

Public Services Committee

Draft Proposal for Residence Water Management Review

Background

Water management in the Town has been, and continues to be, a serious problem for the residents and the Town itself. From a layman's perspective, the topography, age of infrastructure, and increasing urbanization of the Town are the causes. In the basin of the Town, the top soil (and grass) are eroded on the lawns of residents and the Town's parking. Routinely, standing water or debris is left in the street and at curbside after heavy rains and snow. During storms, the sidewalks serve more as conduits for the water than do the streets. Finally, for some residents (there is no idea of the extent) wet basements and garages are common.

Briefly stated, the problems include:

- Environmental effect of major highway drainage into rivers/bay etc.
- Erosion of lawns by flowing water
- Debris, town parking eroded
- Wet basements and garages and other property damage
- Standing water in yards, streets, public places
- Unsafe, impassable sidewalks (ice in winter/wet leaves in fall)

In the past three years, progress has been achieved in alleviating water problems. The County's Phase I drainage system modernization has eliminated some of the most egregious public street problems in the Town. The Town, itself, has instituted water control requirements for new construction and renovations, as well as set back/lot coverage restrictions to reduce the above ground water runoff.

There are four participant/groups that play a role in the Town's water management.

- Responsibilities
 - State - perimeter highways
 - County - street drainage and systems and other county property
 - Town - parking, sidewalks, public areas, regulations for private property
 - Residents - private property, sidewalks (sometimes)
- Positive activities to date
 - State - none, work is contingent on widening Conn. Ave.
 - County - modernizing entire drainage systems
 - Town - regulations for new construction/renovations
 - Residents - compliance with regulations where applicable
 - volunteer with green/space initiatives at own expense
- Limitations on activities

- State
 - no participant
 - insufficient drainage on highway perimeters
 - major water entering Town along Conn., Bradley & possibly E-W Hwy
- County
 - only Phase I complete (30%). Long process subject to availability of funds
- Town
 - limited number of properties actually implement regulations
 - effect severely limited or unable to evaluate
- Residents
 - limited ability/incentive to respond when regulations don't apply

Proposal

Establishment of a town program for any household to obtain a professional review of its property for recommendations on improving water management - particularly drainage/runoff. This process is consistent with previous Town practices in providing residents with assistance with environmental efforts, i.e., FAR measurements, energy audits, and the Tree Program. As noted above, the Town's Water Ordinance is very limited in the number of participants. This program is intended to augment resident participation in resolving water management on private property. The recommendations will not be mandatory for implementation by the resident, in part, or in whole nor will the Town be liable for any results, positive or negative, if implemented. Administratively, the program will operate similar to the tree program with a written report provided to the resident.

Benefits

- Consistency and uniformity in implementing Town's drainage/runoff regulations
- Encouragement/assistance for voluntary corrections of private drainage/runoff problems
- Amelioration of overall private/public drainage problems
- Clear indication that the Town is seriously supportive of residents in solving water management issues
- A greater knowledge of the extent to which private residence drainage affects overall Town runoff issues

Budget

Annual budget of \$20,000 includes professional engineering service, for 75 resident reviews at 2.5 hours per review. Also included are costs for a mailer announcing commencement of the program.