

(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 Wednesday, March 18, 2015 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by the Chair.

Present: Council Majority Leader Paul H. Archetto, Chair
Council Minority Leader Michael W. Favicchio
Nicholas Capobianco
Kenneth Mason, Director of Public Works
Matthew Papino
Council President John E. Lanni, Jr.

Absent: Brian Dupont
Amy Sinyei
Michael Behm
Senator Frank S. Lombardi
Representative Joseph McNamara

Also Present: Sarah Kales Lee
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

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

Chair stated that notice was sent to all the member of the Committee to see who wanted to continue to serve on the Committee. He indicated the following status of the following members and replacements probably need to be made:

- Mr. Dupont - the Clerk has not been able to contact him either by regular mail, email or by telephone.
- Mr. Behm – works evenings and cannot attend meetings.
- Ms. Sinyei – works evenings and cannot attend meetings.
- Senator Lombardi – has only attended one meeting in the last 18 months and probably cannot attend meetings.
- Representative McNamara – cannot attend meetings.

Council President Lanni nominated Sarah Kales Lee to replace Ms. Sinyei and Mr. Capobianco seconded the nomination. Nomination passed unanimously. Council President Lanni stated that he will announce this appointment at the next Council meeting.

Chair stated that he will contact Senator Lombardi and Representative McNamara asking if they still want to serve. He also stated that there are two public members that need replacement. He asked that if the current members know of anyone who would like to serve on this Committee, they notify him.

CORRESPONDENCE:

OLD BUSINESS:

- *Affordable Flood Insurance on Federal Level* (Cont. from 2/19/2014)

Chair asked that this item be removed from the agenda.

- *Status of Fletcher Ave. Flood Wall* (Councilman Santamaria)

Mr. Mason stated that NRCS did a cost benefit analysis again and stated that this was not a project that they would support because it would cost too much money and would protect too little property and would never work.

Mr. Capobianco asked if there is a possibility of the homes to be bought out. Mr. Mason stated that he believes there is that opportunity and the Planning Director is also looking into that. The Planning Director is looking into ways to flood proofing the businesses. He also stated that he believes that for taking, it is just for residential properties, but for businesses, he thinks there is just flood proofing.

Chair asked if the Army Corps of Engineers has looked at dredging the river on the Pocasset Ave. side and if not the Army Corps of Engineers, maybe the National Guard. Council President Lanni stated that this area has been flooding since 1974 and since then, there have been five different studies that have been done, but not one shovel has ever gone to the ground. The only possible solution is to buy out those properties.

Mr. Capobianco stated that what has to be considered is if the homes were bought out, the cost of relocating those people would be very costly. Mr. Mason stated that that is true, however, it is funded by NRCS. The majority would be paid by the federal government.

Ms. Lee asked if we could get a report from the Planning Director on how far he has gotten with this as far as buying the homes. Mr. Mason stated that he can ask the Planning Director and he can try to obtain either a written report or a verbal report from him if he has made any progress.

Chair stated that for the next month he would like a report from the Planning Director regarding purchasing of homes on Fletcher Ave. and step by step process is for doing that.

Mr. Capobianco asked if the \$6 million bond referendum can be used for buying those homes. Mr. Mason stated that the federal government will pay for most of it and the remainder, the way it was done for Amanda Ct. buy outs, Open Space Bond was used.

Mr. Capobianco suggested that the City use the City Council Grant Writer to look into funding for this.

Mr. Mason stated that the taking is a very long process. The Perkins and Amanda St. taking was from the 2010 flood and five years later, there are still homes that need to be closed.

- ***Wilbur Ave. and Oaklawn Ave.*** (Councilman Aceto)

Chair asked that this item be cancelled, since Councilman Aceto is not present this evening and he had requested that it be placed on the agenda.

On motion by Council President Lanni, seconded by Council Minority Leader Favicchio, it was voted to continue this item. Motion passed unanimously.

- ***Status update on Fordson Ave./Riverview Condo. Area*** (Matthew Papino)

Mr. Papino stated that he is the only member left on this Committee from the people affected by the 2010 flood and he is glad this Committee still exists. The people on Fordson suffered a lot of damage, himself included. When discussing about taking, he asked that he City and the City Council not forget Fordson Ave. In this particular area, there are still two homes that are still uninhabited. He asked that not just for this neighborhood, but for all neighborhoods that empty into a river, there be some sort of priority to clean the drains after the Winter, because the salt and sand from the Winter will cause problems if the drains are not properly cleaned and he also asked that the streets sweeping also be done on a priority.

Council President Lanni asked Mr. Papino what the rates flood insurance are. Mr. Papino stated that the rates have gone up between 2013-2014. His went up 20% last year.

Mr. Mason addressed the street sweeping and drains cleaning and stated that the City typically starts the street sweeping on April 1st. He does not think they will be able to start on April 1st this year because there is snow expected. It probably will start the 6th or the 13th. The City does have priority areas and he can put Fordson Ave. on the priority.

Chair asked that this item be removed from the agenda.

- ***Snow Removal/Snow Flooding*** (Chair)

Chair asked if there were any problems with snow melting and flooding in the City. Mr. Mason stated, no, even though we had some rain, there really was no continuous rain to cause flooding.

Mr. Mason presented a handout check off list that the Highway Department uses in plowing main routes and low areas.

Chair asked that this item be removed from the agenda.

- ***Director of Public Works to give status update of \$6 million bonding to upgrade flood areas*** (Chair)

Chair asked what this bond can be used for. Mr. Mason stated that this can be used for storm drainage. Chair asked if it can be used to elevate the pipe at Fordson Ave. Mr. Mason stated, no, because if you elevate the pipe, the pipe would be out of the ground.

Mr. Papino stated that when it rains, Fordson Ave. fills up not because of the river, it is the drain. There is only one drain and it is too much water and too little drainage.

Ms. Lee asked if another catch basin or drain pipe can be installed. Mr. Mason stated that it can be looked into as one of the projects they are contemplating.

Mr. Mason stated that while looking at the Capital Improvement projects, the City came up with the following three projects:

- Garden St.
- Zinnia Dr.
- Lodge & Abbott St.

He also stated that the estimated cost for these three projects is approximately \$1.8 million.

Chair asked if the City Council has any jurisdiction over releasing that money. Council President Lanni stated that to his knowledge, the Mayor does that. The City Council just approves the Capital Budget.

Council President Lanni questioned if the Aqueduct Field could be used as a drainage pond for Fordson Ave. Mr. Mason stated that that is a possibility.

Mr. Capobianco asked if perforated drain pipes could be used to alleviate some of the drainage problems on Fordson Ave. Mr. Mason stated that he can look into that.

- ***Spring cleaning of catch basins*** (Chair)

Council President Lanni asked when this program starts. Mr. Mason stated that the program starts in the Spring, weather permitting and the goal is to clean and inspect every drain throughout the City every year. The goal also is to clean out at least a quarter of the catch basins every year.

Chair asked that this item be removed from the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING/NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion took place on the date for the next meeting. Chair indicated that the Budget hearings will be held during the months of April and May and stated that the next meeting will tentatively be held on the third Wednesday of April, (April 15th) at 6:30 P.M. and if there is a conflict with the Budget hearings, it will be rescheduled.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees