

**Ballston Spa
Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee
May 19, 2022**

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame; John Crpmie, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, and Steve Springer; From SCCCE: Blue Neils, and Ariane Tanski

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman; Monique Cohen, Mathew Ercoline, John Hearn, and Jared Iacolucci

Excused: Bob Bush, Nafeesa Koslik, Peter Martin, Jackie Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephenson.

Observer in Person: Adrian Guadarrama

Observer on Zoom: Liz Kormos

Meeting was called to order by Chair Karen Martell at 7:00 PM. Minutes of the prior meeting had been reviewed; there were no corrections. Scott Burlingame moved they be approved as presented; Ellen Motolla seconded; passed.

Karen turned over the meeting to Blue Neils, Saratoga County Cooperative Extension Associate Community Educator, Stormwater Management. Blue explained his group's maps of the inlets and outfalls for municipalities in the county and how they trace the flow downhill until it reaches an outlet at a stream or wetland or the lines of another municipality, like those in a state highway.

The DEC has published a draft of new standards for municipalities that operate under MS4 permits, like Ballston Spa. There are 6 categories MS4 communities must comply with. The third and sixth have the most on impact Ballston Spa. The third requires mapping from inflows to out flows. The sixth requires cleaning and maintaining the system. Blue introduced Ariane Tanski who works with him producing maps of stormwater systems.

Ariane presented a map with village catch basins, presumed flow, and outflow points. When one clicks on a catch basin, data describing it pops up as well as a photograph. Two common problems exist. First, because sumps below the discharge pipe are not regularly cleaned, when rainwater falls into the basin debris is churned up and flows to the next basin and eventually the outflow. Second, grout around outlets and basin walls has failed, water erodes the soils around discharge pipes and undermines streets and catch basins.

Catch basins at the DPW garage were shown. In one, debris fill the chamber halfway to the top of the discharge pipes, grouting is missing, and a petroleum sheen is on the water. In

another, equally filled and with un-grouted connections, has rusty colored water, which indicates water used to clean rusty equipment goes into the storm system. That would be a major red flag when DEC does an audit under the MS4 permit.

Another phenomenon is that many of the pipes from catch basins do not seem to go anywhere. Pipes are directed to centers of streets rather to the Gordon Creek and create a concern they may dump into the sanitary system. Other catch basins seem to have no outflow. The mapping and inventorying is hindered by difficulty entering catch basins in Route 50 without holding up traffic or getting killed.

Because it was developed and modified over a couple of hundred years, the village's stormwater system reflects the inconsistencies caused by overlaying the perceptions of each generation that touched it. Unlike most municipalities, Ballston Spa is in serious need of an assessment of its system. There are at least three suspected sites suggesting sewage discharge into the stormwater system. If that is verified, it must be reported to DEC, and the village will have the expense of tracing to the cause and eliminating the cross-over. The village may be able to borrow cameras from larger municipalities to explore where pipes lead and points of intrusion.

In some portions of the village, it may be cheaper to abandon the system and build one to modern standards. The village may wish to extend the current studies of its water and sanitary sewer systems to include the stormwater system to meet its requirements under the MS4 permit and assess its functionable ability.

Blue and his staff have focused much of their time on larger municipalities that have staff and are more likely to attract the attention of DEC. Because of the master plan effort, they have given more attention to Ballston Spa.

As a MS4 community, the village in 2003 agreed to perform various actions relating to its stormwater system. That agreement is the legal nexus which allows DEC to require those acts be carried out. DEC will audit communities to ensure compliance. When it finds non-compliance, the DEC will issue a notice of apparent violation. DEC is interested in compliance, not punishment, and will work with a municipality. But if a municipality drags its feet and blows off DEC, significant fines will be levied. Most communities in Saratoga County have been audited. Ballston Spa is on the short list of those who have not.

When a major problem, such as crossover of storm and sanitary systems is verified, the "clock starts ticking." At this time,

that means the municipality has to actively identify, trace, and eliminate the problem. There is no set time frame but there is to be no delay. Proposed rule changes would require the source be identified in one day and eliminated in five days. Those deadlines may be eased in the final regulations, but stringent deadlines are anticipated.

Funds are available from the State Revolving Fund for sewer and potable water projects which are also interested in eliminating crossovers with stormwater systems in lower income communities, which Ballston Spa at this point still qualifies well. State stormwater funds may help pay for revamped or redesigned lines and include methods for water retention during downpours. Water Quality Improvement Projects Grants are available. The Environmental Facilities Corporation has an innovation program for storm water. It is a two-step program. If the village lands a grant for planning, it will be in line for funding construction.

Blue's staff can set the village up for its own audit by completing the reconnaissance it has begun as far as they can. Because the village will be able to show all its outfalls have been inspected, it will show compliance with that requirement of the MS4 Permit.

An observation from last meeting was, because certain soils in much of the village are not conducive to basements future, new building in those areas should not be permitted to have basements. Blue noted in much of the country, homes do not have basements. It a peculiarity of the Northeast that people think there should be basements. In flood plains a building's entry has to be 2 feet above the 100-year flood level. In most other countries it is the 500-year flood level. New housing in the Flats and Island may have to be built on piers.

Ballston Spa has weathered some very significant storms and has avoided serious flooding. It is fortunate because east of the village is a very large flood plain that prevents the Kayaderosseras from backing up. Much of the village's flooding is localized and a product of the drainage system. When more than 100-year storms have occurred, there may have been some flooding at the confluence of the Gordon with the Kayaderosseras, but no significant damage. It was noted the area around the intersection of Mechanic and Ford Street is not in the flood plain and the rise to that area is almost imperceptible.

Multiple springs naturally emerge from hillsides and other places in Ballston Spa which can cause problems for property owners. It is probably best to catch the water and transfer it to the Kayaderosseras as quickly as possible. However, there may be

too many springs making a program control all springs unaffordable. Those springs can have a detrimental affect by transporting pollutants from a site, such as Rickett's, onto "downstream" properties. Current testing is beginning to determine the extent of the plume.

It was observed by Amy Fitzgerald of Behan Associates that the discussion has laid out the attention the stormwater system needs and that the comprehensive plan should state goals and how they may be achieved. Particular attention can be given to capturing stormwater before it enters the system. Blue suggested immediate, short-term, and long-term goals: 1)bring the system up to "snuff" with repairs and maintenance; 2)have an assay done to eliminate cross connections, dead-ends, and eliminate what shouldn't be in the system, and 3)look for ways to reduce stormwater from entering the system, respectively, without throwing a million dollars at a ten-cent problem.

Goals may also relate to policies, like bagging leaves, which affects the cost of maintenance of stormwater systems. Changes begin by being able to convey the financial reasons to residents so they will understand, if not accept, policy changes. To be realistic, goals are to be tempered by the degree of infrastructure maintenance and financial support which can be expected of village government.

Blue and his staff will complete the survey of catch basins and out-falls and put together a succinct report of its findings and a list of top-line, red-flag items that need immediate attention.

A holistic goal:

After addressing immediate concerns, a full-system audit of the infrastructure is to be done, followed by a capital plan to support the measures identified in the audit. As time, money, and talent permit, evaporation, storage, and absorption techniques can be constructed.

The format for August meetings will be managed by Behan Associates and will be two visioning sessions with breakout groups including at least one committee member. Breakout groups can be set up through Cornell Zoom

Karen reminded all the second meeting in June will be on the third Thursday the 23rd, because of scheduling conflict for the room. Meeting was adjourned