

Drainage Issues at 430 Mill Street Updated August 29, 2020

Introduction

For many years the property at 430 Mill Street has been a point source for water on the adjoining sidewalk and on Mill Street itself. This was the case well before the property was sold by the owner of Rockledge Mansion in 2014. In fact, at one point the Town Engineer, at the direction of the Town Council, developed a plan to address the drainage issue and offered it to the individual who owned both Rockledge and 430 Mill Street for implementation. Prior to the property being sold and the current construction beginning, water from Rockledge flowed through the site, which being entirely grass at the time retained the moisture and gradually released it across the sidewalk on to Mill Street. Sometimes the water discharge was substantial, but for the most part was only hazardous during the winter months when it repeatedly froze on the sidewalk.

Current Situation

After the owner of Rockledge sold 430 Mill Street to its current owner, the latter began construction of two single-family homes on the site. This has led over the past several years to significant additional water (and sediment) flowing from the site on to the sidewalk and on to Mill Street. Though uncertain, it appears likely that a significant amount of the water is still coming from the Rockledge property. In the absence, however, of the grass that previously covered the site this water is no longer being absorbed and discharged more slowly, but is rather flowing in significantly greater amounts and velocity than in the past on to the sidewalk and on to Mill Street. Additionally, the crown (or lack of crown) of Mill Street is such that the water is not staying along the curb and running down to the storm drain at the intersection of Mill and Ellicott Streets, but is rather spreading out into the parking spaces on the south side of Mill Street and, before it reaches the storm drain, crossing to the north side of Mill Street. This leaves many of the parking spaces on the south side of the street wet.

In addition to the water discharge, heavy rain events and inadequacies in the construction contractor's silt fence have resulted in sediment from the site periodically inundating the sidewalk and the south side of Mill Street. Even now, after substantial cleanup by the contractor, the inevitable residual sediment on the sidewalk gives the appearance of mud when the sidewalk is wet, and due to parked cars it is often difficult for the contractor to perform any cleaning of the street itself.

Measures Taken and Planned to Address the Situation

At this time the contractor on the construction site has improved the silt fence and cleans the sidewalk every day after construction to remove any sediment accumulation. The sidewalk and street will nevertheless sometimes appear a little muddy due to past sediment accumulation that now can only be removed by power washing (not a particularly environmentally-friendly practice and best left until the end of construction). The bulk of the water is now being routed via a flexible conduit across the sidewalk and on to Mill Street. Absent a break in the conduit

this is and should continue to be clear, sediment-free water. This inconveniencing of the sidewalk in that location will remain until the surface of the site is completed, which is expected in the next few months. Once that is completed it is hoped that there will be no further discharge of water from the site. In the interim, we are investigating with VDOT installing a small berm a few inches from the curb on the south side of Mill Street that would keep any discharged water against the curb and direct it to the appropriate storm drain.

In the event that water continues to be discharged from the site after construction is completed, the Town is investigating how best to direct that flow. One possible solution is to identify the point source and install a small grated section of sidewalk so that the water flows directly into the street and not across the sidewalk (whether directly or through a conduit). Initially, that would still result in water spreading out on the street (absent the berm mentioned in the preceding paragraph). We expect VDOT, however, to re-crown the street in 2021, which should keep the water against the curb and direct it to the appropriate storm drain. Additionally, we are evaluating whether or not the water can be directed to a storm drain near the intersection of Mill Street and the cul-de-sac.