

MINUTES OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING 4-3-2023

The meeting was called for 6:45 in the Town Hall. Present were Dedun Ingram, chair; Kathy Flaxman, Sybil Freedman, Eric Murtagh, Stuart Sessions; and Rich Brancato, Council liaison.

Chair Dedun Ingram reported that the Town Council had approved a contract for six hours of consulting with Jeff Robertson of Cass Engineering.

Dedun reported that Mike Guhin of the Town Water Board was unable to attend but that she had spoken with him regarding stormwater management issues. He noted that the Water Board, in recent years, has reviewed fewer drainage plans than it did earlier on. Some of the points discussed:

- 1) A preference for tanks rather than gravel-filled drywells for water retention because of simpler maintenance;
 - 2) Importance of drainage system inspections and concerns that inspections are not happening;
 - 3) Issue with fences and walls on a lower property blocking natural water drainage – Town code does not consider this (county rules say natural flow should not be blocked);
 - 4) Preference for the filtration test over soil type test to assess drainage capacity
 - 5) Once a drainage plan is in place, no changes that affect drainage are supposed to happen, so adding more impervious surface even after 2 years seems problematic.
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The Committee reviewed some points Jeff Robertson provided and a list of potential questions for him. The Committee drafted additional questions for Jeff. Dedun will put together a draft of the questions for Jeff and circulate to the Committee for their edits. The goal is to send the questions to Jeff by April 13 to give him time to respond to them at our May 1 meeting.

There was some discussion about possible things the Town could do to heighten resident awareness of their responsibility to maintain their drainage systems.

- 1) Takoma Park has a special addendum document that goes with sales. The Town could have one too.
- 2) Require that a sticker about the drainage system and inspection requirements be placed in a conspicuous place such as on the breaker box, so that it would be seen by a home inspector who could raise the issue.
- 4) Embed in the building permit a requirement to inform any buyer.
- 5) Send an annual postcard to all properties with a drainage system. And put a notice in the Forecast so people will look for the postcard.
- 6) Expand the information about stormwater management that is available on the Town website. In particular, be clear about the differences between Town and County regulations.

Regarding administrative aspects of the drainage regulations (such as distances): Would it help to align the county and Town drainage plans if Town staff had some leeway to make adjustments to some of the Town requirements?

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as edited and circulated.

Jeff Robertson will attend our May meeting via Zoom.

Stuart did not distribute the water reports because a number of them were incomplete. He will distribute once he receives the completed reports.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.