

Oakland-Wide Community Meeting

Minutes: August 31, 2021

PWSA: Stormwater management

Presenting: Beth Dutton, Senior Project Manager for Stormwater

Stormwater is the primary pollutant in urban areas. PWSA's goal is to reduce sewage and pollution entering rivers, ensure fewer homes with flooded basements, and help build a more livable city with green infrastructure for environmental + community improvements.

Our region experienced a 71% increase in precipitation – especially heavy rain – between 1958 and 2012, and the problem is only worsening. Pittsburgh currently averages 38" of rain/year, but more severe storms dump a lot of water quickly; our sewage system can't handle the volume. Stormwater combines with sanitary sewage and dumps into rivers or backs into people's basements.

PWSA is building an innovative stormwater system to keep stormwater out of sanitary sewers. Green infrastructure (e.g., Centre/Herron) is designed to capture excess runoff and beautify the neighborhood.

Significant investments in infrastructure require PWSA to change the way it bills for stormwater management. Current billing is for drinking water consumption – determines both drinking water and wastewater rates. This doesn't consider stormwater impact (for example, a parking lot uses no drinking water but contributes enormously to runoff problems). In 2022 (pending PUC approval), PWSA will bill every parcel with impervious areas a stormwater management fee. Property owners will pay proportional to the amount of impervious surface on their property. The average amount on a residential parcel is 1,015 sf. Tiered billing rate for residential customers based on number of ERUs (equivalent residential units): 0.5, 1, 2. ERU will bill Non-residential customers.

PWSA's master planning process will be complete in June 2022. PWSA invites public engagement.

www.pgh20.com/stormwater-master-plan-faq

To report basement backups and flooding, please call PWSA at 412-255-2423. Please direct questions or comments on the stormwater plan to Beth Dutton at bdutton@pgh20.com.

Q: Projects planned for Oakland? Stormwater Management Improvement Project on Ophelia/Lawn?

A: Currently under design, moving forward, will get back with an update on the schedule, when it'll be ready to come to the community.

Q: Have an update on the Lawn/Ophelia project; it says it's planned for 2022, earlier PWSA reps came to an Oakcliffe meeting, and it was supposed to be this year. Why is it being delayed again?

A: There's coordination to be done with the city that's taken longer than anticipated.

Q: Which city department?

A: Not positive; I will get back to you with that information

Q: When we get it, have the plans changed from what we were last shown in February? Plans had changed for the worse from the previous iteration.

A: I don't think there have been significant changes

Comment: Significant to PWSA and significant to us can be different.

Q: Does PWSA provide incentives to property owners to incentivize improvements?

A: Yes, incentives both for residential and commercial properties. E.g., rain gardens, disconnected downspouts can receive a discount on the fee.