

**GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

LOCATION: North Plainfield Community Center  
North Plainfield NJ

DATE: April 6, 2016

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:

John Sweeney-Middlesex Boro	Ted Bassman . Scotch Plains
Bill Crosby . North Plainfield	Paul Woska . Middlesex Boro
Frank McArdle . North Plainfield	Paul Leso . Union County Engineering
Richard O'Connor-Engineer, GBFCC	Stephen Black . Watchung
Robert Greco - USACE	George Ververides-Middlesex Cty Planning
Rob Zucker . Winning Strategies	Diane Toliver-Plainfield City Council

CORRESPONDENCE

In Chairman Murray's absence, no correspondence was reported. The GBFCC maintains a correspondence file that is available for inspection as may be necessary and upon request.

MINUTES

The minutes of the 2/3/16 meeting were approved. A copy of the approved minutes is available on the GBFCC website.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr Crosby provided the monthly report and bills for April. Bills for the months of April were approved for payment. Treasurer's report and budget is available on-line and are also available for inspection upon request.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Mr Greco reported the following:

**Middlesex**

On March 31, 2016 the USACE received \$7.5 million for construction funding of Segments B2 & B3. Due to the carryover of funds (real estate delay) from 2015, the USACE has a total of \$16 million for construction purposes. USACE is also receiving a token amount of funds for the upper basin GRR. The initial allocation for FY16 was \$200 thousand but a cost sharing feasibility agreement with NJDEP must be provided. USACE headquarters questioned how much of the \$200 thousand funding will be expended in 2016. Mr Greco stated that it will take

\$25 thousand of Federal funds and a matching \$25 thousand in non-Federal funds to initiate the GRR. The balance will come in FY17.

## **BoundBrook**

The levee, floodwall and pump station have been completed.

A draft LOMR was issued by FEMA on March 18, 2016. FEMA initiated the first newspaper publication on April 1, 2016 notifying residents of the LOMR (Letter of Map Revision) being issued. A second publication is being issued on April 8, 2016. Mayor Fazen (Bound Brook) requested to hold a public meeting in the May-July timeframe with FEMA, NJDEP, GBFCC and Congressional staff. They will be soliciting comments/questions from the public on the revised maps. The LOMR will be effective July 18, 2016. At that time, residents will be able to apply to FEMA for reduction in their flood insurance.

Closeout . A turnover letter signed by USACE's Colonel of the NY District is to be sent to NJDEP for official turnover of the project. Properties that were acquired by USACE are being reviewed by USACE Baltimore Counsel before being transferred (quit claim deeds) to the title company for settlement. USACE expects a July-August timeframe for turnover to NJDEP. A ribbon cutting ceremony needs to be scheduled and USACE will be coordinating with Mayor Fazen, NJDEP & NJ Press Office for a July-August date.

## **Middlesex Boro**

Segment B1 . Project is 100 % complete.

Segment B2 (floodwall) . 29 Starlit Drive (Munoz property) . There are a series of steps that need to be completed before USACE can have the right of entry to the property and then be able to award a construction contract. Several Federal and State agencies must review before the USACE can proceed. USACE anticipates awarding a contract before September 30,2016.

Segment B3 & B4 . USACE has obtained all of the properties and started the pre-advertising process on March 14, 2016. Plans & specs are expected to be issued online around April 11, 2016. Currently, award is scheduled for June 2016. NJDEP has recently advised USACE that a TWA (treatment works approval) will be required for the sewer line removal if the flows are greater than 8000 gallons per day. Mr Crosby added that he will provide information on the sewer usage to USACE. Mr Greco added that USACE is advertising as they wait for the TWA approval from NJDEP. A 30-day approval timeframe is anticipated.

Mr O'Connor stated that it is often easier & faster to apply for a TWA permit than to prove one is not needed. NJDEP states that when there are revisions or a multiple building situation, they require a permit. For very minor permits, a pre-application meeting can be scheduled with John Maselli to eliminate the 45-day day completeness review period. Mr Greco asked Mr O'Connor if he can provide the forms and a point of contact to him.

Jefferson Ave Bridge (razing) . Project is essentially complete with only minor punchlist items that are to be completed by mid-April. Mr Crosby noted that there is no outlet+sign at Green Brook Road. Mr McArdle questioned if the emergency road has been completed. Mr Greco stated that it is all grassed over but can still accommodate heavy emergency equipment.

Segment H . There is still one (1) property that hasn't been purchased by USACE. The owners have not been able to purchase a new home and has caused for the delay in the demolition process. USACE will be advising the owners of 3 months to vacate.

Question . Are there any underground storage tanks in the garage associated with the home? Mr Greco indicated that it is unknown but it will not hold up the demolition of the homes.

Segment C1 (levee/partial floodwall) . To expedite the project, USACE will be issuing a contract to E4 Sciences in April 2016 for surveys (30 scale), borings (geo technical & HTRW), and wetlands delineations. Once these items are in place, USACE can then start the plans/specs for C1 and all of C (up to the Green Brook). USACE's Baltimore real estate can then identify the properties needed prior to award of the construction contract. USACE estimates they will need \$20 million per fiscal year for the plans/specs. Modifications may be needed if they don't receive the annual funding as estimated. A separate contract for C2 (up to the Green Brook) is expected to be awarded in 2-3 months. As construction work begins on one side (Segment C), they will also be doing Segment H due to possible induced flooding issues. They will continue with Segment B3 and eventually Segment B4. USACE expects to start real estate actions in the near future because of the numerous properties that are very near to the stream.

USACE will be issuing flood proofing contract for the non-structural work in Piscataway, Green Brook, and Bridgewater. When design task order is completed, USACE will meet with the residents to discuss what can be done.

Mr Bassman questioned if there were any issues with hydrology and what the flood levels would be. Mr Greco stated there is issue along the Green Brook but it will all come together with the upper basin GRR.

## **Upper Basin**

Mr Greco stated the USACE held a meeting with NJDEP on March 10, 2016 to discuss the project management plan (PMP). USACE has \$5 million for the PMP. He noted that he will provide the alternative plans to GBFCC at the next PCT meeting. There are six (6) alternatives of which one (1) may be eliminated due to budgetary concerns. NJDEP & Director Moyle have suggested cutting tasks to maintain a budget within \$3 million. An internal meeting is scheduled next week to discuss cutting tasks. Mr Greco listed the alternative plans as:

- 1) Recommended plan from 1997 GRR . includes channel modifications & detention basin at Skytop
- 2) New Providence gorge detention basin (location 1 from January 2001 screening report) with channel modifications & detention basin
- 3) New Providence gorge detention basin (location 2 from January 2001 screening report) with channel modifications & detention basin
- 4) TBD
- 5) 10 & 25-year non-structural plan (any structure in Plainfield within flood plain)
- 6) Current lower basin plan (no upper basin plan, no Skytop or channelization in Plainfield) . will only include channel modification for Stony Brook & whatever is included in the lower basin (assuming nothing is built in the upper basin)

## **WINNING STRATEGIES**

Mr Zucker reported the following:

Since the last GBFCC meeting, the President's budget was released. In January, Winning Strategies worked with the offices of Senators Booker & Menendez to see what the USACE could accomplish. A letter from each of them was sent to the Office of Management & Budget in support of \$ 20 million for construction and an additional \$500 thousand for the GRR.

The budget was released on February 9, 2016 that included \$10 million for construction which is a \$2.5 million increase versus what was appropriated and included in the work plan of the FY16 budget process. It is less than the \$20 million that was hoped for. There is \$800 million less for construction projects in FY17 than what was appropriated in the FY16 budget nationally. There was no funding proposed for GRR in FY17. Winning Strategies worked closely with Congress

to comply with FY17 appropriation deadlines and supplied information to make the best of both worlds. Due to the ban on earmarks, it is difficult to get something into the core budget that wasn't requested thru the budget. Winning Strategies advised Congressmen Lance and Watson-Coleman of the budget number and that there was no funding for the GRR. It will be very unexpected to get funding for the GRR when it wasn't included in the FY17 work plan because Congress would consider a new appropriation as an earmark which is not permissible with the guidelines that are set up.

When Winning Strategies communicated with Capitol Hill, at least \$10 million was requested as per the work plan. As other projects around the nation are considered, Green Brook would like to be included.

On March 10, 2016 Chairman Murray, Mr Crosby & Mr Zucker conducted five (5) meetings with the staff of Senators Menendez and Booker and Congressman Frelinghuysen. They also met with Congressman Lance's staff and the legislative director for Congresswoman Watson-Coleman. All meetings were considered very productive and well received. This budget year is not expected to be as tumultuous as last year because of the deal that was reached last October provided additional funds to be used in FY16 & FY17. The House of Representatives has not passed a budget resolution at this point in time.

Resident . spoke of a conversation with the Mayor regarding the ponding that has impacted the residents of Starlit Drive. They were advised that the float level of the pump would need to be checked. Mr Greco will address the concern with Carl Andreas at the PCT meeting on April 14, 2016.

Vice Chairman Sweeney . questioned if the maintenance portion has been worked out with Somerset County. Mr Greco stated that Somerset County is now responsible for operations. Mr Ververides added that Middlesex completed their contract with Somerset County and Somerset now maintains the levees.

Mr Black . Mr Greco, you suggested six (6) alternate plans. The 6<sup>th</sup> plan was disregarding above the first five (5) in that sector (upper basin). If it ever occurred, with the 6<sup>th</sup> plan can you stand on that and what does it entail? Mr Greco indicated this includes all of the levee systems & floodwall around C,H,B,D segments that are identified in the GRR in the lower basin and the Stony Brook channelization. USACE is assuming nothing is being built in the area. Bound Brook is an independent design that is controlled by the Raritan. USACE's hydrology group has advised that Segment B1, B3 & C1 areas aren't affected by the upper basin but as they get closer to the Green Brook the design will be affected by what is built and not built in the upper basin. Depending on how quickly the upper basin is finished, they may have to modify plans & specs as they get close to the Green Brook.

Mr McArdle . Stony Brook is independent of everything but has an impact on everything below the confluence of the Green Brook and Stony Brook at Green Brook Park (Clinton Ave). Anything west of that will be impacted by whatever USACE does on Stony Brook. When Stony Brook floods, water eventually flows back into the Stony Brook at a delayed pace because it runs thru the center of North Plainfield. It then flows around the back to Stony Brook and into the Green Brook. The big difference is the blue and green coming off Route 22 going thru the east end of Plainfield and Scotch Plains and goes into South Plainfield. It comes back around thru South Plainfield, Piscataway and into the south side of Middlesex Boro.

Question . Wouldn't it be more conducive to complete the project up into the South Plainfield sector and forego Plan 6 as part of the consideration of the upper basin and seriously consider the other five (5) plans to alleviate the confluence coming down and going out to South Plainfield? Mr McArdle stated that it won't do anything for your Boro at Route 22, Scotch Plains or Plainfield.

Question . Would it help by having the upper basin in place with the detention/retention as proposed? Mr McArdle stated that it would get both of the detention basins as originally designed on the Connell property. The only alternative is the channelization of Green Brook as it comes from both of those sites and a structure of some type (probably) on the Weldon property of the north wall which was envisioned as an alternative to the detention basin on the north end of the Weldon property (New Providence & Bonnie Burn). North of that area there was a design that Weldon was agreeable to the development of a detention basin on that site. Giving the Weldon owners advance notice and the cost associated, they could work that part of the quarry as opposed to another part and provide for detention. It would still need channelization from that point thru Route 22 and into the east end of Plainfield (Campbell Field).

Mr McArdle . why are you re-studying Stony Brook as part of a revised GRR - it was always a stand alone? Mr Bassman added there are three (3) sections . upper basin, Stony Brook and everything else. Mr Greco stated that Stony Brook is part of all of these plans. Mr McArdle noted there is no need to re-study Stony Brook as part of the revised GRR for the upper basin.

Question . By the suggestion of not to re-study Stony Brook, where does that put the GRR geographically? Mr McArdle stated there is no need to re-study Best Lake all the way to the confluence of Green Brook and Stony Brook. Mr Greco will speak to USACE's hydrology group because the hydraulics are being revised from the 1997 GRR. Mr Bassman added that coming out of the gorge in the upper basin, the pitch is lost and becomes flat and cannot fit a channel there.

Mr McArdle stated that the level of protection for levees and floodwalls that were proposed on the Green Brook (east end of Plainfield) were not up to 100-year protection. It was only at 25-year level of protection. The more water that is kept within the gorge impacts on everything that happens below to the border of Bound Brook.

Mr Black noted that the last time this occurred, the Freeholders of Union County were vehement about the gorge and not allowing them in that section. Mr McArdle stated they kowtowed to the clamor coming out of Berkley Heights and Connell. They walked away from it and looked at your plan and timetable and felt they didn't have to worry about it at this point.

Question . Since the Torricelli legislation has lifted the ban on dams is there no promise for us? Mr McArdle stated that given the politics, it would be very difficult to accomplish. From an engineering standpoint, there should be no problem. Mr Greco noted there is enough room to put in the detention basin but it impacts their entrances of the Connell property.

Vice Chairman Sweeney asked that Mr Greco take under advisement of the GBFCC members to build your plans around these suggestions? Mr Greco stated that once USACE can get the costs down, it will then be brought to the GBFCC. No studies will be initiated until all parties are in agreement.

Mr Bassman noted that a large berm area at Skytop Drive that was proposed in the GRR could be scaled back.

Mr Crosby complimented Winning Strategies for the efforts to re-schedule the Washington DC meetings due to their commuting traffic.

Mr Greco stated that he has been contacted by the offices of Senators Booker & Menendez and Congresswoman Watson-Coleman for an explanation and was able to provide a link to USACE's report.

Mr Crosby noted that Manville residents are now aware that when the Raritan is flooding, the water is not going upstream from Bound Brook to Manville. Mr Greco added that the BC ratios are 0.5 and below. Homes have been removed and Manville now has a Sandy program that the Governor has allocated funding to. The State has purchased 104 homes of which 36 have been demolished already. Mr McArdle noted that it has a detrimental and devastating effect on the residents tax rate. It is beneficial to the affected residents but is an impact on the tax base. Mr Greco has been advised by NJ OEM (Office of Emergency Management) that there are two (2) more buyout programs coming out in Somerset County. The bulk of the buyouts are in Manville.

REPORT FROM COUNTIES

None.

QUESTIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None.

GBFCC ENGINEER

None.

NJ DEP

No report.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

Vice Chairman thanked North Plainfield Community Center for the use of their facility and their continued support of the GBFCC.

Listed are the GBFCC meeting dates:

**2016**

**June 1 – Middlesex Boro Library**

**August 6 - American Legion Pavillion (behind Middlesex Library)**

**October 5 –Scotch Plains (TBD)**

**December 7 – Plainfield Library**

A motion was made and approved to adjourn.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:08 PM