

**GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting

DATE: June 5, 2024

MEETING CONVENEED: 7:37 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
Bill Picard . GBFCC Treasurer-Scotch Plains
Edward Wrocenski . USACE NY District
Thomas Slowinski . NJDEP
Valerie Bogart . Somerset County
Rich O'Connor . Engineer, GBFCC
Rob Zucker . Winning Strategies
Crisol-Iris Lantz . Dunellen
Alex Miller . Dunellen

Mark Kranz . Middlesex
Brian Conway . Green Brook
Oren Dabney . Plainfield
Skip Stabile . North Plainfield
John Ferguson . South Plainfield
Christine Ead . Watchung

Margaret Illis . Berkeley Heights
Jen Testa . Green Brook
Clare Levourne . Middlesex

MINUTES

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

Chairman Murray advised all member dues has been collected, with Union County soon to send their dues right after the budget is adopted.

He noted that the treasurer's report is available on the Commission's website and reported that the usual three bills have been presented for payment. In addition, this month included a bill to DiFrancesco Bateman, the law firm who the Commission engaged with following the legal action taken by a resident in the Borough of Bound Brook relating to damage after Tropical Storm Ida. The case was dismissed without prejudice.

A motion was made approving that the bills be paid.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Commission was copied on an e-mail from the Middlesex Borough Environmental Commission with questions about upcoming work and consideration for nature-based solutions being utilized in the project plans. Mr. Murray forwarded the e-mail to the USACE project manager.

The Commission was also copied on a letter to the Watchung Zoning Board, along with several other government agencies, regarding conditions of several properties along and near the Green Brook as it crosses Route 22 near Blue Star Mall.

The Commission also received an email with photos depicting damage to the levee system in Bound Brook. The e-mail was forwarded to NJDEP, who confirmed that much of the damage shown was related to TS Ida, and that those repairs should commence in the very near future.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS . Edward Wrocenski, Project Manager

Mr. Wrocenski reported that construction at the Lower Basin is moving along. There was a temporary halt due to a water pipe which was run across when digging the trench on Lincoln Ave. Plans & Specs submitted to American Water were approved. Received a proposal from the contractor and trying to negotiate a price so construction activities can continue.

Flood gates are on the way. One is being painted and one is still being fabricated. Expecting late June or early July will be delivery and installation; then work can continue there on Segment C2 & H.

Since the last meeting, there has been some progress on the long-awaited PPA amendment. We received a draft report from our headquarters and have shared that with NJDEP. They approved it and are now working through the process to get the amendment signed so we can have access to the \$496 million.

Our construction schedule for the current contract is to be done around August, which will hopefully marry with when we can tap into the additional funds and continue construction activities. With access to the funds, we will start holding more Project Team meetings. Keep an eye out for invites in July.

Mr. Murray asked if there were options that can be executed after the money is freed up or is everything in the way of options, tied to the condemnation of 207 Pond property?

Mr. Wrocenski: We are looking internally because once we get the funds, we have some option work that we can award and not induce flooding. Looking at possibly building the two pump stations, just the structures without the internal workings, which is about a year of construction time. That would allow for progress while 207 Pond works its way through the real estate process.

Mr. Murray asks for the status of 207 Pond.

Mr. Wrocenski: There is a meeting scheduled towards the end of June with our Real Estate Division and the State of NJ to discuss 207 Pond and the ongoing real estate status. Our team would like to reach out to the owners and see if a deal can be negotiated without condemnation. The thought process being that now that we're 100% Federal funding, perhaps there is a deal to be made. Access to that property is still about a year off. As far as working on the condemnation package, Bill Shockney was not able to provide an update.

QUESTIONS of the Army Corps:

Mr. Mark Kranz: Once the project is done on South Lincoln and outside the pumping stations, and if 207 Pond is going to be a year away, is there any section that could be worked on next?

Mr. Wrocenski: As mentioned earlier, we would work on the two pump stations as that would be the next logical piece. If 207 Pond is further out, we would need to work with the entire team, including the State, and do a resequencing of what can be built. Maybe we will move ahead to the design of Segment I-J-K or maybe we will convince our hydraulic engineers that we do some notching like in C-1 Segment. Not the most efficient way to build things, but it will keep construction moving forward.

Mr. Kranz: Moving forward on anything is what is most important and not stopping progress.

NJ DEP - Thomas Slowinski

As Ed mentioned, the project agreement has been amended. It has passed through our Attorney General's office for review and was signed by our Commissioner. It is back to the Army Corps. There is an additional addendum that will need to go with that including the real estate as Ed referenced. We are holding a face-to-face meeting in a couple of weeks to review procedures and how to proceed with future real estate. Several properties are still in the Army Corps name, and we are working towards getting them into the State of New Jersey's name, in each Hall of Records for each respective County.

Other than that, utilities stall projects all the time. A lot of unknowns when you unearth and find out what is there. They are working even though it slowed things down.

We went to see the closure gates. They are massive. As Ed said, one is being painted and one is being fabricated. That will be the last piece that the present contractor will perform under his contract now. Options are on the table. We are trying to push to get the pump stations built even if they don't have the mechanicals because they will need to be built at some point anyway.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTIES

Middlesex County – No representative present.

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

Union County – No representative present.

GBFCC ENGINEER . Rich O'Connor
Nothing to report.

WINNING STRATEGIES . Rob Zucker

We have probably covered the major points of our work over the last few months which is communicating and consulting with the Hill and continuing to conduct outreach to the Army Corps Headquarters to turn around the signatures for the updated project agreement and avoid bottleneck and get the DRSA funds available to us. It was a hurdle & we seem to have surpassed the hurdle at this point.

MEETING ADJOURNED: The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Upcoming GBFCC meeting dates:

August 3, 2024, 9:30 AM - In person Memorial Service - 707 Legion Place in Middlesex

October 9, 2024, 7:30 pm . via Zoom

December 4, 2024, 7:30 pm . via Zoom