

(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).

FLOOD COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Flood Committee was held on Monday, January 30, 2012 in the Cranston Senior Center, Dining Room, 1070 Cranston Street, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Councilman Richard D. Santamaria, Jr., Chair
Brian Dupont
Richard Martin
Michael Behm
Amy Sinyei
Matthew Papino

Absent: Councilwoman Leslie A. Luciano
Councilman Emilio L. Navarro
Senator Beatrice Lanzi
Representative Robert Jacquard

Also Present: Council President Anthony J. Lupino
Gerald Cordy, Director of Administration
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

Chair recognized in the audience Council Vice-President Pelletier, who represents the Amanda Court area and Councilman Stycos, who represents the Perkins Ave. area.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Council President Lupino, seconded by Mr. Dupont, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARING/NEW BUSINESS:

- **Discussion on RI Emergency Management's decision of the buyout of homes on Perkins Ave. and Amanda Ct.**

Chair indicated that Representative Jacquard will be re-submitting the Tax Relief Enabling Legislation on the House side. He has not spoken to Senator Lanzi, but he is confident that she will do the same on the Senate side. He has also spoken to Senator Whitehouse's office two times since FEMA's rejection of the buyout.

Mr. Cordy addressed the following items:

1. Timeline for the RIMA notice in regards to the fact that it was turned down
The City received notice from RIMA that application had been denied in a letter dated December 9th and we received this letter December 14th. The following Monday, at the Council meeting, the Administration notified the City Council of this and on Dec. 20th, the letters went out to the residents.

2. Reasons why the Grant failed

Mr. Cordy stated that Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) is part of the Grant that failed. There are three methods FEMA uses for those calculations. The first two would not work and the third may not work either because of life of the homes and documental damage to those homes. The status with this Grant is we filed a request for a non-standard BCA. We are waiting to hear on this. Mr. Cordy stressed that we have several other initiatives in place and still working on this.

3. What we are doing going forward to continue acquisition

Mr. Cordy stated that specific initiatives aimed at property acquisition are:

- We filed a non-standard BCA request, which is still pending
- Senators Reed and Whitehouse were able to get HUD appropriated Grant of \$1.2 million. The Perkins Ave. and the area around it would be the only area that would qualify because of low mod income guidelines.

Mr. Cordy stated the following other initiatives the City is working on not geared at property acquisition:

- Economic Development Fund for Elmwood Ave. area – this did not get funded
- Army Corps of Engineers have decided to do a study of the Pawtuxet River Plain
- Over \$500,000 to upgrade sewer pump stations – this is still pending
- Wilbur Ave. area – we have applied for Storm Water Mitigation Drainage – this is still pending
- Early Warning System – we have applied for this and have been denied by RIMA because they felt they should be doing this
- We have applied for Debris Management Plan – this was denied by RIMA, because they felt this should be done by them
- Debris has been cleared in the Perkins Ave. area
- We have applied for backflow preventers – this is pending
- We plan to have the Pocasset cleaned up the same as Perkins Ave. area
- Meshanticut Ponding Easement – we are working with the State and NRCS to get a wetlands restoration for this area
- We received \$350,000 from NRCS for the engineering of flood wall for Fletcher Ave.
- A grant from RI Housing to remap the Flood Plan in the area of the Cranston Printworks

Public Speakers:

Maureen Casey, 87 Perkins Ave., appeared to speak and asked what criteria was used for the homeowners that did not meet the buyout. Mr. Cordy stated, BCA (Benefit Cost Analysis). Ms. Casey asked where the reports are from FEMA and RIMA, since RIMA and FEMA all walked the area when it was flooded. She also stated that the sewer needs to be addressed at Wheatland and Dresden. Mr. Cordy stated that the problem is the way the pipe is installed, but there is not much that can be done. This has been drained out numerous times.

Marc Moreau, 156 Davis Ave., appeared to speak for the residents in the Davis and Fordson Ave. areas. He stated that he was told by Mr. Peters in the City's Highway Department, that the drain was going to be cleaned out and it has not.

Georgia Jacques, Wheatland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that since the flood, the flooding is even worse than it was before. She questioned if the City can apply for a Grant to clean out the sewer pipes. Mr. Cordy stated that the Grant money has to be appropriate to the particular project.

Ms. Sinyei asked if the City has received any response from FEMA for the 2010 Grant. Mr. Cordy stated that the City never received a response from FEMA, but he would think that if they denied the 2011 Grant, the 2010 was also denied, but he can find out. Chair asked that this item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Sinyei asked what is the BCA number in order for a homeowner to qualify for buyout. Mr. Cordy stated, 1. Ms. Sinyei asked if the people can be told what their BCA was. Mr. Cordy stated that he does not know, but he will find out.

Ms. Sinyei asked if the City has a contractor that it uses to process filing for FEMA Grants. Mr. Cordy stated, yes. Ms. Sinyei asked if the contractor could have been at fault for not meeting the buyout criteria. Mr. Cordy stated, no, the contractor went way beyond the scope of the contract to make the numbers work.

Patricia Barry, 79 Amanda St., appeared to speak and stated that the debris behind Amanda St. near the residents needs to be cleaned first. Mr. Cordy stated that the entire 76 acres will be addressed.

Council President Lupino asked if the State is cooperating at all with the City on the drainage on Oaklawn Ave. Mr. Cordy stated that he can obtain more information, but he can't address this at this time.

Council Vice-President Pelletier asked that the debris that is in the river in the areas of Oaklawn and Amanda be addressed, as well as the spillway along Amanda.

Council Vice-President Pelletier asked what the people who have been denied can do now. He asked if there is something that they should be hopeful for. Mr. Cordy stated that there are two HUD potentials. Another thing the City is hopeful for is the non-standard BCA request from FEMA. We are constantly searching the web for any new Grants and if they come up with one that we can use, they are aggressively pursued.

Marty Madden, 131 Fordson Ave., appeared to speak.

Steven Callahan, 135 Amanda St., appeared to speak and questioned why he was denied by FEMA for the buyout when his house is 30 ft. from the river and the house approved is 80 ft. from the river.

Rita Iannazzi, Amanda St., appeared to speak and asked if the City can do something to clean up the debris behind Amanda St. Mr. Cordy stated that the Grant from NRCS will take care of this.

Sean Flynn, 115 Amanda St., appeared to speak and asked if the public can view the status of Grants. Mr. Cordy stated that if something gets approved, the City makes sure the media is made aware of it and it will also be posted on the City's website.

Emily Peretta, 126 Amanda St., appeared to speak and stated that she has been told by older neighbors that when Mr. Melocarro built the plat, he re-routed the brook area to build the homes. He was told to put it back the way it was. She asked if this is recorded anywhere. Mr. Cordy indicated that DEM was probably not in existence at the time.

Mr. Papino asked if the Backflow Valve Grant request was for certain neighborhoods and what they were pending for. Mr. Cordy stated that the Grant request did not require us to specify addresses. Mr. Papino addressed the NRCS project for Blackamore Pond and Fay Field areas and asked if this was to be finished by December 20, 2010 and if the project is finished, did they complete what they wanted to. Mr. Cordy stated that Blackamore Pond, Fay Field and CLCF began and was completed last year and planting was done this year. Mr. Papino asked what the Pocasset River cleanup would include. Mr. Cordy stated that the entire river would be cleaned up.

Mr. Dupont referred to the January 31, 2011 minutes of the meeting of this Committee in regards to Grant monies received. He asked if anyone has followed up on that money and where that money is. Mr. Cordy stated that he addressed all of this in his report he gave at the beginning of this meeting.

Mr. Dupont indicated that at the January 31, 2011 meeting, it was stated from a report of Senator Whitehouse's Office that there were two rounds of Grant monies. The first round was received, he asked if there was ever a second round of money. Mr. Cordy stated that there was not.

Mr. Martin stated that right after the 2005 Election, there was a Referendum passed to fund \$10 million for flood issues. He addressed this to Mayor Fund, who was not aware that this even existed, but the Mayor stated to him that the citizens of Cranston could not afford \$10 million. He urged the Administration to find out how much it will cost to get this money and give the people of Cranston relief now. Mr. Cordy stated that if the Bond was never gone after, we do not have the money and therefore, we would have to borrow the money.

Chair indicated that there are several Bond Resolutions to be heard by the Finance Committee this month, but there are none for flooding issues. He questioned if this would be an option, since interest rates are low. Mr. Cordy stated that he will explore the answer to this question. Chair asked that Mr. Cordy report on this for the next meeting.

Council Vice-President Pelletier asked how much it would cost to buyout the 39 homes on Amanda and Perkins areas. Mr. Cordy stated that it was estimated at \$10 million, not including restoration of wetlands. This would just be for the buyout.

David England, 92 Perkins Ave. appeared to speak and asked what it would cost for buyout of one home. Mr. Cordy stated that if he is given a specific home, he can provide the number.

Council President Lupino stated that this Committee had a weather expert speak at one of the meetings and he presented testimony. He asked if we could get that expert's testimony in any of this for the FEMA Grant of things to be considered. Mr. Cordy stated that the City tried to get it into the FEMA Grant, but they would not accept it.

Chair announced that the next meeting will be held on Monday, March 19, 2012 at 6:30 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees