

BOARD MEETING:  
2ND AND 4TH TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

(410) 226-5122



101 Market Street  
P.O. Box 339  
Oxford, Maryland 21654

## Commissioners of Oxford

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March 31, 2014

Dear Oxford Citizens,

**The Commissioners of Oxford wish to make all citizens aware of the current considerations for implementation of a new Stormwater Management and Shoreline Protection Fund as previously presented by mail, in the newsletter and the website.**

The Commissioners of Oxford have been working on a Stormwater Management initiative for the town over the last year, including the formation of a Stormwater Taskforce lead by the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center and informational meetings and interactive events involving the citizens of the town.

The Commissioners are currently considering the structure for collecting funds to implement this program based on citizen input in response to the January mailing regarding the same topic:

Creation of a **Stormwater Management and Shoreline Protection (SMSP) Fund**, which similar to a Water and Sewer Fund, will have a dedicated budget for maintenance of the current infrastructure and a long-term capital improvement plan addressing both current and future infrastructure improvements and upgrades. This infrastructure includes ditches, swales, culverts, drains, outfalls, tide gates, storage areas, bulkheads, living shorelines and other structures placed to control water levels.

**Currently the Commissioners are considering a property tax rate increase from FY 2014 rate of .2483 of assessed real property value to .2783 of the same for FY 2015.** Citizen input requested the commissioners seek a more equitable rate structure as opposed to the single flat fee for all properties initially presented. The proposed increase will result in approximately \$100,000 of additional taxes collected, which will be allocated by ordinance directly to the **Stormwater Management and Shoreline Protection Fund** to provide dedicated funding for the maintenance and improvements identified in the SMSP Fund Budget and Capital Improvement Plan. **The proposed increase to \$ .02783 of assessed real property value, designating \$ .03 taxes collected to the Stormwater Management and Shoreline Protection Fund, will apply to all taxed parcels within the Town limits.**

*A Stormwater Management Fund provides dedicated funds utilized to maintain stormwater conveyance and treatment systems, to meet State and Federal clean water requirements, and to protect public safety, property and the environment.*

**The Commissioners of Oxford would like to hear from you regarding this proposal. Please contact the office, by phone, mail or email with your questions, concerns and/or support for the formation of this SMSP Fund. You will find answers to the most frequently asked question on the back of this letter.**

On behalf the Commissioners of Oxford,

Cheryl Lewis  
Town Administrator – Clerk/Treasurer

***Why do the Commissioners think a Stormwater Management and Shoreline Protection Fund is necessary at this time?***

- Although the town performs general maintenance on the basic stormwater conveyance system, there is not an established maintenance or improvement plan in place and although some basic maintenance is covered under the current general budget, there is no established funding mechanism in place to not only provide the necessary funding to accomplish the tasks at hand, but to also assure a portion of general funds and 100% of stormwater fees are dedicated to this initiative annually.

***Why do the Commissioners feel there is a need to address Storm and Tidal water any differently than in the past?***

- Concerns regarding the severity of recent weather events, coupled with increasing high tidal events have brought the importance of good storm and tidal water conveyance to the forefront not just on a local level, but also at the State and Federal level.
- There has also been increasing education regarding the negative environmental impact improperly handled stormwater creates in our local waters.
- There has been increasing documentation regarding the increasing water levels in the Bay as part of the bigger picture of Sea Level Rising and Land Subsidence.
- Federal, state and local governments have been placing emphasis on the priority of protecting public and private property from sea level rise and the accompanying impacts.

***Why should I as a citizen of Oxford be concerned with these issues? Not all areas of town are impacted at the same level as the lower lying areas of town.***

- Certain areas of concern like flooding of the Causeway/South Morris Street area from storm and tidal water are not only an inconvenience to citizens, but also create unnecessary dangers to drivers navigating around inundated areas, and create less than safe conditions for citizens, visitors and town employees.
- Storm and tidal water flooding in low-lying areas of town can create negative impacts for not only the properties located in these areas, but also for the town as a whole. Continued emphasis on flooding threats to certain neighborhoods can have a negative economic impact on the property values of all homes and businesses, and impact tourism.
- Traditional Stormwater management was based on quick removal of stormwater without consideration for the quality of stormwater entering the surrounding waters. The negative impacts of runoff to the waters of Oxford need to be better addressed in the future with improvements to our conveyance system that provide the best possible filtering prior to release.

***What is the plan for the first year's fees?***

- As recommended by the Taskforce, the first proposed project will be a comprehensive inventory of location, age and condition of the current infrastructure, along with prioritization of the improvement projects that will have the greatest impact on both flooding and pollution in a 5 to 10 year Master Plan also known as a Capital Improvement Plan.

***If you would like further information regarding stormwater/tidal water or the proposed fund and fee, or if you would like to know what your individual increase would be, please call or stop in the town office, or email the clerk at [oxfordclerk@goeaston.net](mailto:oxfordclerk@goeaston.net).***