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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Tony Zielinski
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Downspout Disconnection Plan Aims to Reduce Lake Michigan Pollution And Bay View Basement Flooding

Pilot Project To Divert Storm Water

Concerns about pollution issues resulting from storm water runoff into Lake Michigan have resulted in an innovative water diversion project.

Ald. Tony Zielinski took the concerns of the South Shore Park Watch to City Hall, and today convinced the Common Council to fund a portion of a downspout disconnection project for a 12-block area along S. Delaware Ave. between E. Oklahoma Ave. and S. St. Clair St. in Bay View. The contribution from the city to South Shore Park Watch is in addition to funding already received from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District for the \$15,000 pilot project.

“This pilot project addresses the issue of reducing sewer overflows by diverting storm water away from the combined sewer system,” said Ald. Zielinski, whose 14th District includes all of Bay View. “Basement flooding has been especially troublesome for many of the homes on S. Delaware Ave., and I encourage those homeowners to take advantage of this pilot project.”

The pilot program aims to reduce the amount of storm water entering the combined sewer system by disconnecting downspouts and diverting the water into rain barrels, which will be provided at no cost for residents participating in the pilot program, and training and education for dispersing rainwater onto lawns and into rain gardens. “This is not a magic fix to the problem of sewer overflows,” said Ald. Zielinski. “But it is one of many tools needed to reach that goal.”

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Downspout Disconnects/ADD ONE

Volunteers from South Shore Park Watch will work with the residents of S. Delaware Ave. to provide the rain barrels and educational materials on rain gardens. Contact Ald. Zielinski's office at 286-2873 for information.

Why disconnect? During a heavy storm, each downspout on a home can deliver 12 gallons a minute to the sewer system and by disconnecting a downspout, excess water can be kept out of the sewer system.

A rain barrel is a first step, collecting and storing rainwater that can be used to wash a car or water a lawn or garden. They should be used in conjunction with other water management practices, such as a rain garden.

Rain gardens are different from typical gardens. Typically placed near downspouts, they are normally planted with wild flowers and deep-rooted native vegetation to capture water so the runoff can gradually soak into the ground.