

**GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

LOCATION: Green Brook

DATE: February 1, 2017

MEETING CONVENED: 7:30PM

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard O'Connor - Engineer, GBFCC
Robert Greco - USACE
John J. Sweeney . Middlesex Boro
Frank McArdle . North Plainfield
Paul Leso . Union County
Theodore Bassman . Scotch Plains
Raymond S Murray . GBFCC Chairman
Bill Crosby . North Plainfield
Alice Tempel . South Plainfield

Carl Andreasson . Somerset County
Ilona Brodetsky . Middlesex resident
Louis Rossi . Middlesex resident
Kevin Boswell . Engineering student
Lou Piffer . Middlesex resident
Linda Piffer . Middlesex resident
George Ververides -Middlesex Cty Planning
Stephen Black -- Watchung

MINUTES

The minutes from the Dec. 7, 2016 meeting were approved. A copy of the approved minutes is available on the GBFCC website.

CORRESPONDENCE

Received notification from Bridgewater Township of their appointments for current year:
Tom Forsythe, regular member
Councilman Matt Moench, alternate member
Councilman, Filipe Pedroso, alternate member

The GBFCC maintains a correspondence file that is available for inspection as may be necessary and upon request.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Crosby distributed copies of the treasurer's report for year ending 2016. He reported that the bills for beginning of 2017 have been reviewed by the Finance Committee. The regular three bills for Grotto Engineering, Winning Strategies and our secretary, Tina Totten, plus dues for NJ Alliance for Action are found to be in order. Motion was made for bills to be paid. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report and budget is available on-line and available for inspection upon request.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Mr. Greco, Project Manager, reported the following:

Budget . We received \$10 million in Federal funds on January 29, 2017. That is the balance of funds for fiscal year 2017.

Bound Brook – Meeting on January 23 with Mayor Fazen, and a couple members of the Town council. We need to turn that part of project over to NJ DEP. There are seven or eight properties

at the NJ Attorney General's office which are being reviewed. Once approved, the properties will be released to the NJ DEP. Only issue is on one property, next to Meridia apartment complex. The contractor needs some minor fixes (remove gravel and seed) and then can turn over.

Middlesex:

Segment B3 – Awarded contract on Oct. 14, 2016 to CMS Construction. Notice to proceed was given on Jan. 26, 2017. Contractor can initiate construction. Contractor has contacted the Borough of Middlesex and they should start staging their equipment. We will start seeing activity.

Segment B2 . Along Starlet Drive, a 500-foot floodwall. About to award this contract. Bid Opening is Feb. 3, 2017. Award date scheduled for Feb. 14, 2017.

Two contractors starting at roughly the same time so we will start seeing action in Middlesex Borough. To continue moving this project forward, we need additional project mitigation sites. We have Finderne Farms in Bridgewater but it is almost all used up in terms of mitigation credits.

Segments B & C – Purchased two acres from mitigation bank about a year ago, but we still need additional mitigation acreage to build the rest of Segment C. Looking at property in Hunterdon County in the Raritan Water Shed. In discussions with property owners in Hunterdon County for about 150 acres. Have an appraisal report being reviewed by NJ DEP so as soon as they complete the review of appraisal report we can move towards acquiring that site. Also, coordinating with LURP regarding the number of mitigation credits they will provide to us for that property.

Currently taking borings along the C1 alignment, which is by South Lincoln Ave down by the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line. Have a rig back there in the wooded area taking borings. In late August 2017, we have another contract that we are going to award for Segment C-1, Contract 1 (pump station).

Tomorrow night, Feb. 2, at 7:00 pm in the Middlesex Borough Hall there will be a public meeting of property owners in Middlesex regarding alignment of C-H-B-D. Will use a large map to show residents what is planned. We need rights-of-entry along that C alignment to continue with plans and specs for the levee. Need to know soil characteristics. Also, must take wetlands delineation surveys. Going to request rights-of-entry from the property owners so we can access their property to take these samples and take surveys. Once we receive data from the surveys and geo-technical borings, we can move forward with design. Looking for an aggressive schedule for design and construction because the people in that area of Middlesex Borough are impacted by flooding. They are quite anxious about the process moving forward.

FY18 will see nearly \$40 million of contracts awarded for:

- Segment C-1, Contract 1 . Pump Station
- Segment C-1, Contract 2 . Levee/Floodwall back by the Raritan Valley Line
- Segment C-1, Contract 3 -- Pipe crossings . four 10-foot diameter culverts
- Segment C2 -- on both sides of South Lincoln Ave about 800 . 1000 linear feet
- Segment H . about 1000 linear feet

In order to keep to this aggressive schedule, the right-of-entry from property owners is critical. The meeting tomorrow is important to make property owners realize how crucial their cooperation is. Without it, things will really be slowed down.

Demolition Contracts .

- 292 Greenbrook Road, Green Brook . in the way of the levee (segment C).

- 225 South Lincoln Ave, Middlesex
- 1204 Bound Brook Road, Middlesex . adjacent to segment B3- right by Borough Hall & the American Legion

Non-Structural Flood Proofing of Structures in Piscataway & Bridgewater – Just above Bound Brook. Along South Ave there are several structures that need to be elevated or need ring walls to protect from flooding.

Upper Basin . Will initiate a study near Watchung Mountains to determine if the retention basins are currently feasible. Need to decide if they can remain in place or need to be eliminated. Currently putting together a Project Management Plan which consists of a schedule and cost estimates.

Questions/Comments:

Mr. Murray asked for confirmation that the non-structurals are in design phase now and for timing on the progress. Mr. Greco said it hard to estimate, but since those are not inducing flooding on the property owners it is not a concern for moving forward.

Mr. Murray also asked for clarification on timing of the demolition contracts. Mr. Greco said he hopes to award by March 2017.

Mr. Murray asked about the minor oil contamination issue at the Bound Brook Rd property. Mr. Greco explained that plan is to purchase and clean it up. Believes this is the quickest way to resolve.

Dr. Alice Tempel asked about the nature of the mitigation sites and clarification on the mitigation credits.

Mr. Greco explains that it is farmland, with some wooded area, and does have a structure, but no one lives there. He has been told that some of that area will be very good for wetlands. We are still researching, but we are looking at wetlands credits, preservation credits and forested upland credits. We must meet with LURP to negotiate the mitigation credits. After NJ DEP reviews the appraisal put together by USACE, we will begin before moving forward.

Mr. Greco also stated that we are trying to find clean sites. In Middlesex County, we are finding there is a lot of contamination, which the NJ DEP must clean up and that presents a problem for us. Our preference is clean sites.

It would behoove NJ DEP to work with us, in terms of mitigation credits because it is contiguous to a site they already own. Also, there is additional Green Acres property nearby.

Lou Rossi, a Middlesex resident, asked about the completion time frame for Segment B-2.

Mr. Greco explained that bids will open Feb. 3. Contract will be awarded to the lowest bidder. Contract award is anticipated by Feb. 14. The contractor will be given 18 months from the notice to proceed date (not from the award date). That would put completion towards end of 2018. It is a lump sum contract so it behooves the contractor to move faster.

Mr. McArdle asked to go back to the mitigation topic. Did I understand you to say that the site you are looking at in Hunterdon County is Green Acres property? Mr. Greco clarified that it is not Green Acres, it is a private site. The area surrounding the property is Green Acres.

Mr. McArdle questioned if looking at a site in Bedminster? Mr. Greco explained there is one very small site, only seven acres, but he took a preliminary look and determined it wasn't feasible. The Hunterdon County site is a beautiful piece of property and would be quite feasible.

Mr. McArdle brought about the apartment complex in Bound Brook and asked if it is the same one that had the problem with the boiler system last time? Mr. Murray clarified that it is the one on the other side, by the tracks.

Mr. McArdle also asked who is taking the lead on getting it cleaned up? Mr. Greco responded that he met with Mayor Fazen. There will be an inspection team sent there. Will inspect other Corp built projects in the area as well. The team will put together a list of fixes that are needed, ie. remove gravel, seed, clean drainage pipe, etc. Then Mayor Fazen will contact Meridia to rectify it. In addition, Mayor Fazen requested that we also look at bocce courts to see if there is any issue. Point is emphasized that our levees are not built for recreation. There are signs up for no trespassing. Other instances throughout the country when the USACE has installed levees, they put up benches, lights, and walkways. These are not designed that way.

Again, Mr. Greco stresses the importance of the cooperation from the property owners in Middlesex Borough. In order to aggressively accelerate the schedule, need access to their property. Design work cannot begin until properties are accessed and borings taken. In comparison, it took 15 years in Bound Brook and that is much smaller in the extent of levee system compared to Middlesex.

FEMA Flood Plan Certification for the levees in Bound Brook has helped with lower insurance rates. Granted they have been waiting for 15 years, but they are quite happy to see the rates drop. FEMA recommends you still hold flood insurance even though you are behind the levee, but the rates are greatly reduced.

REPORT FROM COUNTIES

Middlesex County

Mr. Ververides is pleased to hear progress being made.

Union County

None.

Somerset County

None.

GBFCC ENGINEER

None.

WINNING STRATEGIES

Mr. Zucker was unable to attend but sent a memo for Mr. Murray to share.

2017 \$10 million funding pending -- Mr. Greco says it was received . under the House & Senate versions of the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill.

Congress is under a Continuing Resolution bill through April 28, 2017. Working in interim to ensure the full amount of funding is included in what's likely the final 2017 spending bill.

Believe some program level funding from that package may be cut as Republicans in the House and Senate secure savings for the current fiscal year at this stage. We now believe that the water projects are at risk.

Working with the Senators as well as Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman on a letter to the Army Corp to ask for \$30 million of funding for FY18.

President Trump is expected to release FY18 budget in April. Inclusion in budget at a robust funding level is important heading into the next year's appropriations budgeting cycle.

As mentioned, looking at awarding \$30 million in contracts in 2018 so if we can get \$30 million in federal funding then the non-federal sponsored match is 25%.

Presently in process of whittling down dates for the GBFCC to visit with our congressional delegation in DC. Looking at the first or second week in March. Hoping to time it when the Congressmen themselves are there. Even though more often than not the meetings will be with staff members, it is nice to have the opportunity to shake hands with the Congressmen and say hello, even if just while they are running in between meetings.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

The Chairman thanked Green Brook for their hospitality and reminded everyone of upcoming GBFCC meeting dates:

April 5 – North Plainfield
June 7 – Middlesex
Saturday, August 5, 9:30 am - Memorial Service – location TBD
October 4 – Scotch Plains
December 6 - Plainfield

One last reminder of the meeting tomorrow Feb. 2 in Middlesex Borough Hall Council Chambers at 7:00 pm intended for those that received letters regarding access to their parcels, but it is open to all.

A motion was made and approved to adjourn.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:25 PM