

Daniel A. Alderman
115 Hume Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22301

February 19, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council:

As an Alexandria resident since 2011 and Hume Avenue resident since 2015, I am writing to strongly urge support for your passage of an increase in the Stormwater Utility Fee. On the night of 23 July 2020, I parked my Honda Accord on the street in front of my home on Hume Avenue. Little did I know that rising rain water in the street would total my car on Hume Avenue that evening. Today, I worry for my own car and rush to warn my neighbors to move their cars, whenever I see significant precipitation in the forecast. I look forward to a day when stormwater improvements will prevent residents of Hume Avenue from having to worry about storms washing away more cars and significantly damaging homes.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Alderman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel A. Alderman
115 Hume Ave.

Gloria Sitton

From: George Demetriades <gdemetch@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 4:23 PM
To: John Chapman; Justin Wilson; Amy Jackson; Del Pepper; Canek Aguirre; Mo Seifeldein; Elizabeth Bennett-Parker
Cc: Gloria Sitton
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Vote No on the Stormwater Increase

Council,

I stayed as long as I could but other obligations forced me to log off before I could speak.

The text of my comments are provided:

I oppose this massive increase to the stormwater utility fee because we still do not believe this increase will actually solve flooding issues in our City.

When we first broached this issue on January 6th a group of neighbors and I spoke in favor of delaying the vote to put more guardrails in place to ensure the funding is actually spent on fixing problems.

What you are considering today falls far short of that. Here's the chain of events:

1. In 2018, you implement the SWU fee. The Mayor and Manager sold it to us then as an important part of fixing infrastructure. You spent the bulk of it on salaries, debt service and the Clean Water Act.
2. But the flood waters continued, and residents started waking up to the City's failure to protect life, health and property. Some of the SWU Fee was spent on flooding. Homes were flooded, cars washed away, a child almost died – how very magnanimous of you to spend our money on fixing our problems. It wasn't enough though; the flooding continues.
3. In a bevy of municipal theatrics, the City Manager put together the Strike Team. The memes appear to be the most valuable outcome of the Strike Team. For the only other outcome was a recommendation to double the fee.
4. The Mayor justifies the doubling by saying there just wasn't enough in the Fee to cover both the Clean Water Act and flood mitigation.
5. On January 15th, in a bit of Facebook revisionist history, the Mayor said the fee was "originally created as a funding source for water quality initiatives that allow the City to meet its Federal Clean Water Act/Chesapeake Bay Act obligations." True to form, there's been more Facebook back and forth with the Mayor on what exactly the City is permitted to spend money on.

You have to answer the question: can the City use the money to put shovels in the ground? State law either *only* allows you to collect a fee to meet Clean Water Act obligations or the City can fund both that and projects to fix flooding.

Which is it?

What does the law actually allow? Before taxing residents hundreds of millions of dollars, it is incumbent upon you, Councilors, to have the City Attorney answer without any ambiguity, as a matter of public record, whether or not the

Fee can be used to fix flooding; that is, whether or not the money can be used directly to award contracts to companies that clean, fix, and increase the capacity of our drains.

If her answer is anything but "Yes, you can spend it on contracts" you must vote no to this increase.

Because if you pass this massive increase without clarity on your authority, you're simply allowing the City Manager and Mayor to continue to play the revenue shellgame they've played all along. They're winning. And the residents of this City are losing.

Even if the City Attorney answers affirmatively the money can be spent on fixes, there are still no guardrails in place to ensure it will be. Just look at what they have in salaries in the budget documents.

Raising the stormwater fee by hundreds of millions over 10 years without true safeguards is not acceptable. Vote no and force the City Manager and T&ES Director, both of whom are of dubious competence, to do better.

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Gloria Sitton

From: Vineeta <vineetaa@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 2:20 PM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Submitting written comments for the February 20 meeting on stormwater fees

Dear Ms. Sitton, I would like to submit my public comments on the stormwater fee discussion today for the record. I had hoped to speak but cannot stay for the rest of the meeting.

Mayor Justin Wilson and the City Council, I'm asking you to update the city code in Sections **5-6-231 and Sec. 5-6-236** to ensure that it specifically addresses street-level flooding and underground backups and/or flooding.

Mr. Mayor, I'm perplexed by your contradictory statements, including on Facebook, about whether the stormwater fee is intended to address flooding or just the Clean Water Act.

If you proceed with doubling and then doubling the fee again without explicitly addressing flooding in the code, you can stop pretending that hiking the fee will help those of us whose homes flood year after year.

If you don't specifically address flooding in the city code, all of you who vote to double the fee are saying you don't care about our health and safety.

Will you commit to changing the city code and showing that you truly care about us and mitigating flooding?

I would also like to give a shout out to Amy Jackson, who voted against the proposal on January 26 because of concerns that part of our fees would be used to buy up and tear down homes (through eminent domain) for the proposed \$60 million Hooffs Run project.

Thank you,
Vineeta Anand
A concerned citizen

"Choose to be optimistic. It feels better." Dalai Lama XIV

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Gloria Sitton

From: Jol Silversmith <jol@thirdamendment.com>
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 12:08 PM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: Re: Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group
Attachments: PastedGraphic-1.tiff



ROSEMONT CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2873
Alexandria, VA 22301-2873
rca@dominionstrategies.com

February 19, 2021

Dear Ms. Sitton:

I write on behalf of the Rosemont Citizens Association (RCA). The RCA understands that the City is organizing an Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group, and that three of the members are to be nominated by civic associations from flood affected areas. As you may know, Rosemont historically and recently has been affected by flooding from Hoofs Run.

The RCA supports the application of Katie Waynick to serve on the group. Although Ms. Waynick is not a resident of Rosemont, she is a resident of another flood affected area (Del Ray), and has taken a lead role in organizing residents across the City to address flooding issues, including the issues affecting Rosemont, through online and other advocacy. The RCA believes that her background and knowledge would make her a valuable contributor to the group.

Additionally, the RCA is reaching out to members to identify a Rosemont resident interested in serving on the group, and will separately follow-up with you regarding such a nomination.

If any additional information would be of assistance, just let us know. Best regards.

Jol Silversmith
President, RCA

February 18, 2021

Dear Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker and Councilmembers:

I am writing regarding Docket Item #13, File #21-0695, the Second Reading, and Final Passage of an Ordinance to increase the Stormwater Utility Fee by amending Article C (STORMWATER UTILITY) to Chapter 6 (WATER AND SEWER) of Title 5 (TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES).

I am not in favor of taking a vote to approve this increase at this time; it needs to be deferred as the City needs to take a step back and reevaluate this increase and consider the following:

- 1) There is no justification for doubling and tripling the stormwater fees which will make Alexandria's fee the second-highest in the nation after Seattle, which has more than 200 miles of coastline.
- 2) The City needs to cap annual increases in the fee at inflation.
- 3) The City needs to sunset any increases once the large construction projects have been completed. That is what other cities such as Palo Alto in California are doing.
- 4) There needs to be a substantive change to the City's code which will codify that the fees must be used for addressing flooding, not just the Clean Water Act.
- 5) Use the majority of the stormwater fee to put shovels in the ground and build bigger storm drains and culverts.

Additionally it is recommended that the City create an independent citizens' committee to oversee how the city spends the stormwater fee. Councilwoman Amy Jackson who has the most expertise on the issue as a representative of the City on the Combined Sewer Outfall Project Review Team Workgroup, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee and the Potomac Watershed Roundtable should be appointed to this committee to oversee how the city spends the stormwater fee.

Moreover, I endorse Katie Waynick, a Del-Ray resident who has spent more than \$50k on repairs to combat flooding and has studied the issue in-depth, to be appointed to the citizens' committee, so she can provide her knowledge and make sure the money is spent properly.

There are many Alexandria residents, I among them, who are not behind moving forward on approving the increased Stormwater fees at this time and that more consideration needs to be given to this.

Respectfully,

Fran Vogel