

March 21, 2015

Friends and neighbors,

As I review the various communications that have come to my attention over the last week regarding the ongoing review of one part of the Cafritz SWM system it is clear that I need to send out a review of the situation. There are many questions area residents understandably have, often the exact same ones I had a week or two earlier, but also some conclusions are circulating that are way off base and a clear picture of what is and IS NOT happening needs to be written.

First, lets start with the big picture. The Cafritz project has in place a comprehensive SWM plan that not only meets but exceeds the new state mandated requirements for controlling/managing runoff of water from a quality (pollution) and quantity (flooding) point of view. The shorthand for this is Environmental Sight Design (ESD) and the principles involved can be seen in the state publication on the topic:

<http://www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/Design%20Manual%20Chapter%205%2003%2024%202009.pdf>

One way of looking at this part is to understand it as being there to manage the events that are more "normal"; that is the types of events that happen from every year, up to every few years. On this level--ESD--the Cafritz project again exceeds state standards by approximately 25%, and this portion of the plan is **not under discussion**.

What **is being reviewed** is the means of handling the much larger events that come much less frequently, but that will eventually come--the 10 and 100 year storm. The plan that was initially placed as a requirement of the Cafritz project for mitigation at this level was a system based on an underground tank that would hold flood water. The Cafritz engineering team produced a study of Wells Run and the proposed tank system that called into question its effectiveness and turned it over to the County officials at the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) for review. Their argument is this: the tank will not produce any appreciable benefit in a 100 year storm and therefore they want to pay a fee-in-lue of doing the project to the County. The expectation is that the fee will be used for a more productive facility for controlling flooding.

County Government is the level at which the actual approval and enforcement of SWM takes place, so DPIE is in effect the office that will decide the issue of whether to stay with the "tank" system or to accept the fee-in-lieu payment. DPIE has analyzed the findings of the Cafritz team and concurs with them. Both our neighbors in University Park and our Town Government are having independent analyses of the study done by separate engineering firms. Neither is complete as of this writing.

To repeat an earlier message, we now have a page on the town website with storm water management items posted. Right now the new Cafritz study of the "tank" is there, and shortly a copy of the ESD for the whole project will be posted there as well.

<http://www.riverdaleparkmd.info/StormwaterManagement.cfm>

I asked the DPIE team to come to our next council work session on March 30 at 8 PM in order to give to the council and interested public the exact same presentation of the facts, as they see them, that I was given in a briefing on March 12. By that time our engineering firm will have completed its study, and I am of course interested in the study commissioned by UP as well.

University Park will be having the same presentation on April 2 giving everyone in the area a second chance to gather information and weigh in on the issue.

The last matter that I need to address is the question of what would be done with a fee-in-lieu payment. First, let me say that this option is only open if an effective on-sight option is not available. If the numbers bear up, and the on sight proposal is not effective, the fee-in-lieu money must be used on that SWM drainage. That is to say the money cannot be transferred to some other project in another part of the county.

Many stake holders in this area have looked to the 9 Pond site to the west of Adelphi Road as a good contender to make a real improvement to SWM along Wells Run. Let me be plain in that there are real hurdles to be passed before this can happen, but there are significant factors that make it an appealing place for a major management facility. Hurdles include it is private property, almost entirely a wetland already and regulated by the US Army Corp of Engineers, and in Hyattsville which is NOT down stream on Wells Run so may view its interests somewhat differently. The appealing parts mirror the hurdles, while it is private property and a wet land, it cannot be used for much other than water management and Hyattsville is ultimately down stream from other places and needs answers to SWM just like we do.

Another set of circumstances that make 9 Pond more likely is the county's desire to see redevelopment of Prince George's Plaza area, which would kick in the same much more demanding SWM regulations that the Cafritz project has to meet. 9 Pond has the potential to significantly ease that process.

In closing I look forward to seeing all of those interested in this issue out on March 30 or in UP on the April 2.

Vern

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Vernon Archer, Mayor
Town of Riverdale Park, Maryland