

**GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

LOCATION: Green Brook Municipal Building

DATE: February 7, 2018

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  
John J. Sweeney . Middlesex Boro  
Raymond S. Murray . GBFCC Chairman  
Mark Hardenburg . Piscataway  
Alice Tempel . South Plainfield  
Paul Woska . Middlesex  
Paul Leso . Union County

Louis Rossi . Middlesex Boro resident  
Frank McArdle . North Plainfield  
Theodore Bassman . Scotch Plains  
Robert Greco . USACE  
Bill Crosby . North Plainfield  
George Ververides-Middlesex Cty Planning

MINUTES

The minutes from the Dec. 6, 2017 meeting were approved. A copy of the approved minutes is available on the GBFCC website.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Finance Committee reviewed the typical three bills to consulting engineer Grotto Engineering, our secretary Tina Totten and our public relations firm Winning Strategies (clarifying this payment is for Dec. & Jan.; not Nov. & Dec.). Motion was made for bills to be paid. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

Little to report, other than some internal emails between the Corps and various partners. Mr. Murray will reply to a potential resident asking about a property in Green Brook Township with regard to being in the floodway and flood insurance.

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

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Robert Greco, Project Manager.

***Cost Change Control Board (CCCB):***

Mr. Greco and team will attend each of these meetings explaining reasons for cost increase to the project. As mentioned previously, we will break the authorized cap on the project sometime in 2045. They have prepared a slide-show presentation, which will be distributed to the commission as well.

February 13, 2018 - to brief Col. Asbery.

February 22, 2018 - to brief Commander at North Atlantic Division

March 1, 2018 - an on-board review meeting with working level staff at HQUSAE  
in Washington D.C.

March 15, 2018 - CCCB briefing also in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Murray clarifies that although exceeding the cap of \$1 billion, we are only exceeding by a very small margin of \$50 million.

Several scenarios will be discussed and presented. They will be asking about ways to stay under the cap. With regard to the Upper Basin, there are several possibilities which may bring us under the cap. Also, accelerating the project will help to bring overall costs under the cap. Other risks that have affected us in past such as real estate, easements, permits, and the annual budget amount will also be discussed. Looking for the larger amounts in the upcoming years, but we need to show progress on our project or else we will lose the annual funding and it will be allocated to other projects nationwide if we are taking too long.

President Trump's budget is due to be released next week; then we will know how much we are getting for the next fiscal year.

***Construction status:***

Segment B2 - Floodwall

- Floodwall sections are completed.
- Substantial completion is expected May 31, 2018
- Levee notch to be filled by segment B.
- Boat ramp being put in for Somerset County down by Green Brook.

Segment B3 -Floodwall, pump station, temp levee tie off

- Auto body shop demolished and the home on Greenbrook Road also demolished.

Segment B4 . Floodwall alignment

- 56 Dayton Ave - purchased by USACE Baltimore Real Estate a few months ago. Waiting on asbestos/lead inspections before they can be demolished.
- After May, there will be a lull of six to seven months when we don't see construction equipment in Middlesex Borough.

Segment C-1, Contract 1 (Pump Station & Levee)

- Putting in brand new culverts to allow more water to flow through. Four 12-foot diameter steel pipe culverts. Construction to be coordinated with NJ Transit.
- Goal is to have the real estate plan sheets available no later by Feb. 9, 2018. Will identify the temporary and permanent construction easements that we need on people's properties for C-1, Contract 1.
- Our real estate folks will get appraisals for the impacted properties by May 2018.
- Should be ready to advertise by July 31, 2018.
- Assuming we get LURP permits by Sept. 21, 2018; Should have award by Sept. 28, 2018. Questions from construction contractors might push this into October.

Question: How far does that portion of C-1 go? All the way to South Lincoln?

Mr. Greco: C-1 does not go to South Lincoln; it is now much smaller. Mr. Greco showed various segments on a map, also indicating water flows and various work stages for each segment.

Segment C-1, Contract 2 (Floodwall)

- In house design.
- Our engineering division is putting together the Real Estate Plan sheets no later than Feb. 23, 2018.

- Once appraisals complete we will contact property owners (maybe 10-12 impacted properties)
- Going out for advertisement on Aug. 17, 2018
- Bid Opening on Sept. 17, 2018
- Award on Sept. 28, 2018.

Potential hold ups could be real estate issues and again, questions from construction contractors.

#### Segment C-1, Contract 3 (Culverts)

This will be combined under one construction contract with the levee and the pump station because it is so compact in that area. The culvert contractor will need the pump station area as a lay-down area, to be able to move pipe and equipment.

Question: How far along is design of Segment C-1, Contract 1?

Mr. Greco: 30% draft design submittal Feb. 9, 2018 for C-1, contract 1.  
 30% draft design submittal March 30, 2018 for C-1, contract 2.  
 30% draft design submittal March 26, 2018 for C-1, contract 3.

Question: For the culverts under railroad, are they using pre-cast box sections?

Mr. Greco: No. It will be four 12-foot diameter steel pipes. Not using concrete box due to weight issues. After meeting with NJ Transit, this was the decision for several reasons.

Contract 3 will be combined with Contract 1 with an award of Sept. 28, 2018.

This is a hectic schedule with a lot going on at one time. Any little hiccup could move us to the right.

Question: Are the culverts going to be designed in such a way that we have security and young people cannot get into the pipes?

Mr. Greco: Yes. I have not seen the design yet, but typically they put bar screens in front of the culverts.

Question: Who will maintain these culverts?

Mr. Greco: Middlesex County will be responsible to maintain. Middlesex County can decide to sub to Somerset County. Mr. Murray assures that they will assist if needed.

#### Segment C-2 and Segment H -- SUR JV/Jacobs Engineering

- They are ahead of everyone else with 35% plans today.
- Real Estate plan sheets by April 11, 2018.
- There are several properties in this section that are a full take+meaning the entire property must be turned over to the Corps. Real Estate is already taking some of these.
- Assuming no real estate issues, going out for advertisement Nov. 2, 2018.
- Award for this contract Dec. 18, 2018.
- Hoping to push the real estate along so we can keep to this schedule. The people in this area are very anxious about project getting done as quickly as possible. Mr. Greco has spoken to several of them.

### Segment C-3 and Segment C-4, Princeton Hydro/HDR

- This is the area opposite the library & landfill.
- A-E contract awarded on September 22, 2017 to Princeton Hydro LLC.
- Estimating the Award to take place on Nov. 26, 2019.

### Flood Proofing (Non-Structural) in Piscataway Township and Bridgewater Twp.

Some homes need to be elevated. Also, several large commercial properties need a ring wall (floodwall) around the perimeter and that is very costly. Looking at cost effectiveness of a complete acquisition of the property and relocating the business versus putting in the expensive ringwall/floodwall. Construction in FY18; this might be delayed into FY19. Need to come up with very detailed appraisals and then as a group, need to figure out what is the most reliable solution for that area.

Mr. Murray clarifies that the big difference in these non-structural parcels versus the ones in Green Brook Township, is that these are not as a result of induced flooding.

Mr. Greco agrees. They are already in an area that floods. During the interview process, one commercial warehouse owner said he has been in same location for 30 years and never flooded. So, we'll just see how it all works out. Remember, non-structural flood proofing is voluntary.

March 8<sup>th</sup> is tentative date for a public meeting in Middlesex Borough with property owners along C-1, C-2 & H and commercial structures/properties in Piscataway Township to discuss the real estate appraisal process.

### Upper Basin

Various meetings with NAD & ourselves regarding Upper Basin. We were informed in December 2017, that we should proceed with the validation study for the Upper Basin area. Mr. Greco showed on a map the current area of focus.

We have a study, which is funded under current Construction General (CG) funds. Instructed by NAD to proceed with looking at these areas and updating the H & H models using the current storm events that we have to date. Besides updating the models, also have to update the fees based on the models, revise improvements on channel, and modify detention basin and then come up with new costs.

Before April, will be meeting with several folks about possibilities for area. If feedback is negative, then this whole study will be very short (less than a year), and the report will indicate that there were public objections to these detention basins. From there, we move forward with a General Re-Evaluation Report, which comes from a different set of funding (General Investigation Funds). Must put us in the appropriations funding stream to receive General Investigation Funds to look at Upper Basin and impacts.

This relates back to Cost Change Control board which I talked about earlier. One method is to accelerate construction. Another option may be for these detention basins to drop out of the plans and be replaced with a more cost-efficient plan.

The GRR is going to not only look at the Upper Basin, but the rest of the uncompleted project. So, we might have an opportunity to reduce the project overall costs, depending on what comes out of the GRR.

Question: Do you foresee anything proposed for Upper Basin that will impact what has already been constructed?

Mr. Greco: No. Worst case maybe B-1. There the engineers are telling me they are not sure. We are building this project as if there are no improvements; with the current flows coming down from the mountains right now. That is not the worst-case conditions. What they are looking at now, hydrologically, in designing C & D is investigating scenarios that give us the greatest flow downstream. I think Joe Skupien alluded to this previously, that we should go for the most conservative flow. Better to have a conservative design with a larger footprint, and larger levee, than have to come back and make it larger.

Mr. Bassman: Keep in mind, a lot of push back which we had twenty years ago, was because property was being developed and they were trying to keep options open. That area is pretty much built out now.

Mr. Murray: Some of what was built is exactly where that basin is going to be.

Mr. Greco: Right where we would be tying off the levee feature/burm, there is a beautiful park with a waterfall and chess board. I can understand that there will be an issue if we come in and disrupt that.

Mr. Crosby: Is it any different than taking down someone's home?

Mr. Greco agrees. It is not different.

Mr. Cosby: If you do nothing, on the detention basin, what you are factoring in is that the water flow that is currently crossing through the City of Plainfield and into the Cedar Brook, impacts South Plainfield and Piscataway at both Spring Lake and New Market pond. There is a longer time frame for that water to get into Bound Brook because of the circuitous route. If on the other hand, you do something to contain the flow within the Green Brook, so it doesn't cross through City of Plainfield, that obviously has to have some impact downstream on Green Brook and its confluence with Stony Brook, heading West & South. It mitigates the problem for South Plainfield at Piscataway, if you contain it within the City of Plainfield.

Mr. Greco agrees. We have to do something.

Mr. Crosby says he knows we must do something, but when. We have been waiting on long time on this.

Mr. Crosby also asked about Berkeley Heights being a participant in the discussion of whether there would be some objection where Skytop is located. Will Union County & Watchung be part of those discussions too?

Mr. Greco: Yes. All the municipalities will be included in the discussions.

Mr. Murray clarifies that if they are getting a lot of pushback, it could have implications for funding. We certainly need to be as inclusive as we can.

Mr. Greco, going back to time frame question, explains that the validation study will be starting next week on February 15, 2018. We have a time frame for two years on that part, provided no objections. Plan to meet with the public prior to the formal public release of draft report in February 2020. Final report to NAD in January 2021, assuming none of these features are revised, and we still have Oakway & Skytop basins.

If objection arise, it changes the funding process and a separate schedule will be developed.

Mr. Crosby: The common-sense approach is to insure there are no objections to this. Need to keep reminding all involved parties of the possibility of substantially increasing costs for everyone, all for the presumed objection of one community.

Presentation at West Point:

This project is garnering attention from various entities. We have had people from Little Falls, NJ, Passaic Valley Flood Control Commission, New York City, Hudson River group, and China. Now, we are getting interest from West Point. Received an email from a retired general asking the Corps to assist with a one-credit course for the Civil Engineering cadets. On Feb. 14, 2018 will be presenting the overview history of GBFCC project, some key facts and figures and a description of the flooding problems. The students will have to come up possible solutions qualitatively. The week following, on Feb. 21, will do conference call with students to answer questions. Then on Feb 23, will have a mock town hall meeting, with students representing all the different entities involved (ie. GBFCC, NJDEP, USACE, various counties and municipalities, residents, etc). We will be on hand to offer direction. The cadets just may come up with some interesting, worthwhile ideas!

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTIES

**Union County**

None.

**Somerset County**

None.

**Middlesex County**

None.

GBFCC ENGINEER

None.

QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC

None.

Mr. Murray asked the appropriate people to reach out to reserve upcoming venues.

A motion was made and approved to adjourn.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:45 PM

Upcoming 2018 GBFCC meeting dates:

**April 4 - Middlesex Library**

**June 6 – North Plainfield Community Center**