

## Case Study: Borough of Dormont Stormwater Authority

On April 27, 2016, the Borough of Dormont Stormwater Authority passed a resolution authorizing the collection of a stormwater fee. It was a big step toward the municipality's goal of managing its stormwater more effectively and complying with Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) regulations, but it didn't happen overnight.

### Authority Background

From 2012 to 2016, Dormont Borough researched and developed a plan for funding stormwater in the municipality through public meetings, outreach mailings to residents and a stormwater committee charged with identifying stormwater issues in the borough and developing recommendations for



funding stormwater management. In 2014, the stormwater committee created educational materials on stormwater authorities and determined the methodology for a stormwater fee. In 2015 the Committee shared their research and recommendations with Dormont Borough Council and held public workshops in conjunction with the Saw Mill Run Watershed Association.

On August 3, 2015, the Borough of Dormont Stormwater Authority was formed through [Ordinance No. 1609](#). The Authority submitted its Articles of Incorporation to the Pennsylvania Secretary of State in October 2015, but due to delays at the state level, the Authority was unable to receive official approval until February 4, 2016. On March 23, 2016, the Authority held its first public meeting and organized its Board of Directors. [Dormont Stormwater Authority Meeting Agendas and Minutes](#)

### Authority Structure

The Borough of Dormont Stormwater Authority is a separate entity from the Borough of Dormont, a sanitary sewer community, incorporated in 1909, situated on .7 square miles in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. The Borough has a population of nearly 9,000 (2010 census data) residents. The Authority, with its four-member Board of Directors that meets monthly, oversees funding for operation and maintenance (O&M) of the borough's stormwater system, administers the federally mandated

municipality permit requirements, and designs, funds and constructs capital improvements in the stormwater system.

### **Stormwater Fee**

Prior to the creation of the Stormwater Authority, funds for repairing and maintaining the stormwater system came from the General Fund of the Dormont Borough operating budget. This funding structure became unfeasible due to:

- the severity of Dormont's stormwater problems;
- state and federal mandates to reduce sediment and phosphorus runoff into waterways;
- the need to meet requirements of the PA DEP and US EPA; and
- an aging, deteriorating and undersized storm sewer system in need of repair.



The Stormwater Authority structure allows for the borough to charge a fee to homeowners, commercial property owners and non-profit entities specifically to be used for stormwater management in the community. Fees are even levied against tax-exempt properties, such as municipal buildings, churches and schools.

To originally calculate the fee, Dormont hired an independent engineering consultant who used aerial photographs and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer software to measure impervious areas, hard surfaces that do not allow rain or snowmelt to infiltrate at the same rate as natural surfaces such as grass or dirt.

The amount of stormwater runoff flowing from a property into the borough's stormwater system (then to Saw Mill Run and ultimately the Ohio River) is directly related to the impervious surface of the property so Dormont decided to base its fee calculation on impervious surface area.

### **Fee Structure**

Owners of single family homes pay a flat fee of \$8.00/month based on one Equivalent Stormwater Unit or ESU. An ESU is the median amount of impervious surface found on single family residence (SFR) properties throughout Dormont. Multi-family units are charged using a multiple of the ESU:

- 2 Family- 1.25/ESU (\$10.00/month)
- 3 Family- 1.50/ESU (\$12.00/month)
- 4 Family- 1.75/ESU (\$14.00/month)

- Rowhouse- .50/ESU (\$4.00/month)

Larger properties (apartment buildings, commercial, nonprofit) are charged fees based on the on the actual amount of impervious surface.

Ratepayers are charged on an annual basis, but may alternately choose to make quarterly payments.

### **Ratepayer Fee Credits**

The Borough of Dormont Stormwater Authority offers ratepayers an opportunity to reduce to their stormwater fee by implementing any of the following benchmark practices:

- **Rain Barrels** – Residents may earn a one-time, \$40 rain barrel credit
- **Rain Garden** – A resident may earn a rain garden credit that qualifies for a 25% discount on his annual stormwater fee (must submit annually).
- **Peak Flow Attenuation** – A credit is available to any non-flat rate parcel that has qualifying onsite stormwater detention facilities, retention facilities or other structural BMPs designed to control the peak flow from the property in accordance with [Chapter 179 of the Dormont Borough Code](#). Sufficient information must be supplied to the Authority to verify that the peak runoff rate is controlled to the credit ratio requested as related to the peak runoff rate for the same property under predevelopment conditions for the 25-year storm.

### **For more information:**

Visit the Borough of [Dormont Stormwater Authority website](#) or on [Facebook](#):

### **Borough of Dormont Stormwater Authority**

Jennifer Taylor, Administrative Manager

[jtaylor@dormontstormwater.org](mailto:jtaylor@dormontstormwater.org)

1444 Hillsdale Ave

Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Phone. 412-561-8900 ext 240