as NFWF and Chesapeake Bay Trust.
- Hydrodynamic separator for Culpeper Ave project: relatively easy to maintain. Needs to be vacuumed (using a vacuum truck) twice a year.
  - Mr. Doyle himself inspected the first 2 maintenance calls and determined that twice a year is probably the right amount of time.
  - Didn't take longer than 10 minutes. Petersburg used their own truck.
  - Handles litter as well as sediment.
  - If you have a neighborhood that's known for sediment and trash going into the system, these can help a lot. Lakemont has issues with both sediment and trash.
- Petersburg Citywide Drainage Study – *underway, 12-18 months*
  - A team led by Timmons Group to conduct the drainage study; includes RK&K and JRA
  - Mapping storm sewer assets and modeling watersheds in the city with the long-term goals of improving drainage and reducing localized flooding
  - Funded by CFPF grants; kick-off meeting (*completed*)
- Almost decade-long work – 2013 Walkable Watershed Grants (NFWF) began; Amber Ellis (JRA) started a long time ago. Attended every neighborhood watch meeting. Grant project consultant helped with community outreach.
  - Important for residents to know that you're in it for the long haul.

- Petersburg’s cash flow “isn’t necessarily stellar” – so when opportunities come you have to take them.
- Jay: this is exactly what the PDC can help do – examining problems, looking at resources, etc.

## Q&A

- How did you choose the communities for outreach? What led to JRA reaching out to them?
  - Started in 2013 just as part of JRA’s mission. They partnered with other localities on Walkable Watersheds over the years.
- Where did the initial money to hire Timmons Group in 2019 come from?
  - \$65k grant (NFWF)
  - Also funded Culpeper Ave project – they had leftovers to pay Timmons for N. Whitehill project.
  - Petersburg has been matching along the way – \$87k for Culpeper.
  - NFWF really likes building from smaller, previous projects, as long as you’ve got a long-term plan.
- Possible barriers for other localities to implement similar BMPs:
  - Lack of partners (like JRA)
  - Onerous grant application – NFWF Small Watershed Grant for this one was tough. Petersburg and Timmons helped – technical expertise, etc.
  - Locality staffing – makes it hard to get done, especially from an engineering and community outreach standpoint.
  - Don’t have standing assets – such as a vacuum truck for maintaining stormwater separators.
    - Example: JRA decided to go with a different permeable pavement product in one project because Richmond didn’t have the vacuum truck to handle their first choice.
- William Johnson: how helpful was it to already have the stormwater utility fee in place?
  - The fee is definitely helpful. Helps them operationally to do what they can. Because of the current rate, they can’t do it on their own yet (i.e. without JRA’s grant help).
  - The ability to show a positive return on investment from the fee may be helpful; i.e. that infrastructure maintenance avoids costs down the line.
- Jay Ruffa: they now have an educational mechanism, too – just showing students or stakeholders how that separator works would be a big deal.
- William Johnson: who helps the Meherrin? They’re in the Chowan watershed – even though the water goes into the Sound, want to help them.
  - Might need North Carolina or DEQ to help.
  - CFPF can assist with flooding and stormwater.

## Grants Overview – Nadya Syazsa and Luke Peters (BG)

### *EPA's Green Streets, Green Towns, Green Jobs (G3) Program*

- Deadline: March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 4:00pm
- Eligible applicants:
  - Municipalities
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Neighborhood/community associations
  - Other non-profit entities
- Applicable Project Tracks:
  - Conceptual Plans for Green Streets/GSI (< \$15,000)
  - Engineered Designs (< \$30,000)
  - Implementation/Construction (< \$150,000)
  - Community greening (< \$50,000)
  - White papers (< \$20,000)
  - Green Street Charette/Technical Planning Assistance
- Example: Ashland, VA got permeable pavement installed in 0.3 acre parking lot.
- Example: Bellemeade Green Street project – part of Walkable Watershed Plan.
  - Got funded twice - \$30k for concept in 2016, and \$161k.

### *Wetlands Watch Coastal Resilience and Trees Fund*

- In partnership with VA Outdoors Foundation - <https://wetlandswatch.org/coastal-resilience-trees-fund>
- Coastal resilience projects and tree planting
  - Wetlands Watch would be of great assistance on these projects
  - No match required, but small total funding pool - \$135,000 for Coastal Resilience projects; \$50,000 for tree planting
- Applicants should be located in the coastal zones as defined by the CZM program (DEQ)
  - Community Flood Preparedness Fund should be utilized to the maximum extent possible for non-Bay localities.

## Locality and Stakeholder Roundtable Discussion

- Reggie Tabor: Help with public safety and co-benefit with heat islands, stormwater, environmental education & stewardship – using trees (or other natural design elements) as bollards?
  - Issues raised were primarily car crashes and pedestrian safety.

- Could also incorporate trees into curb bumpouts.
- Topics for future meetings: Following up from last year's topics (septic, solar, etc.). Also important to remember that grants for agricultural BMPs and economic opportunities will be discussed.
- Jess Robison – Emergency Management Alliance support introduced herself.
  - Is going to get geophysicist involved – usually goes to PlanRVA Env. TAC.
- Danielle Simms, DEQ, provided information on the federal IRA EJ grants:
  - The DEQ Office of Environmental Justice invites you to a public stakeholder engagement call about funding and grants to benefit environmental justice communities on Wednesday, March 1st 12pm-1:30pm.
  - “We will provide an overview of the EPA’s Environmental Justice Grants, which include \$30M in funding for community organizations and \$70M in funding for partnerships between community organizations and government entities (including DEQ). We will also discuss funding opportunities around water quality monitoring, brownfields redevelopment, and more. Contact the Office of Environmental Justice if you have any questions.”
  - <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8271060156293120090>
- Marianne Pitts also came from Chesterfield planning department.
  - Will share ideas from PlanRVA.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.**

**Next meeting scheduled for March 22, 2023.**