

**GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting

DATE: December 7, 2022

MEETING CONVENEED: 7:30 PM

Chairman Murray opened the meeting and took role call along with leading the Pledge of Allegiance. He recited compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Raymond Murray . GBFCC Chairman - GB  
Paul Woska . GBFCC Vice-Chair-Middlesex  
William Crosby . GBFCC Treasurer- NP  
Alek Peterson . USACE NY District  
Luis Santiago . USACE NY District  
Tom Slowinski . NJDEP  
Valerie Bogart . Somerset County  
Rich O'Connor . Engineer, GBFCC  
Rob Zucker . Winning Strategies  
Cole Sigmon . Dunellen

Jerry Searfoss . Green Brook  
Harry Allen . North Plainfield  
Bill Picard . Scotch Plains  
John Ferguson . South Plainfield  
Alice Temple . South Plainfield  
Jeff Varnerin . Berkeley Heights  
Jen Testa . Green Brook  
Mark Hardenburg . Piscataway  
Florence  
Linda

MINUTES

The October minutes were approved. A copy of approved minutes is available on the GBFCC website.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Crosby noted that all participants have paid their 2022 dues. Expenses for the period include the normal three bills to be paid . Grotto Engineering, Tina Totten for sending out notices, and our Government Relations consultant Winning Strategies, plus the Courier-News for the professional services ads, postage for the Treasurer and Chairman Murray for the 4-year renewal of the website. Bills were reviewed & motion to pay. Motion carried.

Chairman Murray noted that a proposed 2023 budget has been proposed with a 1.75% increase to the member Municipalities and Counties. The budget adoption was moved by Mr. Crosby and unanimously approved.

Chairman Murray reported that responses for the RFP were received in November, with only the two current providers responding. Winning Strategies proposal included no increase in cost, and Grotto Engineering proposed a modest \$5 per hour increase for professional engineer services. Renewal of the two Professionals was moved by Mr. Crosby and unanimously approved.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mr. Crosby reported that no parties had come forth expressing interest in serving in any capacity on the Executive Board, resulting in the recommendation of continuing with the current board: Raymond Murray from Green Brook as Chairman, Paul Woska of Middlesex Borough as

Vice-Chairman, and Bill Crosby of North Plainfield as Treasurer. Renewal of the Executive Board was moved by Mr. Crosby and unanimously approved.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Primarily just internal correspondence and some reminders on dues, as well as meeting scheduling between the Commission, NJDEP & USACE regarding a meeting on the Upper Basin.

## ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS . Alek Peterson, Project Manager

**Segments U-R-T:** Borough of Bound Brook - constructed.

**Segments B1, B2, B3:** Borough of Middlesex - constructed.

**Segment C-H-B-D:** Borough of Middlesex . .

Segment C2, Contract 1 . complete. Waiting official closeout.

Segment C1 . All the work that can be done without the acquisition of 207 Pond Ave is complete. Addressing comments on that condemnation package. Also addressing compensability to Verizon for the relocation of line. Hoping to have all that back early January.

Segment C2& H . The base contract is next to be awarded.

- Base contract consists of two closure gates across South Lincoln Ave and the floodwall monoliths to support the gates, along with some floodwall.
- Options associated with C2 & H consist of levees and two pump stations.
- All of this work is dependent on acquisition of 207 Pond Ave, as Segment C1 and Segment C2 & H are hydraulically dependent upon each other. Can't build one without the other.
- Plan to award the base by mid-January. Just answering some remaining questions on design. Real estate for the base has been certified. Working to finalize the necessary permits.

Segment C3 & C4 - Anticipate construction award in Summer 2023.

Segment B4 & C5 - (hydraulically dependent) Anticipate awarding a construction contract in FY2024. Working on some modifications in design.

Will jump to next system with Segment I-J-K and complete that, then come back to complete the remaining of C-H-B-D so we do not induce flooding upstream.

**Segment I-J-K:** Green Brook Township, Dunellen, North Plainfield area.

With the increased DRSA funding, we have a general plan and an unconfirmed schedule to complete this part of the project. Hoping to award this as larger construction project instead of piece meal. Doing assorted surveying now to gather necessary information.

**Segment E-F-G & L:** would follow after Segments C-H-B-D and I-J-K are completed.

Throughout the process we will work on the non-structural improvements too.

### **Upper Basin:**

Nate Wales, Project Manager for the Upper Basin, was not at meeting but provided an update to Alek to be shared:

- Screening alternatives in preparation for the alternatives milestone meeting scheduled for January 26, 2023. For that meeting will have defined existing conditions and formulated a suite of alternatives to address the flooding in Plainfield & the Upper Basin. The alternatives won't have been analyzed for this meeting.
- Before the January milestone meeting, have a meeting scheduled for Dec 13<sup>th</sup> with NJDEP & GBFCC to discuss the alternatives to be considered.

Luis Santiago, Project Planner for Upper Basin, did not have anything else to add, but said there would be figures & maps to share at the meeting next week.

One other thing to mention is that the repair work for damage done to Segment U-R-T during Ida is hitting a delay in getting the necessary easements but should have a construction date to start repairs soon.

### Questions for USACE

*Mr. Paul Woska:* Is 207 Pond Ave holding up C2 & H moving ahead?

*Mr. Peterson:* Acquisition of 207 Pond is holding up completion of Segment C1. For C2 & H, 207 Pond is not holding up the award of the base contract. Need appropriate permits and then can award that base contract in January. When it comes time to build the C2 & H options (the levees & pump chambers), that will be delayed until we get 207 Pond Ave due to hydraulic connectivity with the C1 features.

Mr. Wolska, Mr. Peterson & Mr. Murray continued to discuss some specific details about part of project.

*Mr. Wolska:* What happened to the jersey barriers for the diner property? The pile of trash is growing.

*Mr. Peterson:* I didn't know the barriers were not there. Tomorrow I will follow up.

*Mr. Jeff Varnerin:* Is the Upper Basin meeting next week open for the public?

*Mr. Murray:* It is for the USACE, NJDEP & Somerset County to discuss the cost / benefit ratio and make sure we are looking at full picture without ruling out any possible options at this point.

NJ DEP . Tom Slowinski

Jeff, you can be on the call next week about the Upper Basin, just send me an email. And anyone else that wants to be on the call, just send me an email.

Carbro won't come back until 175 Lincoln is cleared to demo. We have ownership, but we are waiting on permit to disconnect the sewer line, then can get a demo permit from town. That's when they will bring the concrete blocks to block the diner off. They are working elsewhere & want to group it together.

*Mr. Wolska* that property is a mess, and it is the center of our town. It is overgrown & no one is cleaning it up. If the blocks were in place, you would still have the weeds, but you might not see them.

*Mr. Slowinski:* It is in the Corps name; they left a guard rail for safety. I will see if anything can be done.

Regarding C2 & H, the award of the base contract is being held up because of the Freshwater Wetlands Permit. DEP had to go to the EPA for comments and the EPA just returned the comments on Dec 5<sup>th</sup>. DEP is meeting with EPA management on Friday so hopefully we get some good news.

Good job to North Plainfield, South Plainfield, Piscataway, and Dunellen for getting your Floodplain Ordinances adopted. The rest of the towns in the sub basin really need to work on that. These flood control features don't work well if you are not enforcing rules within the floodplain.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTIES

**Somerset County** – Valerie Bogart . nothing to report.

**Middlesex County** – No representative present.

**Union County** – No representative present.

GBFCC ENGINEER . Rich O'Connor

Nothing to report.

#### WINNING STRATEGIES . Rob Zucker

This past month, trying our best to help the Commission engage Congress, and other important parties, to better understand the application of the cost share to the DRSA funding. Ray & I had meeting with the staff for Senator Booker, who had also received incoming advocacy by NJDEP, related to trying to understand why the USACE would be treating us and a small handful of other projects differently. Our shared desire would be for NJ & for the Communities that participate in the Commission to get the best possible treatment. Meaning that if there's a chance to forgo the cost share and save money for the participants in the Commission and the people of NJ, then we certainly want to achieve that.

Last week had a meeting with NJDEP as well. I believe we are in alignment in that we don't want to somehow put the funding at risk, or not show that we are prepared to go forward, but just making sure we are doing everything that we can to save money if its possible in terms of a cost share.

We also worked in conjunction with Congresswoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman's office. She has sent a letter to the Corps that another \$29 million be allocated to the project.

It was our belief that the DRSA funding was providing all moneys to complete the work plan. However, in subsequent communications from the Corps, it is not being fully funded with DRSA and therefore would be subject to the cost share. In the coming meetings we hope to get more information and clarification on this.

Continuing Resolution runs until Dec 16<sup>th</sup>, and it is likely that Congress will enact another one, but the question is whether it will go into the next Congress or will extend by just days to work on a new package before the ending of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

As a result of the Congressional elections, we will begin working with Tom Kean, Jr. who defeated Tom Malinowski. We are grateful to Malinowski's staff for working with us both on authorization and appropriation matters, particularly in his role on the Transportation Committee which has overseen USACE. We understand that Tom Kean has knowledge of the project so we are optimistic that there will not be a learning curve in terms of the needs of the project. Also, optimistic as he has listed Infrastructure as one of the things he wants to work on when he is sworn in, and that will be a great way to engage him.

#### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

Mr. Murray assures everyone they will work on a new secure platform for next meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:15 pm

#### Upcoming GBFCC meeting dates:

Wednesday, February 1, 2023, 7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 5, 2023, 7:30 pm

Wednesday, June 7, 2023, 7:30 pm