

Attach EPA webinar slide show  
STORMWATER TASK FORCE (SWTF)  
MINUTES  
June 13, 2019

The Stormwater Task Force (SWTF) met in the Ritter Building, first floor conference room. In attendance were Matt Allison, Jack Rabbitt, and Phyllis Luck. Land Use Director Burney was also in attendance. The special guest of this evening was Rob St. Germain, Ashland Stormwater Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair. The meeting opened at 6:31 pm. Town Manager Lemieux joined the meeting during Rob St. Germain's presentation.

The SWTF welcomed Rob St. Germain, thanking him for taking the time to meet with us. Members had copies of the EPA – Soak Up The Rain Webinar Series presentation on May 14, 2019: Reaching Public Consensus: Stormwater Funding in Ashland, MA (attached). Rob went through the presentation, adding bits of information as he proceeded. He pointed out that Ashland had been a Super Fund site, due to contamination of its waters by a chemical plant. As a result, most Town residents are on Town water and do not use wells. Also, they are keenly aware of issues that may arise from polluted waterways. Ashland also has a significant aging population, so many folks remember the Super Fund issues very clearly. Ashland used THINK BLUE materials and joined the Central Mass Regional Stormwater Coalition (CMRSWC) to save valuable dollars and get expert help. They realized that most people don't attend meetings or forums, so used Public Access TV to help with marketing.

Folks in Ashland are familiar with government helping them keep Ashland clean. They have a "Green Up Ashland" program where folks adopt roads. They get different colored trash bags and fill them with trash found along their "adopted" road(s). There is an arrangement with the Town's trash hauler to pick up these bags. Ashland also already had several utilities utilized by most Town residents, including sewer, water, and trash, so another utility was less intimidating than it might be elsewhere.

Ashland "scrubbed" the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirement budget from an initial cost of \$2.4 million down to \$1.4 million. They also looked carefully at consultant/contractor quotes to reduce costs. In one instance, using MASS GIS, they were able to reduce the cost of a contract from \$120,000 to about \$20,000. They wanted to get the most bang for their buck.

Ashland's Stormwater Advisory committee looked at different options for assessing the Stormwater Utility Fee. They felt the fee had to be fair and equitable for businesses, residents, seniors, and low income. To keep it simple, they adopted a 2 tiered approach. Tier 1 included all single family home owners, condominium owners, and owners of undeveloped parcels, who are charged \$8.75 per quarter (\$35/year). There is a reduced rate for qualified low income seniors, but no other reductions are possible at this time. Tier 2, which includes all multiple family dwellings, businesses, and properties exempted from property tax (schools, churches, government buildings), is based on a charge of \$ 0.80, per 100 square feet of impervious area. The SAC pledged to endeavor to keep the fee constant for the first 3 years of the program. They expect to receive about \$300,000 in revenue as a result of the fee (Ashland issues 6,500 tax bills).

The first bills will be issued this summer; they are hoping all goes smoothly. Rob agreed to send out an electronic copy of Ashland's IDDE bylaw, and to send updated information as is available. The SWTF

thanked Rob for the wealth of information provided this evening and expressed that we'd welcome any additional support they can provide. Rob exited the meeting.

Minutes of the May 23, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Adam Burney passed out copies of the Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP). It was noted that Consultant Ed Himlan of the Mass Watershed Coalition, who put the SWMP together, did not include all of the edits requested at the May 23 SWTF meeting (see 5/23/19 minutes). Adam Burney said he would request an editable copy and take care of all required edits. The SWTF looks forward to receiving the "final" final copy of the SWMP.

Jack Rabbitt made a motion to approve the SWMP, including all required edits; Matt Allison seconded; all voted in favor.

Town Manager Lemieux handed out the Non-Price Proposals received from Comprehensive Environmental Incorporated (CEI) and Woodard & Curran, as well as the Comparative Evaluation Criteria sheet to be completed for each.

Jack Rabbitt and Matt Allison expressed disappointment that DCI had not submitted a proposal and suggested that someone reach out to them. Town Manager Lemieux offered to do this. Jack and Matt indicated they may also.

It was determined that the SWTF would meet on Wednesday, 6/19, at 5 pm, to discuss and evaluate the non-price proposals, then have the firms in to discuss same. It is hoped that a decision will be reached that evening.

Update on Matt Allison's work to create a survey assessing resident knowledge of Stormwater Pollution, first of 2 surveys. There was discussion on this survey and it was suggested that the SWTF hold a "workshop" meeting focused on completing this survey; date to be determined.

As the hour was late, it was felt that further items be put off to a future meeting. Jack Rabbitt made a motion to adjourn, Matt Allison seconded; all voted in favor.

Meeting Schedule for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter: June 19 at 5:00 pm; suggested meetings for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter: July 25, August 22, and September 12. All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held on Thursdays at 6:30 pm, in the Ritter Building, upper conference room. Should additional meetings be required, they will be scheduled on the second or fourth Thursday of the month.

Motion:

To adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. M. Allison

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jack Rabbitt

Vote: All in Favor

Respectfully submitted,  
Phyllis Luck, Chair SWTF  
Vice Chair, BOS

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**SEP 16 2019**

**LUNENBURG TOWN  
CLERK OFFICE**

6-13-19  
5:45 PM  
Ashland, MA



## **EPA – Soak Up The Rain Webinar Series**

### **Reaching Public Consensus: Stormwater Funding in Ashland, MA**

**May 14, 2019**

Maeghan Dos Anjos, Conservation Agent

Steve Mitchell, Vice Chair, Select Board

Rob St.Germain, SWAC Chair

Evan White, Town Engineer

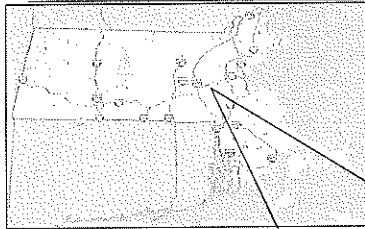
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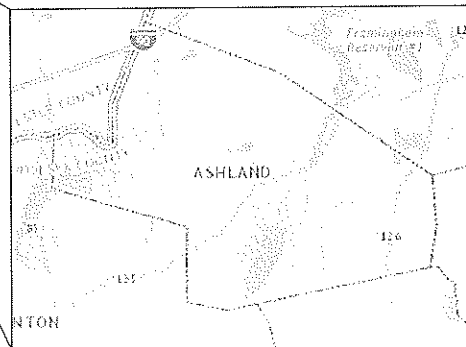
- Ashland Town Facts
- Ashland Waters and Stormwater History
- A Slowly Evolving Solution
- Actions & Strategies
- Recommendation Solution
- Lessons Learned
- Current Status & Challenges

## Ashland Town Facts



- Diverse Population ~ 17,000
- White collar – Blue collar mix
- Strong political party affiliations
- High number of apartments & condos
- Historically fiscally conservative

- Aging infrastructure
- Annual water restrictions
- Nyanza Super Fund site
- Very small commercial tax base
- Lowest tax rate of high tax region



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## Ashland Waters



- Impaired Waters
  - Sudbury River and Ponds
  - Ground water contamination
  - Waushakum Pond
  - Charles River watershed
  - Ashland & Hopkinton State Parks
  - Various brooks



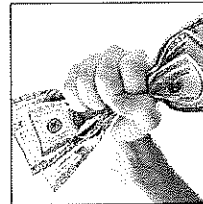
Mill Pond on the Sudbury River

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## MS4 Compliance History



- Proposition 2 ½ keeps budgets tight
  - Low commercial base
  - Homeowners carry most of the burden
- DPW budget tight
  - Never enough \$\$
  - Aging and undersized culverts
  - Storm drains cleaned on rotating 3-year schedule
- Prior MS4 compliance minimally funded
  - No dedicated staff
  - Inaccurate GIS
  - Minimal compliance
  - Lack of awareness and understanding of MS4 issues
- Personnel turnover



## Slowly Evolving Solution



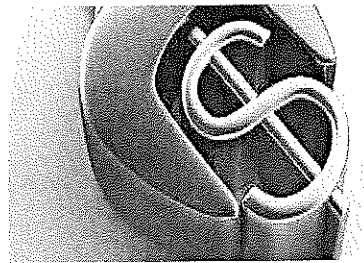
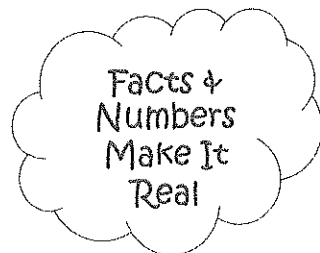
- Conservation Agent's 2015 Memo re: 2016 MS4 → Fear of Cost
- Low awareness or interest of 2003 or 2016 permit compliance need
- Lack of knowledge of stormwater system and issues
- Committee slow to form
- Staff carried the load until mid-2017, recruited committee members



## Slowly Evolving Solution -2



- Consultants created Gap Analysis for 2003 and 2016
  - Cost of 5 yr. compliance projected to be very high  
~ \$2.3 million
- Consultant report added credibility
- Consultants are a source of learning
  - “A drink from a fire hose”

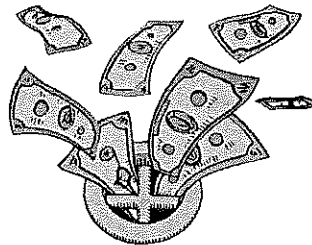
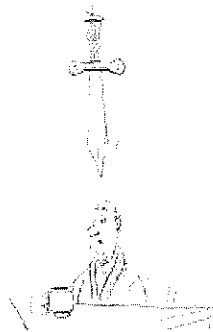


## New Sense Of Urgency



- 2016 permit NOI deadline July 1, 2018

www.portland.gov



- Threat of Fines
- But be careful with threats

## Actions & Strategies - 1



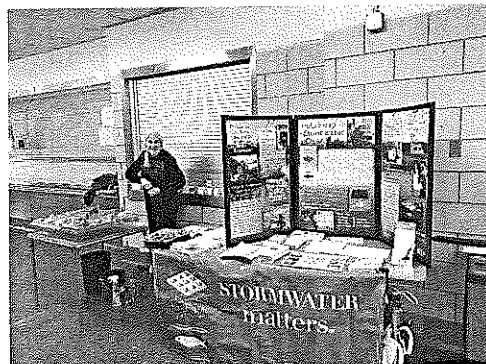
- EPA seminar
- Stakeholder Analysis
  - Identify key stakeholders
  - Understand their position on the issues – pros and cons
  - Address their fears and reservations
  - Sell the benefits
- Opinion leaders help others accept what you want to do



## Actions & Strategies - 2



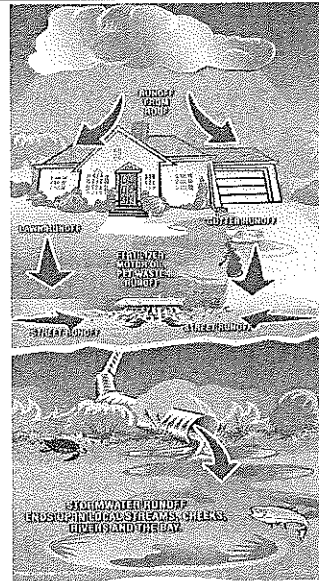
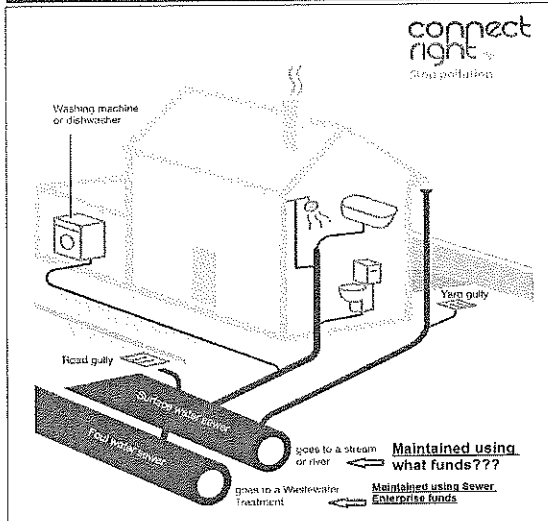
- Public Education & Awareness
  - Early and often; Learn by teaching
    - Farmers Markets: handshaking, posters and flyers
    - Reports to Board of Selectmen (Televised)
    - Info sessions with other committees
    - Town meeting presentations
    - Local TV appearances
    - EnviroScape model
    - News articles
    - Forums



## Wastewater Pipes vs. Stormwater Pipes



### Two Separate Systems

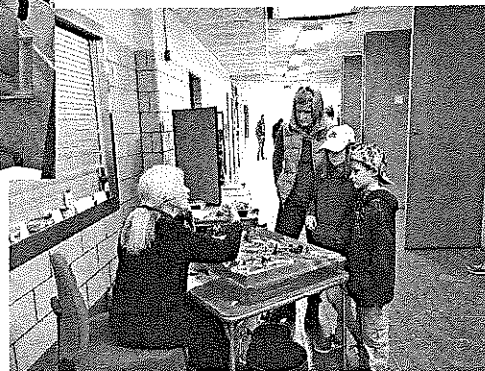


## Marketing 101 - Educate



- Kids help parents learn

- Kids often become the family conscience



## Marketing 101 – Get In Their Heads



- Rubber Duckie Rescue
  - Think Blue video
  - Big duck
  - Little ducks as handouts

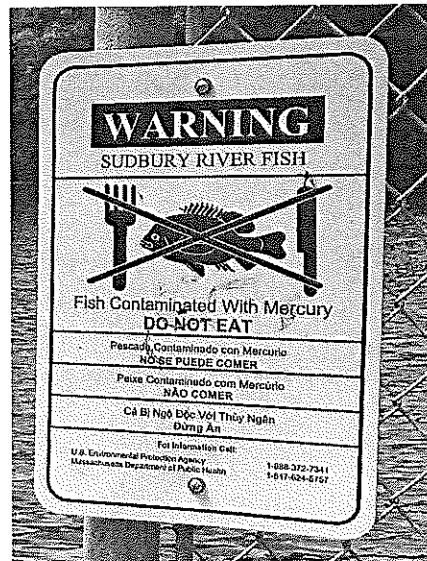
**Take The Pledge**  
*To Help Reduce Pollution In Ashland*

## Marketing 201: News Articles

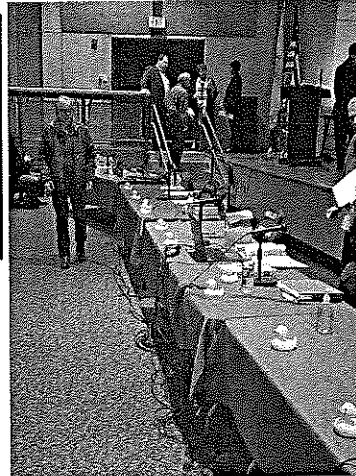


This photo appeared on the front page of the local newspaper. The article stressed the positive...

- This is more than an unfunded mandate
- This is an **OPPORTUNITY** to do what is right.



## Marketing 301

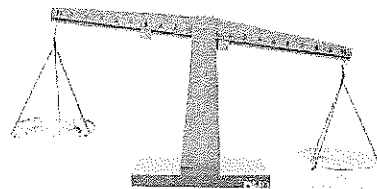


- Local Access TV
  - Most people don't come to meetings or forums
  - Some local officials have a following
- Rubber ducks at Town Meeting
  - Stealth marketing

## Fee Scenarios and Calculations



- Required budget =  
Fees + Contingency
- Who pays ? → All parcels including tax exempt and government owned
- Rate basis → Flat Fee vs. Tiers, Impervious Area (current data), Equivalent Residential Units (ERU)
- Many many fee scenario iterations
- Need to know → number and size of parcels, rate codes, impervious area
- Tax bill vs. Water-Sewer bill
- Little things – invoice redesign, letters to rate payers, split parcels
- Good to have an accountant on your committee

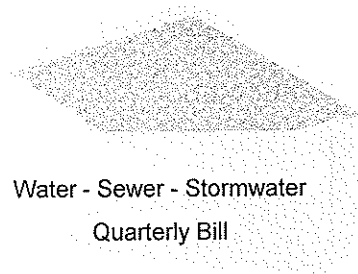


**Fees must be fair and equitable**  
Businesses  
Home owners  
Seniors & Low Income

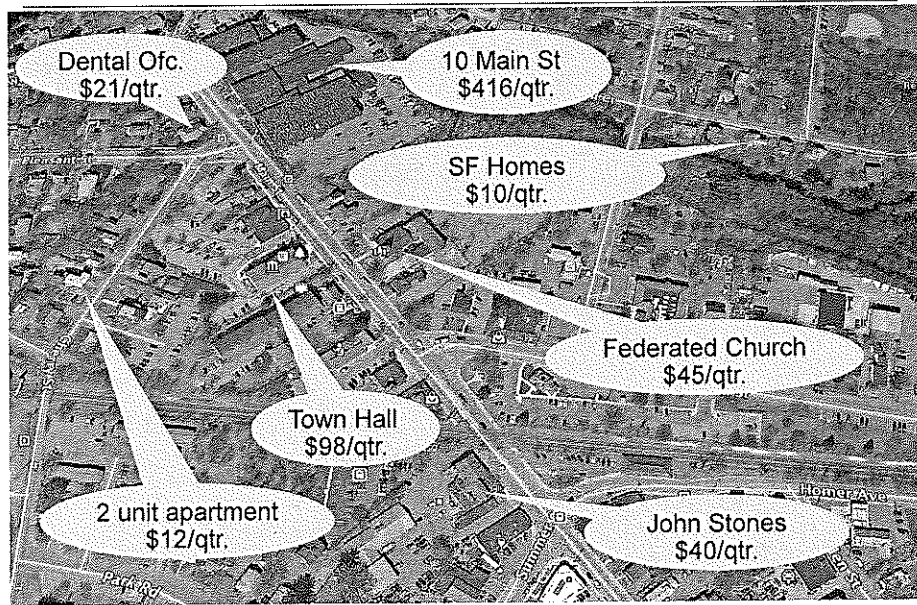
## Ashland Solution



- Stormwater Management Utility (Enterprise Fund)
  - Approved at November 2018 Town Meeting
- Separate DPW division
- Adequate funding but tight (retained earnings discomfort)
- Fees
  - Single Family Homes, Condos, Land → \$35/yr.
  - Commercial parcels including apartments → \$.80/100SF of I.A.
  - Billed quarterly



## Stormwater Fee Example [ Thank You Town of Reading, MA ]



## Drivers / Critical Success Factors



- History of pollution
- Non-compliance risk
- More compliance = more expense
- No room (\$\$\$) in the General Fund
- Town manager support/involvement
- Cooperative Select Board and DPW
- Town image and spirit
  - From 'Superfund site' image to  
→ → → a dynamic community with high public spirit
- Evolution from "We have a problem" to "We have an opportunity"

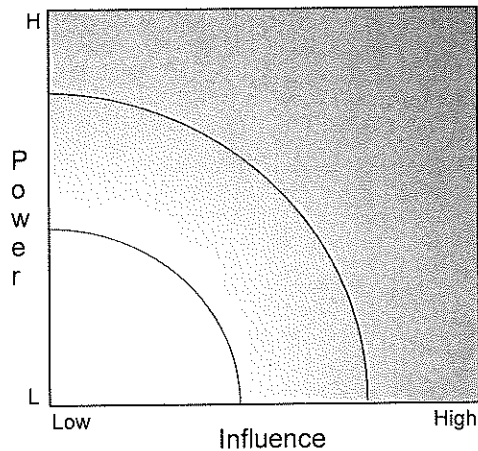


Nyanza Memorial

## Lessons Learned - 1



- Understand your city or town
  - History
  - Sources of pride
  - Items of shame
  - Problems & Issues,
    - » Current and past
  - **Stakeholders:**
    - » Shakers and movers
    - » Those in authority
    - » Those with influence
- THEN... weave your story so that it connects with the Town's story



## Lessons Learned - 2



### ■ Build 'Critical Mass'

- You must become the irresistible force
- Be trustworthy → No 'BS'
- Numbers make it real
- Bring stakeholders along
  - » *Go slow to go fast*
- Educate, educate, educate
- Engender an understanding of the Problem
- Sell the benefits
  - » *Must be believable*
- Probe for Acceptance of the Solution

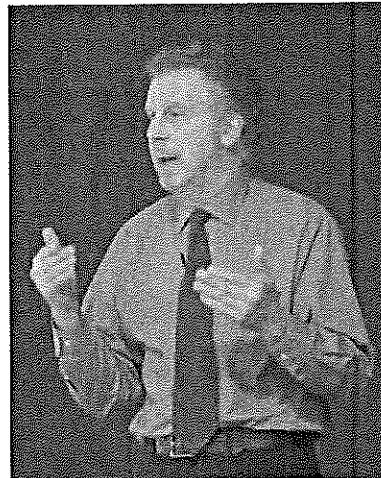


## Lessons Learned - 3



### ■ Get Help

- Consultants
- Coalitions
- Local expertise
  - » Conservation Commission
  - » Board of Health
- Friendly stakeholders
- Fred Civian, MA DEP
- EPA

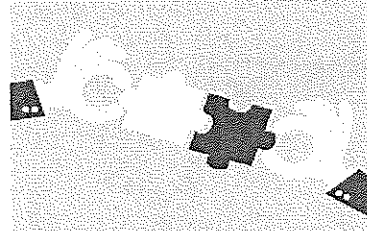


Fred Civian  
MA DEP Stormwater Coordinator

## Ongoing Role



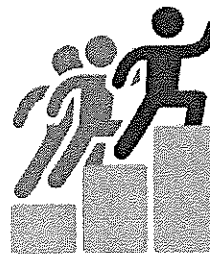
- Stormwater Advisory Committee ongoing
  - Partner of DPW and others
    - » DPW owns the '*letter of compliance*'
    - » SWAC owns the '*spirit of compliance*'
    - » Goal → Eliminate Pollution in Ashland
  - Advise town leadership
  - Annual report to the Town
  - Oversight of compliance
  - Help with public education and awareness
  - Citizen participation requirement



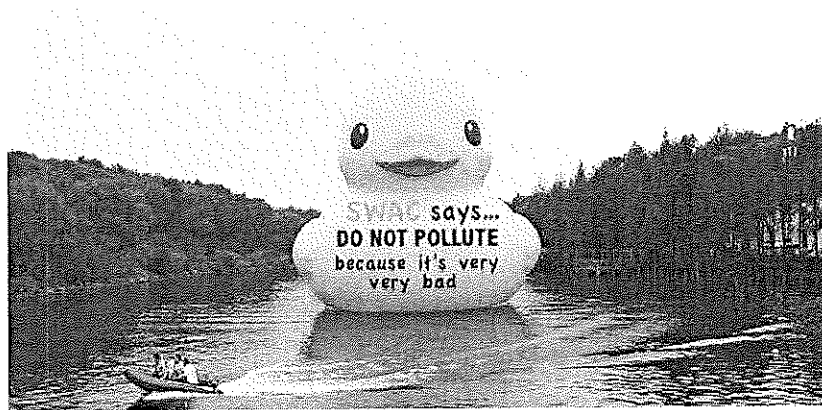
## Current Status & Challenges



- Accounting – anticipate overhead cross charges
- Cash flow – funding until first billing
- Rate setting authority – who has it
- Bylaws – collecting, enforcing
- Staff – acquiring and training
- Equipment – ?
- Billing – poor software, poor vendor response
- Communication – manage expectations
- Anticipate push back – prepare questions and answers



One Step At A Time



*Please support the Stormwater E-fund*

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**AUG 22 2019**

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