

**GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

LOCATION: North Plainfield Senior Citizens Center  
North Plainfield

DATE: May 6, 2015

MEETING CONVENED: 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:**

Ray Murray . Green Brook	Theodore Bassman . Scotch Plains
Bill Crosby . No Plainfield	Alice Tempel . South Plainfield
John Sweeney-Middlesex Boro	George Ververides. Middlesex County Planning
Frank McArdle . North Plainfield	Ken Herrmann . Green Brook Committee
Richard O'Connor-Engineer, GBFCC	Richard Jacobus-Twp of Green Brook
Robert Greco . USACE	Paul Woska . Borough of Middlesex
Joe Skupien . Somerset County	Rob Zucker . Winning Strategies

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Murray reported no receipt of any correspondence received by the GBFCC for the months of March & April. The GBFCC maintains a correspondence file that is available for inspection as may be necessary and upon request.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the 03/04/15 meeting were approved as corrected. A copy of the approved minutes is available on the GBFCC website.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Bill Crosby provided the monthly report and bills for March & April. Bills for the months of March & April were approved for payment. Copies are available for inspection upon request.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

No report.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Murray introduced Rob Zucker of Winning Strategies who will now be representing GBFCC in place of Kristen Michaels.

**ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

Mr Greco reported the following:

Cost update. USACE awarded a Cost & H&H update to the current 1997 GRR that meets post-Katrina design standards to AECOM. The updating will include hydrology, hydraulics and project costs. Project timeframe is approximately 12 months. Some of the information generated from the H&H cost will be used in the GRR in the upper basin.

FY16 Presidential Budget . USACE received \$11 million in Federal funds on 4/7/15 and \$1 million in non-Federal (NJDEP) on 5/1/15. Currently, USACE has approximately \$19-20 million in project funds.

## **Bound Brook**

LOMR (letter of map revision) . USACE had an internal meeting with FEMA regarding the issuance of LOMR. The LOMR should be issued by January 2016. The Bound Brook Mayor has tentatively set up a public meeting for June 22, 2015. Based on USACE's schedule, a public meeting should occur in September 2015. Mr Greco will coordinate.

Segment T (levee) . Punchlist items still need to be addressed by Rencor. These items should be complete by the end of May. AECOM has completed the design of the levee top widening and coordinated with Somerset County DPW. Rencor will submit shop drawings for review to proceed with construction. Some trees need to be removed. USACE will coordinate with Bound Brook officials for removal & re-location of the trees.

Downtown low spot-storm sewer . The sidewalk restoration & base course paving have been completed. Somerset County will be completing the top course & striping as part of their separate project work.

Segment R2 (levee tieoff) . USACE is attempting to conduct a test of the stop log structure in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May. Somerset County, Rencor (construction division) & DPW will be present. The levee tie-in & a section of the wall are still being constructed and should be finished by the end of May. There was a delay due to Conrail approving the drainage structure.

Diversions pipes . USACE construction division will be forwarding an email to Joe Skupien stating the scour holes had been done.

Mr Greco stated that he is putting together a list of as-builts for Somerset County, Bound Brook & NJDEP. He will be providing them on DVD.

## **Middlesex**

Segment B1 (Sebrings Mill) . A few punchlist items are remaining and will be completed by May 30, 2015. Final as-built drawings were provided by the Contractor in January 2015. Currently, USACE has their A/E back checking to assure all of their comments were addressed.

USACE requires Middlesex County to provide an auto dial phone # and identify a point of contact for the turnover of the pump station. The final O&M was provided by Montana in February 2015 and is being transferred to Middlesex County.

Mr Sweeney . do you have the as-builts from Montana? Mr Greco stated USACE does have them but are reviewing them. They will be released on DVD upon approval.

Segment B2 (floodwall) . USACE expects to advertise in May 2016 with an award by July 2016. Due to real estate issues, they are unable to award in 2015. There are 2 properties being condemned and a 3<sup>rd</sup> property headed in the same direction. There is still 1 homeowner who has not responded with a decision. USACE met with NJDEP in March 2015 regarding LURP. NJDEP is reviewing the plans for permitting.

Segments B3 & B4 . Originally, USACE was going apply to NJDEP as one (1) permit. Due to induced flooding of more than 6/10 of a foot on the opposite bank, USACE is now required to split the permit. On May 7, 2015 Tom Decker (AECOM) will be meeting with Charles Defendorf

& Tom Slowinski (NJDEP) to provide the permit package for Segment B3. Mr Greco indicated he will then need assistance from NJDEP to expedite the permitting process. The value engineering was completed on May 4, 2015. Some of the comments are acceptable to USACE & others. USACE has given all items to Jacobs Engineering to see what can/can't be incorporated.

Segment B3 . Mr Greco provided the following timeline for the project:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Completion</u>
Real estate appraisal	7/27/15
100% plans & specs	8/17/15
Real estate offer to sell (signed)	8/10/15
Real estate certification	8/14/15
Permit package submit to NJDEP/LURP	5/7/15
Permit package approved by NJDEP/LURP	9/18/15
Ready to advertise	7/31/15
Issue advance notice	7/31/15
Advertise	8/17/15
Bid opening	9/17/15
Award of contract	9/30/15

Chairman Murray stated he will follow-up with to avoid problems that may arise. Mr Greco added that he anticipates having the permit package prior to 9/18/15. If there are any constructive comments from the contractor, the award date may be pushed to October.

Chairman Murray noted that flooding can't be induced on the other side so USACE is segmenting where the pump station & levee ends. They won't be able to activate the pump station because they have to go back to the end of Segment C and work their way back up to the levees (working both sides of the stream at the same time) to avoid inducing flooding on either side. USACE is basically building the structure without the pumps.

Segment B4 . USACE is firming up the amount of properties that will be needed. They tentatively defined 4-5 structures (diner, 2 garages, 2 homes) as buyouts. Chairman Murray noted that having a ballpark \$ figure will help with real estate as funding will be encumbered.

Mr Greco added that for Segment B3 \$10-15 million is needed to complete the project. The cost update contract was awarded for \$1.2 million. Costs for the Jefferson Ave Bridge have not been determined. Jacobs Engineering (AECOM) is concentrating on modifying the design of Segment B4 to determine how much of a gap to leave from the end of B4 to Route 28. They don't want water to be trapped behind B4.

Chairman Murray . Was the design to the north of Route 28 (adjacent to the bridge) initially scheduled to be a floodwall? Mr Greco stated yes and there is a closure structure there. Chairman Murray suggested putting a wall in place (i.e. B1) and leaving sections open to allow water flow and install the remaining sections at a later time.

Mr Greco noted there is a garage behind the American Legion that is being reviewed for possible removal. He expects to provide a list of structures for buyouts.

Jefferson Ave Bridge (razing) . Mr Greco noted the contractor for the project will be renting/utilizing office space at the USACE Funderne office. Rencor's contract will be completed by August 2015. Mr Greco provided the following timeline for the bridge razing:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Completion</u>
Independent technical review	5/12/15
Incorporated comments due	5/19/15
Package sent to contracting division	5/20/15
Provide package to small business 8A contractor	6/10/15
Receipt of contractor's proposal	7/10/15
Award of contract	7/31/15

Mr Crosby . If the contract is awarded on 7/31/15, when will the project be completed? Mr Greco stated the USACE expects completion in 6-8 months.

Chairman Murray . When will construction begin? Mr Greco stated construction is expected to begin in 1 month (August).

Chairman Murray noted that the school is planning to re-pave the parking lot. If construction isn't finished by that date, the only access to the school will be off the side street. Mr Greco indicated USACE will coordinate.

Chairman Murray . How much of the allocated \$ 20 million will be used for this project? Mr Greco guesstimated less than \$1 million.

Chairman Murray . Will demolition of 292 Greenbrook Road be part of the B3+ contracts? Mr Greco stated yes. It may be in the B3, B4 or Jefferson Bridge contracts.

Segment H . USACE received soil investigation studies from Middlesex County on April 28, 2015. Included were soil borings and contamination that were from the 80's. Mr Greco provided the information to USACE engineering department. USACE has a contractor (E4 Sciences) who will be taking geo technical borings within the next month (depending on receiving the rights of entrance).

Chairman Murray . Is this work being done on opposite sides of the landfill? Mr Greco stated it is southeast of the landfill. Only part of the work is in the landfill. USACE is waiting for the boring locations before Ms Daley can make up rights-of-entry for the contractor's access to the area.

Mr Greco indicated that USACE envisions building B3 to be followed by B2. Once B2 is completed, it will provide a 40 year event protection. They hope to award B2 in FY16. USACE anticipates B4 to be awarded in FY16 but real estate issues could result in awarding in FY17. While constructing B2, the next design contract will be the raising of the South Lincoln Ave bridge (by Segment H). USACE anticipates that work could begin while working on B2 & B4. If the design work is started in FY16, they could start construction in FY17.

Segment C . USACE is considering designing the bridge in-house and having an outside A/E contractor design the levee. Once the bridge is designed, construction can begin in FY17-FY18 and continue to work their way toward the Green Brook. As they get closer, they will begin Segment H construction and eventually to B3 to be able to close off B3 & B4. Funding will be a large factor in the timing of completion of these areas.

Landfill cleanup . Mr Greco noted that USACE is only responsible for cleaning up the radiological portion of the landfill. A USAEPA contractor (independent of USACE) will be cleaning up the remaining contaminants. Mayor Dobies (Middlesex Boro) advised Mr Greco

that the cleanup is expected to be completed by 2019. Cleanup work will not impact work being done on the opposite bank.

Chairman Murray . Is USACE doing soil borings for Segment C when doing Segment H? Mr Greco stated that they are only doing Segment H. Segment C will need a contract issued. He is unsure if USACE engineering is going to modify E4 Sciences contract to include Segment C. The delineation of wetlands is part of the E4 Sciences contract that will determine the impacts on Segment C.

Chairman Murray noted that once the alignment is in place, MCI or USACE will need to investigate whether the MCI line will be in the way of Segment B3 or B4. Mr Greco stated that Jacobs Engineering is currently doing that investigation.

### **Upper Basin**

USACE received a letter from NJDEP on April 6, 2015 regarding their support in moving toward a re-evaluation report. On April 10, 2015, a letter was received from USACE headquarters directing the district to proceed with a GRR. With a GRR, USACE has more flexibility in the upper basin. A GRR is treated as a GI study which limits a maximum of 3 years duration & a maximum of \$3 million in expenditures. It has to be cost shared 50/50 with NJDEP.

Mr Bassman . Is the cost share pushed by NJDEP down to the counties as well? Mr Greco indicated that it is up to NJDEP for that decision.

Mr Skupien noted the process of the upper basin started as an LRR instead of a GRR. The main reason for an LRR would be not affecting authorization of the project or re-authorization by Congress. There would only be authorization at the District/Division level. Mr Greco added that no further authorization is needed by USACE.

Chairman Murray stated there has to be a positive cost benefit ratio. In meeting with Mr Greco, Winning Strategies & Dr Hudson, it is thought that \$20 million was spent on Sebrings Mill Bridge with very little benefit. Everything is incremental from that point on and anything else done after will have a much higher benefit when completed & protected.

Mr Skupien added that in looking back at the economics of the 1997 GRR, it is believed that the upper basin has the best B/C ratio of all three (3) areas (upper & lower basin, Stony Brook).

Mr Bassman noted that Union County has a budget for work on the Rahway River project.

Mr Skupien questioned if the USACE is starting the Passaic again? Mr Greco stated yes. He added that the Passaic Valley Flood Control Board would like to visit the Bound Brook project. He noted the USACE's vision is a series of levees and floodwalls for the Peckman River that would be similar to Middlesex Boro. PVFC would also like to see the issues & concerns of the Segment B+ projects. The visit is tentatively scheduled for May 21, 2015.

Mr Skupien added that with the LRR becoming a GRR there is a bigger scope and more flexibility. GBFCC needs to address the anticipated problems/objections earlier than later.

Mr Greco noted that he was questioned by USACE headquarters if there was any input from upper basin local residents. Mr Greco advised no as this is the reason for the GRR.

Mr Skupien stated that the USACE studies do have a no detention plan. It was not approved. The reason it would have cost so much is due to the number of bridges along the Green Brook

that would require bridge replacement & channel widening. The basin plan was cost effective because there was minimal bridge replacement.

Mr McArdle . Is there a difference in the public hearing process under an LRR as opposed to a GRR? Mr Greco stated there is no need for an additional public hearing process.

Mr Skupien noted the appropriation in the agreement with the State states there are contingencies for costs escalating with inflation. In the agreement it allows for adjustment over time based on a detention plan. Will USACE be limited to that agreed number? If a more expensive plan is approved & is over the agreement number, what happens then? Mr Greco noted that this is a cost cap calculation that will require them to get accurate costs by re-design to post Katrina standards. Mr Greco will provide an answer at another meeting.

Mr Bassman noted there are several new municipal managers in his town and he has provided them with the goals/vision of the GBFCC. Chairman Murray added that Union County, Berkeley Heights & Plainfield need to be involved in the GRR process. Chairman Murray will have a discussion with members.

Mr Bassman stated that properties are not available as they were in the 90s. Chairman Murray added the GRR is to determine what portion of Connell is still feasible or to look at the gorge & the Reservation for other alternatives.

Mr McArdle noted the upper basin study also included a good portion of Middlesex County (by crossover into Cedar Brook) and also involves Union & Somerset Counties.

#### QUESTIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None.

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Richard Jacobus (Green Brook) . If Green Brook is 4- 4 ½ miles long, how much will be bermed for floodwalls in 15 years? Chairman Murray stated there are a series of levees starting at the Regional Center (Sebrings-Plainfield) and turn to floodwalls & pump station at the Trust House in the bend. They continue down Warrentville Road & tie into the bridge. On the other side of Warrentville Road, the levees tie in and head up toward the Brook & English Street area and tie into higher ground. It continues further down with levees past Town Hall with a pump station and across Washington Ave to the edge of town.

Mr Jacobus questioned two (2) residences on the south side of Jefferson Ave (bordering Dunellen, Green Brook, Plainfield) that are in very close proximity to the brook. Chairman Murray stated that area is scheduled to have floodwalls. There will be no buyouts.

Chairman Murray & Mr Jacobus discussed various other properties that may be impacted due to future projects.

#### QUESTIONS FROM SOMERSET COUNTY

None.

## QUESTIONS FROM MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Mr Ververides reported they had a first meeting with consultants regarding the levees & pump station. A second meeting is scheduled. Deadline is July 1, 2015 to turn it over to the County. They may need to request assistance from Middlesex to mow the grass in the interim.

## WINNING STRATEGIES

Mr Zucker reported the following:

There was a productive trip along with Chairman Murray & Bill Crosby meeting with members of Senators Menendez & Booker & Congressman Lance. They were able to meet with newly elected Congresswoman Watson-Coleman's staff to orient them of our issues. A possible site tour for Congresswoman Watson-Coleman may take place over Memorial weekend.

In addition to the budget, USACE's work plan is allocating \$7.5 million for the project. The House of Representatives has begun the appropriation process. The first of two (2) bills that advanced is the Energy/Water legislation for FY16. Last year's House & Senate bills and reports that accompany them did not specify a dollar amount. They had to get to the end of the year before a sense of the overall dollar amount was sufficient. This year's House of Representative approach is different. Two weeks ago, the Energy/Water subcommittee marked up the appropriation of \$7.5 million. Last week the full House of Representatives passed the bill and forwarded to the Senate.

## NJ DEP

No report.

## GBFCC ENGINEER

No report.

Chairman Murray thanked North Plainfield Senior Citizens Center for the use of their facility and their continued support of the GBFCC.

Listed are the GBFCC meeting dates:

**2015**

**July 1 – Green Brook Municipal Bldg**

**August 1 – American Legion Gazebo (behind Middlesex Library)**

**September 2 – Middlesex County Planning**

**November 4 - Plainfield**

A motion was made and approved to adjourn.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:48 PM