



**CHARLOTTE™**

**City Council  
Follow-Up Report**

**November 1, 2013**

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**September 23, 2013 – City Council Workshop and Citizens' Forum**

**Stewart Creek Watershed Update**

*Staff Resource: Daryl Hammock, Engineering & Property Management, 704-336-2167,  
[dhammock@charlottenc.gov](mailto:dhammock@charlottenc.gov)*

During the Citizens' Forum, the City Council requested a status update on the repairs to the Stewart Creek Watershed in response to several citizens who spoke before Council and expressed concerns over sewage spills, surface water quality, stream bank erosion, public health concerns, and related issues.

City and County staff from various agencies have held productive meetings with the Stewart Creek Environmental Association and the Historic West End Neighborhood Association. A high level summary of some the actions being taken by City and County departments as a result of these discussions are as follows:

- The City and County presented projects that are underway or planned for the future. Putting the projects into context as to their relation to community interests was well received.
- CMUD Field Operations crews have been in the area cleaning and inspecting the system, and addressing repairs. There is also work underway on a comprehensive project to evaluate and repair or rehabilitate all of the sewer system in the Irwin Creek basin, including the Stewart Creek area.
- A feasibility study for the Stewart Creek Stream Restoration Project is underway and will be complete before March 2014. An update will be available no later than 3 months from now. The goal of this project is improved surface water quality.
- A bacterial source tracking study will be performed on the Stewart Creek watershed to possibly determine if the bacteria are from human or other sources (wildlife, pets, etc.).
- The Medical Director and State Toxicologist have been contacted regarding human health concerns. A follow-up meeting with the Stewart Creek Environmental Association involving the Medical Director (at a minimum) and State Toxicologist will be held to discuss their analysis when complete.
- Numerous agencies are working together to improve how the City and County communicate with flood victims. City and County staff will be providing an update soon - specifically related to assembling volunteers to help flood victims in need.

**Background:**

Citizens from the Stewart Creek area expressed similar concerns at the August 6 Board of County Commissioners Meeting. In both meetings, there was concern that infrastructure and project investments have not been allocated to this area.

Numerous staff of the City, County and State have had considerable, frequent and positive interaction with residents in the area in recent months and in particular with three members of the newly formed Stewart Creek Environmental Association. Neighborhood and Business Services staff has interacted with residents in the area involving flooding concerns dating back to 2006, 2011, and July 2013. Neighborhood and Business Services staff responded on each occasion in regard to housing related flood damage and building repair at the University Gardens Apartments.

When the area flooded in July 2013, the City/County Damage Assessment Response Team was called to evaluate the flood damage. During this evaluation, the Response Team found that damage to the habitable spaces of the units was minimal. Since that time, the apartment management has been working diligently to repair any interior damage to the units affected and dry out all crawl spaces that had water intrusion. There are no minimum housing code cases open at this time.

Three meetings were held with Stewart Creek Environmental Association area residents, including President Tammy Hill, in 2012. These meetings focused on flooding along Abelwood Road, and a Brownfield redevelopment by Classic Coffee. Some of these meetings included NC Department of the Environment and Natural Resources staff members, State Representative Kelly Alexander, and County Commissioner Velma Leake.

Many of the recent concerns raised by the residents originated after the July 2013 flood where several homes and business were flooded, streets temporarily closed, and emergency responders were mobilized. A sewer spill occurred as a result of this flood due to inundation of flood waters into the sewer system. Utility staff worked to get the system back into service and restore the area to the extent possible. There have only been a few spills in this area in recent years.

One aspect of this spill that has been a topic of conversation with representatives of the Stewart Creek Environmental Association is that once sewage is released into the environment in a flood, it is dispersed and diluted, before flowing down the creek. There is no effective way of remediating this spilled sewage. The spill that occurred in July associated with the flood is considered a small to medium sized spill. In addition, there are numerous sources of bacteria in our streams when it floods and under normal conditions. These sources include wildlife and pets as well as man-made impacts due to washing, cleaning, and other human activities.

After representatives of the Stewart Creek Environmental Association spoke at the County Commission meeting, Mecklenburg County coordinated community meetings on August 10 and October 9. Storm Water Services staff members from Mecklenburg County and the City met with the Historic West End Neighborhood Association on Saturday August 10 to explain City and County services pertaining to creeks, flooding, sewer and water service, and surface water quality. This meeting was attended by Commissioner Leake and Representative Alexander.

In a follow up meeting on August 28 with the citizens in this area, Mecklenburg County staff identified a path forward to further clarify the public investments in the area and to clarify the limits on services provided.

The following list of key interests was identified by the Steward Creek Environmental Association:

- Reduced property loss due to flooding
- No contaminated flood water in or under homes or businesses
- Clean, healthy environment with diverse habitat

A key point that has been emphasized to area residents is that floodplain areas immediately adjacent to Stewart Creek and Irwin Creek are designated flooding areas. Capital investments are not intended to prevent or to reduce flooding in these areas.

At a lengthy October 9 meeting with the Stewart Creek Environmental Association, staff answered numerous questions and addressed staff action items related to flooding, surface water quality, sewer overflows, water line repairs, and greenway trails. The representatives of the Stewart Creek Association were in attendance, as well as Commissioner Leake, Representative Alexander, a representative of the Catawba Riverkeeper, and the Clean Air Coalition.

Mecklenburg County Health Department staff also attended the October 9 meeting, to hear the health related concerns. On October 9, Mecklenburg County staff emailed the tabular results of numerous surface water quality samples to the State Toxicologist. The samples accompany a request to address the public health related concerns associated with this data.

Following the October 9 meeting with the Stewart Creek Environmental Association, numerous follow-up actions have been requested of City and County staff involving customer service requests, flooding, stream bank erosion, surface water quality, drinking water quality, sewer system failures and maintenance, greenway construction, public health issues, storm drain blockages and the level of public investment in this area. Follow up meetings are anticipated with Stewart Creek Environmental Association and Historic West End Neighborhood Association before the end of calendar year 2013.

Association representatives coordinated with City and County staff to establish a very successful Big Sweep event on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> in this area, where approximately 65 residents volunteered to remove trash from Stewart Creek as part of this annual, countywide event.

City and County staff also met with the Historic West End Neighborhood Association on Saturday, October 12. Issues raised at this meeting centered on surface water quality, sewer overflows, water line repairs, public health concerns, greenway trails, and storm drain repairs. Approximately 15 representatives were in attendance. Staff is following up on several questions pertaining to this meeting, and a future meeting is anticipated with the Historic West End Neighborhood Association, possibly in November.

## **October 7, 2013 – City Council Workshop**

### **Nominations to Waste Management Advisory Board**

*Staff Resource: Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk's Office, 704-336-4515, [sckelly@charlottenc.gov](mailto:sckelly@charlottenc.gov)*

At Monday's meeting there was a question regarding who makes the recommendation to fill the current vacancy on the board.

The Waste Management Advisory Board is a County board to which the City Council has five seats. The City Council makes recommendations to the County Commissioners regarding filling those positions. The action that will come back before you on November 11th is for a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint someone for an unexpired term beginning immediately and ending February 1, 2014 and then continuing for a full three-year term beginning February 2, 2014 and ending February 1, 2017. If you have any questions, you may contact Khadya Hale, Boards and Commissions Clerk.

## **October 28, 2013 – City Council Business Meeting**

### **Charlotte Business INclusion Status Update**

*Staff Resource: Nancy Rosado, Neighborhood & Business Services, 704-336-2116, [nrosado@charlottenc.gov](mailto:nrosado@charlottenc.gov)*

At the end of the October 28, 2013, City Council meeting, Councilmember Mitchell requested an update on the progress of the Charlotte Business INclusion (CBI) program which was approved in April, 2013, and became effective on July 1.

Staff has been working in three primary areas that are required to fully implement the new program:

#### ***1- Recruiting Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs)***

To effectively set MWBE subcontracting goals, the City must develop a new vendor database of MWBEs located in the City's relevant market area. Since April, staff has focused its outreach and marketing efforts to a wide range of customers. This activity includes presentations to local minority business groups, which was a Council expectation. A summary of the outreach to date includes:

- An electronic survey and recruitment campaign targeted to:
  - 813 MWBEs registered with the State's Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses with headquarters in the City's relevant market area.
  - 144 contractors that do business with the City.
  - Community business networks including the Carolinas Minority Supplier Diversity Council (CMSDC), Metrolina Minority Contractors Association (MMCA), Hispanic Contractors Association, Latin American Chamber, Asian Chamber, Black Chamber, and National Association of Women Business Owners.
- Presentations at fifteen (15) community events targeted at MWBEs, including the CMSDC Business Opportunity Conference, the Hispanic Construction Industry Trade Show and the monthly meeting of the MMCA.
- Presentations at five (5) vendor recruitment sessions sponsored by major city departments.
- A new City webpage that is promoted on [CharlotteBusinessResources.com](http://CharlotteBusinessResources.com).

- Thirteen (13) training sessions for existing staff in City departments who communicate with contractors and subcontractors on a regular basis.

Council's FY14 ED Focus Area Plan target for the CBI is to register 400 MWBEs by June 30, 2014. To date, 150 MWBEs (38%) have been registered.

### ***2- Updating Systems, Documents and Processes***

Several required updates have been completed, including:

- Reconfiguring the City's vendor database.
- Updating certification applications and construction solicitation documents.
- Instituting a new goal setting methodology for construction projects released after July 1, 2013.
- Incorporating new processes to increase the utilization of MWBEs for service contracts.

### ***3- Updating the Organizational Structure***

Neighborhood & Business Services is currently working with The Galilee Agency, a local MWBE consulting firm, to identify staffing competencies for the three additional Council-approved positions. Also under review is an analysis of the optimal organizational structure required to enhance the effectiveness of the program goals. This work is anticipated to be completed by the end of the calendar year.