

Lakes (Save
our Lakes)

City utility planned to fund lakes improvement programs

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WINTER PARK—After adopting a new storm water management ordinance last month, Winter Park is now gearing up to forward with another phase of its lakes cleanup program. The city plans to establish a storm water utility.

Revenue generated from the citywide utility would be used to

fund long-term, aggressive lakes improvement programs, which by all accounts are likely to be very expensive.

The Winter Park Chain of Lakes have become increasingly polluted over the last decade and, while consultants' reports have identified several key sources of the contamination, little has been done to fix the problem because of lack of

available funding.

For example, consultants hired earlier this year to study the Dinky Dock area of Lake Virginia and make recommendation for improvement reported to city commissioners that a total cleanup of the water at Dinky Dock could cost as much as \$.5 million. The city

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doesn't have that kind of money in its Save Our Lakes Fund, so it is opting instead to implement \$23,000 worth of the consultants' recommendations, which will bring about considerable improvement but won't solve the problem completely.

City officials are hopeful that a storm water utility would generate enough money on an on-going basis to fund the kind of projects like the one recommended for Dinky Dock.

They are approaching the storm-water utility with caution, however, as it is one of the most complex and delicate issues facing the city today.

After reviewing a report submitted this week by consultants hired to study the feasibility of such a utility for Winter Park, the city commission will further discuss the issue along with related policy

questions such as the equity of the proposed utility's rate structure, use of the new revenue, billing techniques and the public information program necessary to introduce and implement it.

The consultants, Professional Engineering Consultants Inc., will also assist city officials in developing a "fee in lieu" rate curve plan for the new storm water management ordinance, which is scheduled to take effect Aug. 1.

The storm water management ordinance requires property owners to provide on-site storm water retention facilities for construction or improvements to existing structures on their property.

Owners for whom it is impractical or impossible to comply with the new ordinance will be required to pay a "fee in lieu" based on the cost of a comparable underground system.