

**MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF NORTH EAST
106 S. MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, MARYLAND 21901**

Workshop Meeting – August 13, 2025

Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie called the Storm Water Management Fee Workshop to order at 6:02 P.M. Participating were Mayor Kelly Benson, Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis, Commissioners Hilary A. Crothers-Moore and Catherine Bernard-Dutton. Also present were, Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Commissioner Neil DeMatt was absent from tonight's workshop.

OPENING COMMENTS

Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Town Administrator, gave history regarding the Storm Water Management Fee:

As part of the Fiscal Year 2020 budget process, the Board discussed the options for funding and ultimately adopted Ordinance 2019-05-01, which created a storm water management utility fee. In addition, as part of the budget discussions, the Board also decided to reduce the FY 2020 budget for storm water management from \$400,000 as identified by the study to \$160,000. The lower amount represented only the anticipated costs of design and engineering of potential projects to meet the 26-acre requirement as well as funding for other tasks which fall under the permit, including education and outreach. The process for determining how the new storm water utility fee was to be assessed to each property owner is outlined in Ordinance 2019-05-01.

The study determined the average impervious surface for residential properties is 1,180 square feet. The amount was adopted as the amount of impervious surface area, which makes an equivalent residential unit (ERU). All residential properties (single family, town home, duplex, condominium) in town would be charged one (1) ERU. All commercial, industrial, apartment complexes, and tax-exempt properties would have their number of ERUs determined by taking the total impervious surface area on the parcel and dividing by 1,180 and rounding to the next whole number. The town's consultant used the Cecil County Geographic information System (GIS). This database is maintained by Cecil County and is updated regularly based on permit information.

The consultant also recommended mechanisms to fund the mandate. The two options available to the Board were to increase the real property tax rate or to create a new storm water management utility fee:

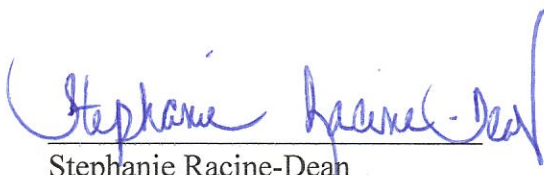
- Tax Increase Benefit
 1. Mostly administrative ease
- Storm Water Management Utility Fee Benefit
 1. A fee is more equitable because it spreads to the costs by assessing a higher fee for those properties that are “contributing to the problem” which MDE is attempting to solve.
 2. Because it is a fee and not a tax, tax-exempt properties in town must also pay their “fair share” of the costs
- Tax Increase Disadvantages
 1. Puts an unfair burden on residential property owners as there are many tax exempt properties within the Town and have larger impervious surface areas which drive up the number of acres the Town is required to treat
 2. There are many commercial properties that have a similar assessed value to residential properties but have a much larger impervious surface area than a typical residential property
- Storm Water Management Utility Fee Disadvantages
 1. A new fee, which may be difficult for some property owners to understand

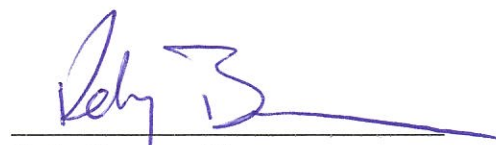
Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie advised the Board she along with the Assistant Town Administrator, Director of Finance and town staff, will get additional information prior of the next scheduled workshop for the Storm Water Management Utility Fee. If any additional questions or thoughts need to be asked, please contact them directly via email.

With there being no further information discussed regarding the Storm Water Management Utility Fee, a motion to adjourn was made by Vice Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:


Stephanie Racine-Dean
Town Clerk


Kelly Benson, Mayor