

(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, May 20, 2015 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by the Chair.

Present: Council Majority Leader Paul H. Archetto, Chair
Councilman Mario Aceto
Nicholas Capobianco
Sarah Kales Lee
Matthew Papino
Council President John E. Lanni, Jr.

Absent: Council Minority Leader Michael W. Favicchio
Brian Dupont
Michael Behm
Senator Frank S. Lombardi
Representative Robert Jacquard

Also Present: Peter Lapolla, City Planner
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Council President Lanni, 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:

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Wilbur Ave. and Oaklawn Ave. (Councilman Aceto) (Cont. 3/18/2015)**

Councilman Aceto asked that this item be continued to the next meeting and he would like this item more detailed on the next meeting's agenda and the following information be provided for the next meeting: cleaning schedule of drains from the State and also from the City.

PUBLIC HEARING/NEW BUSINESS:

- **Status of Fletcher Ave. Flood Wall - Report from Planning Director on status of possible buy outs of properties on Fletcher Ave. and process of buyouts (Chair)**

Mr. Lapolla introduced Carissa Lord of CDI McGwyer, Consultant for the Planning Department in regards to the Plan for the Hazard Mitigation Plan. He stated that this Plan calls for a series of flood walls. Original cost estimate for the flood wall was approximately \$4 million. The last time the City spoke to NRCS, the cost was approximately \$22 million. NRCS determined that this was not economically feasible. We are looking to having discussions with NRCS , the Public Works Department and the Engineering Department to see what else can be done. With the flood wall off the table, we would like to move this neighborhood into our rotating cycle to see if we can use FEMA Grants to take the homes. Our goal is to take five homes a year at \$250,000. There are 8-10 homes on both sides of Fletcher Ave. that are in the flood plains. The City is going to try to use FEMA money. There is a 25% match for FEMA Grant.

Councilman Aceto questioned the businesses that are close to the river. He asked if any of those businesses are eligible to be bought out or do we have to look at the homes first. Mr. Lapolla stated that as to the businesses, they can flood proof their buildings. To buyout the businesses, it would be very expensive, a lot more expensive then the homes. Another problem is the right side of Fletcher Ave. was a dump years ago and if we bought out the businesses, we would have to clean up the contamination.

Council President Lanni asked what kind of flood wall are we talking about for \$22 million. Mr. Lapolla stated that when building the flood wall, sheet piling would have to be driven down to the foundation. When the cost estimate was done, they assumed a drainage area of a certain size.

Chair asked how many homes are in the flood zone that are planned to be bought out. Mr. Lapolla stated that at the Perkins Ave. area, there are 8-9 homes that are in the flood plain; Warren Ave., there are approximately 40; Fletcher Ave., there are 8-9.

Chair asked if there are any other avenues besides FEMA. Mr. Lapolla stated that we are speaking to NRCS again.

Mr. Capobianco asked if there is any sophisticated drainage project to alleviate these areas from flooding. Mr. Lapolla stated that, unfortunately, when you building near a river, when it floods, the water goes towards the development.

Chair asked that this item be continued and an update as to the buyout process and the funding be given at the next meeting.

- **Floodplain Management Plan (Chair)**

Mr. Lapolla stated that a Hazard Mitigation Plan, by law, has to be done every five years. It was done in 2005 and an update was done in 2010. Two years ago, we received notice from FEMA stating that they had a Grant to be used for update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and asked if we wanted it for the 2015 update. He accepted and the Plan is in to FEMA for review. A public meeting was held last spring to get input from the public of where they thought flooding was. He is present this evening to get input from the members of this Committee of where they see flood problems and if those areas are not on his list, he would include those when the program is written and, hopefully, identify some solutions.

Councilman Aceto stated the following areas he feels are areas that are prone to flooding:

- the duck pond on Natick Ave. and further up on Natick Ave., at the intersection after Love Lane intersection and the Natick Ave. bridge area;
- area at Twin Birch Estates – continuous flooding especially in the winter.

Council President Lanni stated the following areas he feels are areas that are prone to flooding:

- the area of Florida Ave. between Dyer Ave. and Park Ave. – all this area was wetlands and in the 1970's, it was filled in.

He also stated that we can't correct the past because that would be very expensive, but we can prevent this from happening in the future. One of the best ways to do that is through zoning. Mr. Lapolla stated that another thing that would stop this is there is "no fill" in the flood plain Ordinance.

Councilman Aceto asked what can be done to neighboring communities that area at fault in causing the flooding. Mr. Lapolla stated that they are subject to the same flood plain regulations, as well as all the other communities in the State.

Councilman Aceto stated that at the Traffic Safety Commission meeting, the issue of maintenance of the bike path came up and from Knightsville Library to the West Warwick line, there are at least five to six little brooks, culverts, pipes that are coming out of the streets. Those are filled with debris and this effects drainage and causes flooding. Someone has to do something about that either the State or the City to clean those and maintain them.

Ms. Lee asked if the Plan addresses the runoff issues in older neighborhoods. Mr. Lapolla stated that there is probably less of a problem now with new developments then there was with the older developments. Ms. Lee asked if we can restrict people from paving their whole front yard or restrict how much they can pave in order to give water a place to runoff. She also stated that when businesses pave their parking lot, some pave right up to the street and there is no runoff for the water. Ms. Lord stated that this is potential actions that could be included in the Hazard Mitigation Plan,

Chair asked why the area of Oaklawn Ave. that was flooded a few years ago at the two apartment buildings, is not part of the Mitigation Plan. Mr. Lapolla stated that the likelihood of this happening again in the magnitude it happened a few years ago in that area is not likely. What it was, was a microburst near Meshanticut Valley Parkway and the drainage system could not handle it. This is a State road and the State should address the drainage there.

Chair stated that Dyer and Budlong at the traffic light, there is a dip there and always floods. He asked that this area be added to the Plan's list.

Chair asked that Mr. Lapolla provide this Committee with a list of the locations specified.

Ms. Lee asked what the timeline is for this Plan to be done. Mr. Lapolla stated that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is done. Our goal is to have this done by July.

Chair asked that the Clerk send Committee members, Michael Behm and Brian Dupont, a letter stating that they no longer will be serving on the Committee since they have missed numerous meetings and they will be replaced.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees