

Amy Harvey

From: Town Council
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 3:50 PM
To: Berlin, Charles S
Cc: Adam Searing; Amy Ryan; Camille Berry; Elizabeth Sharp; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Melissa McCullough; Paris Miller-Foushee; Theodore Nollert; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; CHRIS BLUE; James Baker; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver; Susan Brown; Britany Waddell; Lance Norris
Subject: RE: stormwater ordinance changes - recomendation

Hello Charles,

Thank you for your email and input regarding the LUMO changes. The Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as the appropriate Town staff, are copied on this email.

We're interested in what you have to say and thank you again for your input.

Best,

Shay Stevens



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From: Berlin, Charles S <cberlin@pitt.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 11:29 AM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Cc: Sue Burke <sburke@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: stormwater ordinance changes - recomendation

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Dear Mayor and Council members,

At a public information meeting about the LUMO changes related to stormwater issues, I had a conversation with Sue Burke of the town's storm water department, asking about the possibility of a potential future adjustment in stormwater calculations used by the department. Ms. Burke indicated that this was a meaningful issue that merited being looked into by the town, and she recommended that I forward this in writing to you to be considered for inclusion in the final LUMO rewrite.

The concern relates to how out of date the rainfall data is that is relied upon in North Carolina in calculating stormwater system approvals. This data is now more than a decade out of date (NOAA Atlas 14 ver 3) and does not take climate change of recent years into account. Although NOAA hopes to update this in the next two years, even if they meet this deadline that new data may already be out of date by the release date and will continue to be further so for each passing year of further climate change.

There are several means that towns in NC can make some adjustments to account for climate change. One is to increase the "freeboard" component of the calculations (how high water will rise in a location after a 24 hour rain). Chapel Hill has already done this. A second potential adjustment of importance is whether to also use a "multiplier" to further adjust the NOAA data to be more congruent with current climate conditions. It is my understanding that Charlotte-Mecklenburg has recently done this in its calculations, adding an additional 10% to its stormwater flooding calculations. It is also my understanding from speaking to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg chief storm water engineer that doing this requires only local council approval, not any state approval. Chapel Hill does not currently do this. Ms. Burke felt it could be meaningful for the new LUMO to allow the town stormwater staff the latitude to do this after their own study of what the appropriate amount for a multiplier should be.

Thus I strongly recommend that this be included in the final LUMO rewrite, given how important stormwater runoff decisions and periodic flooding are in Chapel Hill. Our storm water department should have the tools it needs to more accurately address this.

Respectfully
Charles Berlin