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WEST LAFAYETTE CONSIDERING STORMWATER USER FEE

City officials proactively communicating; potential fee would not start until 2014

West Lafayette, IN – November 28, 2012 –City officials are proposing a stormwater fee for all property owners who connect or otherwise benefit from the City’s Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) to pay for mandated system expenses.

According to City Engineer Dave Buck, currently the City is paying for these required expenses with other City funds, but continuing to use those funds will begin to delay capital improvement projects.

“To date, we have been using other City funds to pay for the repair, replacement, planning, improvement, operation, regulation, and maintenance of the MS4 and general storm water run-off management. The fee options we are proposing would pay for these mandated costs and allow us to free up other City funds for much-needed capital improvements.

“The need for dedicated funds is significant, so we will be talking about options with everyone from City Councilors to school corporation officials to potential rate payers. If a fee is adopted, bills would not start until 2014,” Buck said.

In the proposed plan, each parcel that directly or indirectly contributes to the City’s stormwater system would be charged a fee based on the presence or measure of impervious surface (hard surfaces and surfaces that generate run-off). Impervious areas include but are not limited to roofs, parking areas, private drives and concrete pads. Each parcel or property would be classified as residential or non-residential. If adopted, a rate would be designed to recover the cost of providing stormwater service to users of the system.

“All properties having impervious surface areas within the City limits would be assigned an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), with all properties assigned a minimum of one ERU, which equals 3,200 square feet. Residential properties (single-family homes or duplexes) would be assessed a monthly service charge for stormwater service of one ERU, as a flat rate.

“Non-residential properties would be assessed a monthly service charge based on the total number of ERUs that encompass the measured impervious surface area. We would determine the total ERUs for a property by dividing the total square footage of the measured impervious surface area by 3,200 square feet.

“The rate would be evaluated annually to ensure its fairness and sufficiency with an evaluation report provided to the Board of Works by April 30,” Buck said.

At its December 3 meeting, the City Council is scheduled to consider a proposed ordinance establishing a stormwater fee, with the monthly amount still being discussed. The ordinance would require two readings to pass. If the Council considers the ordinance on December 3, public comment will be allowed at that meeting.

City officials patterned the proposed ordinance after Lafayette’s stormwater fee ordinance and fee structure. If adopted, funds collected from this fee could not revert to any other City utilities or to the City’s General Fund and may not be transferred for any other purpose other than to pay for the operation and maintenance of the MS4.

Designated by the State of Indiana as an MS4 operator, the City is obligated to comply with all federal requirements of the Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

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For questions or interview requests, contact Dave Buck at 765-775-5130.