

(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, March 19, 2012 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 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

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

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

Council President Lupino stated that he had an informal discussion, via e-mail, with Representative Jacquard and he asked what the status is of the Bill regarding property tax relief for the flood victims. Representative Jacquard indicated that, as it stands now, it is in Committee. It could be heard soon and voted on.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

- ***Report from Administration in response to 2010 Grant application to FEMA***

Chair asked Mr. Cordy to give an update from the last meeting.

Mr. Cordy stated that at the last meeting, discussion was held on the failure of BCA. A few days after that meeting, he received a letter from RIMA denying us of our alternative measure. We seeked relief mainly because our flood maps are no longer accurate. They denied us because we did not provide new flood maps data. Mr. Cordy stated that his suggestion is to consider this initiative dead and consider other alternatives, such as HUD Grants available to us. There are two HUD Grants. Mr. Cordy stated that we re-wrote the HUD Grant for \$1.2 million strictly for the buyout, which was directly allocation to Cranston. The Grant went through the entire process and public comment was held and went to Washington two weeks ago and we anticipate having an answer this week. The other HUD Grant came out of the same initiative in 2010 and went directly to the State. They opened up bid to other Cities and did not allow the larger Cities, such as Cranston and Warwick, to bid on it. It went out to bid a second time and Cranston and Warwick and other larger Cities were allowed to bid. We applied for this and application was submitted last week. A public meeting was held approximately three weeks ago at the Senior Center.

PUBLIC HEARING/NEW BUSINESS:

Public Speakers:

David England, 92 Perkins Ave. appeared to speak and asked if there are any restrictions for the second Grant of where it can be used. Mr. Cordy stated that if the Grant is awarded, we have to use it for the buyout.

Mr. Dupont asked if there would be an opportunity for money through Bond Referendums. Mr. Cordy stated that that could be an option.

Lori Apace, 87 Perkins Ave., appeared to speak and asked who is going to make the determination or has the final say in the buyout, is it HUD, City of Cranston, State Planning Director or a Biologist. Mr. Cordy stated that the City would have the final say because the City makes the application for the Grants.

Charles Coster, 142 Warren Ave., appeared to speak and asked for an update regarding Amanda Ct. and Warren Ave. Mr. Cordy stated that at the last meeting, he addressed all the initiatives the City is working on.

Mr. Papino stated that last year, he wrote to the City regarding a house on 121 Fordson Ave., which was damaged by the flood. This house was never mitigated. The home is literally rotting from the outside and inside and there is water in the basement. He asked how the City can follow up on this. This home is next to his and he is concerned about health hazard. He also questioned if there are any other homes in the City in the similar situation. Mr. Cordy asked that Mr. Papino e-mail him the address and he will follow-up. He also stated that if it does prove to be a health hazard, the City will have to address it.

Steven Callahan, 135 Amanda St., appeared to speak and stated that there is a proposed new development at Phenix and Natick. He asked how this will affect the brook in that area and if there will be an impact study done. Mr. Cordy stated that there is a process the application has to go through and all D.E.M. requirements would have to be satisfied. He also stated that there will be an impact study done.

Deb Callahan, 135 Amanda St., appeared to speak and asked if Cranston has ever considered a pay to pave program, similar to other Cities that have such a program. Those funds could be used to buyout some of the flooded homes. Mr. Cordy stated that that could be one of the initiatives. That is one of the options the City is looking at.

- *Report from Administration on whether there are any pending Bond Resolutions by the City Council to address flooding issues*

Mr. Cordy stated that there is a difference between having Bonding authority and actually exercising that Bond. He stated that in 2008, there was a \$6 million Bond approved by the voters. Of this Bond, we have exercised less then \$500,000. It was spent on storm drain repairs. He does not have details of exactly what this money was used for at this time.

Mr. Martin asked if there are any plans to use that Bonding authority on any other projects, since interest rates are historically low at this time. He also asked if the City could at least explore what the interest rate would be. Mr. Cordy stated that interest rates are already going back up. As to what projects it could be used on, it would be putting the cart before the horse because we have to determine when the City can take on this burden. The question is when can we afford it. Mr. Cordy stated that he and a number of City employees have worked for the past two years trying to solve this problem, in addition, the City has spent money for outside consultants. Mr. Martin stated that he and the citizens of Cranston appreciate Mr. Cordy and his staff's work on this issue, but people have been suffering for over forty years and this problem has been put off all those years. He is not suggesting we use all this money. He is asking that some projects be identified and some work be done.

- *Update on Fletcher Ave.*

Mr. Cordy stated that Fuss and Oneil is doing the engineering work as we speak. They should get back to us by the Fall.

Mr. Papino asked if there will be an impact of flooding downstream with this project and this has been looked at.

Chair indicated that a survey regarding a flood wall was given to all the people that were affected by the floods and the only people that wanted the flood wall were the people on Fletcher Ave. The others were not interested or not concerned.

Jackie Pearson, 104 Perkins Ave. appeared to speak and asked how the residents will find out if the grant is awarded. Mr. Cordy stated that the City will have to review to make sure all the details are correct and then hold a press conference.

- *Oaklawn Ave. drainage improvements*

Council President Lupino asked for update on report from DEM for drainage improvements on Oaklawn Ave. Mr. Cordy stated that the only thing he received from DEM is status of application of the underpass. Council President Lupino asked for update for the next meeting.

Chair announced that the next meeting will be held on Monday, May 21, 2012 at 6:30 P.M. No meeting will be held in April due to the budget process. If an issue comes up and warrants a meeting before that time, a special meeting can be scheduled.

Mr. Dupont asked if the City is short from the grant to buyout some of the homes, is there any way that some of the Bond money from the 2008 Bond Referendum can be used. Mr. Cordy stated that that could be a possibility, but he is not in a position to make that kind of a commitment. We do not know if and how much we will get at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees