

**GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

LOCATION: Plainfield Public Library
Plainfield

DATE: December 7, 2011

MEETING CONVENEED: 7:30PM

NOTE:

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided informing the public of time and place according to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ted Bassman . Scotch Plains	Alice Tempel . South Plainfield
John Sweeney . Middlesex	Thomas Slowinski . NJ DEP
Ray Murray . Green Brook	Frank Verga - USACE
Richard O'Connor . Engineer, GBFCC	Kristen Michaels . Winning Strategies
George Ververides. Middlesex Cty Planning	Carey Pilato, Bound Brook, Mayor
Bill Crosby . No Plainfield	Adrian Mapp . Plainfield Council
Joe Skupien . Somerset County	Barbara James . Plainfield
Thomas Mineo . Union Cty Engineering	Christine Johnson . Middlesex
Henry Kita . Watchung	Michael Giordano . No Plainfield, Mayor
Linda Carter . Union Cty Freeholder	Phyllis Gentile . Middlesex
Jim Koch - Public	

Chairman Bassman noted the passing of Vernon Noble (first Chairman of GBFCC). Mr Murray attended and spoke at the memorial service. A moment of silence was given for Mr Noble.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Bassman stated there were no items of correspondence received by the GBFCC for the month of November. The GBFCC maintains a correspondence file that is available for inspection as may be necessary and upon request.

MINUTES

The minutes of the 11/02/11 meeting were approved. A copy of the approved minutes is available on the GBFCC website.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ray Murray provided the monthly report and bills for November. Bills for the month of November were approved for payment. Copies are available for inspection upon request. Mr Murraray also noted the bills for municipalities are available.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

No report.

FINANCE REPORT

Mr Crosby reported that the Finance Committee has reviewed the budget and recommended it be passed and presented to the Treasurer. A motion was made and the budget was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Bassman attended a FEMA meeting hosted by Mayor Sherr of Middlesex Boro. Subjects involved the need for flood affected residents to register their event with FEMA.

Chairman Bassman also spoke of the GBFCC's work with Winning Strategies on the upper basin provision. Senator Lautenberg office has approached the USACE on the Toricelli amendment. A provision is being sent in to add to the Water Resource Development Act that will strike the Toricelli amendment from the bill. Kristen Michaels (Winning Strategies) noted that no agreement has been made by legislators and the bill has been tabled indefinitely.

Chairman Bassman had a conference call on the Sustainable Raritan River project. He noted that several representatives have attended the annual meeting. 2012 meeting is expected to be in June at the Duke Farms. The 2012 subjects will include flood control topics.

Barbara James questioned how flood reporting to FEMA will benefit affected residents. Mr Murray noted that he attended a Blue Acres project (resource for flood mitigation) meeting. Currently, a pilot program that pertains to the Passaic area where FEMA puts up 75% and Blue Acres puts up 25% to complete various programs (i.e. buyouts, etc). Based on program applied for determines the different criteria and payout.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Frank Verga of the USACE reported as follows:

On-Going Construction (Bound Brook)

The USACE is working with FEMA and State of NJ to initiate activities (tasks, costs, schedules) necessary for levee certification. They are also working on necessary repairs as a result of Hurricane Irene. The State of NJ is working with FEMA to obtain reimbursement funding for some repairs.

The USACE is working internally to verify how to proceed with repairs. There are two alternatives: 1) modify the existing contract on site or 2) procure a whole new contract (more time consuming). By early next year, work could begin and the project completed.

Segment U . Segment is complete. As a result of Hurricane Irene, repair action is necessary.

Segment R1 . Segment is complete.

Talmage Ave Bridge . Segment is complete.

Segment R2 (Levee/Pump Station) . The project is 99% complete. Additional modifications are underway that will not impact the project performance. Project is functional and will be turned over to the NJDEP.

Segment R2 (Railroad Closure) . Project is 57% complete. Majority of diversion pipe work is underway. It will be summer 2012 for the pipes to be aligned and fully functional. The railroad closure gate is currently under construction and expects to be functional in the spring 2012.

South Main Street (Closure Gate) . The gate is 98% complete. The gate is functional but the contractor has some punchlist items to complete by the end of the month. A final inspection will be held in January before being turned over to the NJDEP.

Lincoln Boulevard Bridge . Project is complete.

Segment T (Pump Station) . Pump station is reactivated and the project is 99% complete. Some final punchlist items are being addressed and expect to be completed by end of month. A turnover to NJDEP is expected in January.

Segment T (Levee) . The levee had damage due to Hurricane Irene. They are conducting a survey and collecting information to start repairs as soon as possible.

E Street Closure Gate . The gate is in place and functional. The area warrants adjustments due to Hurricane Irene.

The USACE is continuing to compile an overall operation & maintenance manual (including segments, floodwalls, pump stations) to be provided to the NJDEP and Somerset County for maintenance of the project.

The USACE's goal is to complete all of Bound Brook by the end of 2012.

Bound Book Questions

Resident questioned if the levee damage has been caused by Hurricane Irene or by recent construction? Also, over time will it have to be repaired? Mr Verga noted that Segment T Levee had water over-topping. Patchwork needs to be addressed but there is no significant damage. This type of damage could occur because the levees are designed for a certain level of protection. Segment U . there is heavy erosion occurring along the levee floodwall. The USACE expects to do some work to prevent further erosion and protect the area.

Tom Mineo questioned as to who maintains the levee and are there things that will be taken care of in the future. Mr Verga stated that it would be the State of NJ. NJ has its own agreement with Somerset County to provide for on-going maintenance. Mr Murray added that there was some erosion noted prior to the storm and has worsened as a result of the storm.

Mr Mineo questioned that over time levee areas that are being repaired will become overgrown and who is responsible for cutting grass, etc? Mr Murray noted the County would be taking care of the areas. The State will be paying the County for the upkeep.

(Middlesex/Green Brook)

Segment B-1 (Sebrings Mills) . Segment is 24% completed. The majority of the levee is in place at 85% completion. The pump station is starting to take form at 25% completion. Foundation work is in place and it is just a matter of time until the pipes are in place.

Bridge Raising . Work has been slow. Some pole re-locations have held up the progress but PSE & G has installed new poles and are in the process of re-locating lines. Cable/Verizon is working to transfer lines. At that time, the contractor can begin Phase I of the bridge raising which is expected in January.

Downstream Floodwall - The area has been cleared and the contractor will begin construction of the floodwall.

Non-structural Floodproofing . The USACE has inspected several structures that could participate in this project. The contractor is expecting to obtain protective floodproofing methods for each structure. They expect to have a final draft by early 2012. The USACE will begin homeowner meetings to provide options and their participation in the project.

Design Work

Segment B-2 . They are making progress on the 500ft portion of floodwall which is in conjunction with B1 that will raise the level of protection to a 40 year event. Design is on the way. The USACE will be doing value engineering in January. They expect to have a contract awarded by late summer 2012.

Segment B3 & B4 . Design efforts will pick up by end of 2012. The concept is to finish the design into next year and construction efforts will start with funding availability.

Segments C, H, P & D (Various floodwalls, levees, gates, pump station) . Due to the size of these projects, it will take some time to complete.

NJDEP

Tom Slowkowski reported on the following:

The NJDEP is working on certification of levees in Bound Brook which is a longer process than normal. By next year, they expect to have some decision on that. It will involve municipalities and the meeting of townspeople. It was designed for a 150 year storm and they are hopeful residents will get a reduced insurance rate or no insurance.

The NJDEP met with FEMA at Section T. The possibility for reimbursement funding due to damages in this area looks good. They are working on all paperwork needed.

Operation maintenance . The agreements are included in the FEMA paperwork that is required.

Section T . FEMA would pay the NJDEP to recover all material at Middle Brook. In order for approval, the NJDEP will have to go thru a 406 mitigation program and will have to do a cost factor analysis.

QUESTIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Mayor Pilato questioned if they are encouraging the boxing of the stone? Mr Slowkowski indicated they want to try to recover material in the streambed with substantial rock/fabric and armor that for the transition in the beginning.

Chairman Bassman questioned the contract awards for consulting Engineering services and Governmental Relations. Mr Murray stated there was only one (1) proposal (RFP) received for each service. There were several other inquiries without proposal. Mr Murray presented the proposal of Grotto Engineering Associates and Winning Strategies for approval by the GBFCC. A motion was made and approved.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mr Crosby indicated the following appointment results for 2012:

Chairman . Ted Bassman
Vice Chairman . John Sweeney
Treasurer . Ray Murray
Legislative . Frank McArdle

A motion was made and approved.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Adrian Mapp . Where does Union County stand in what has happened and what movement would come this way? Mr Murray noted the biggest hurdle in Union County is the Toricelli amendment which restricts building of two (2) basins north of this area. The GBFCC is working on getting the amendment stricken from the next water bill. The amendment doesn't say work cannot be done only that work cannot be done in those two (2) basins. Funding is another issue that would impede the process. Studies would have to be done downstream as has been done on the upstream portion.

Mr Mapp questioned if there is any involvement by Winning Strategies? Mr Murray affirmed that WS is working with USACE to assure the correct language is in the bill to remove the restriction.

Chairman Bassman questioned if Congress passed the 2012 appropriation. Ms Michaels noted that it should be in the next set of bills being presented before Congress.

Jim Koch questioned if it was possible to expedite the balance of the work to close the gap. Mr Verga explained that the diversion pipes under the railroad were the final work item and were being constructed as quickly as possible but they were large quantities of large pipe and would require the time just to physically perform the work.

Mr Koch also questioned if the diversion pipes go under the train bed and will disrupt train service? It is not anticipated that the trains will be disrupted. Mr Verga noted that most of the borings are complete. They are finalizing the piping system and will go into next year to complete. Mayor Pilato spoke of the unusual size and amount of pipes involved which causes for longer installation time of the stormwater system. It is needed for low areas in order to channel water to the pump station and ensure proper return on the investment and keep homes out of harms way.

Chairman Bassman thanked the Plainfield Public Library for the use of their facility and their continued support of the GBFCC.

A motion was made and approved to adjourn.

Listed are the GBFCC meeting dates:

2011

January – Middlesex Library – Middlesex Boro

February – Dunellen (TBD)

March – North Plainfield

MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:50 PM