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St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission

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Potable Water Distribution - Wastewater Collection / Treatment

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Minutes

January 14, 2009, 7:00 pm

Chesapeake Building, Leonardtown, MD

Public Hearing Table of Equivalent Dwelling Units

Attendees

MetCom Staff: Steve King, Director; Chet Frederick, P. E. Chief Engineer; Christy Sterling, EIT Asst. Engineer; Debbie Settle, Field Services Supervisor; Trish Gonzales, Engineering Administrative Assistant.

MetCom Commissioners: Katie Warner, Commission Chairperson; Chuck Lancaster, Vice Chairperson; Joe St. Clair and Frank Taylor.

LUGM: Phil Shire, Acting Director

Reading of the Notice of Public Hearing by Steve King

Welcome and Overview

Mr. King introduced himself and thanked everyone for attending the public hearing. Mr. King explained the purpose of the public hearing and gave a brief overview of the Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDU) table and the Committee formed to evaluate its statistics to update the table accordingly. Mr. King introduced the various MetCom Commissioners and MetCom staff in attendance for the public hearing, and also recognized the EDU Committee members.

Mr. Frederick gave the audience a brief summary on the history of EDU's. He explained how a committee was formed early last year to evaluate and discuss the different aspects of the table, including flow data, actual water usage of our non-residential water and/or sewer customers as well as tables from other jurisdictions. The committee also researched various categories to determine the basis and criteria of EDU's. The key change is going to gallons per day (gpd) or persons/ # of seats.

Mr. Frederick went through a PowerPoint presentation Ms. Settle provided, which was a summary of the various categories in the EDU table to give the audience a better understanding of EDU's and how they are broken down and calculated.

Mr. Frederick also summarized the various categories that were combined within the proposed EDU table, and categories that were sub-categorized to accommodate different uses within one category.

Commissioner St. Clair questioned whether the information gathered for the table was metered. Ms. Settle stated the information gathered came from metered commercial customers.

Commissioner Chairman Warner asked what the timeframe was for the data gathered, and if the entire history was used. Ms. Settle explained some customers had a lengthy usage history that was used, while other customers had a period of transition in their usage history between old and new meters. The data during that transition was excluded because of the possible inaccuracies. Mr. King explained some customers are new and don't have the years of data, or some accounts may not have much history because they hadn't been previously metered.

Mr. Frederick noted one of the biggest changes proposed is the medical category; it is now one overall category, combining all the different types within the medical category. Mr. King added that the gpd rate for medical office buildings in St. Mary's County is lower than compared to Anne Arundel County.

Ms. Settle explained at length what data was collected for recreational use and pools, researching the number of fixtures, maximum capacity and the average gpd for each facility.

Mr. King inquired about the meters installed at apartments and whether the meters for irrigation, washing cars, etc. were included in the data collected. Ms. Settle stated that those types of meters are completely separate from the meters for the apartment buildings themselves. Only the meters for the apartment complexes themselves were used in the data.

Mr. Rick Benefield had various questions regarding EDU's, including when the use was determined. Mr. Frederick explained that the use is determined when the design drawings are submitted. Mr. King noted that renovations proposed may increase or decrease the EDU's allocations and charges assessed accordingly. Mr. Benefield also asked if storage units were under the warehouse category, and if there is an EDU allocated for storage units if the water will only be used for fire protection. It was explained to Mr. Benefield that if the County allows the units to be built without restroom facilities, they wouldn't be charged for an allocation; however, if there are restroom facilities, a charge would be assessed. Only the office would be charged an EDU not the self storage units themselves. Mr. King added the same rules apply to warehouses.

Mr. Benefield needed further explanation on how the data was gathered for Apartment complexes. The Queen Anne and Spring Valley Apartments are significantly higher than the rest of the complexes researched. These numbers affect the apartment complex he is currently having built. Mr. King cited that complexes recently built within the last 10 years are using more efficient plumbing fixtures than older complexes like Queen Anne and Spring Valley. Mr. Benefield expressed his concerns with the work force and the lower income housing being built and the apartments being billed at such a high rate. Mr. Benefield requested that the rates be revised to be possibly be based on bedrooms per apartment; a minimum 1 EDU may not be appropriate. Mr. King and Ms. Settle stated our billing cannot tell how many rooms there are in a single apartment.

Commissioner Taylor appreciated Mr. Benefield's comments. He stated the purpose of the study gives a clear picture of what an EDU comes down to, and Mr. Benefield's input is very important.

Commissioner St. Clair inquired whether this will help increase the EDU's left, or if reallocating will open up more EDU's. Mr. King stated we will not know until the table is implemented and placed into the billing system.

Mr. King stated the MetCom board will consider the comments brought to the hearing and give direction on how to react to the comments, considering Mr. Benefield's recommendations and possibly doing a further study. Commissioner Taylor made a motion to close the public hearing portion of this and leave the record open for comment for 10 days to receive written comment. Commissioner St. Clair second the motion and was approved carried.

A complete audio version of this Public Hearing is on file at the main offices of the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission.