

(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 14, 2011 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Councilman Richard D. Santamaria, Jr., Chair
Councilman Emilio L. Navarro
Senator Beatrice Lanzi
Michael Behm
Brian Dupont
Richard Martin
Amy Sinyei

Absent: Councilwoman Leslie Luciano
Representative Robert Jacquard
Christopher Brouillette

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

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Senator Lanzi, 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.

Chair welcomed Ms. Sinyei as a new member of the Committee.

CORRESPONDENCE:

OLD BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING/NEW BUSINESS:

- *Presentation from Peter Walsh of RI Housing regarding “Hardest Hit Fund of RI” (HHRI) on how to apply for those funds.*

Mr. Walsh appeared to speak regarding the “Hardest Hit Fund of RI” and presented a handout. He also provided the members of the audience with a packet of information regarding this Fund.

Doris Bruno, 130 Fordson Ave., Unit 2, appeared to speak and asked where these funds came from. Mr. Walsh stated that they come from the Treasury.

Mr. Dupont stated that as to the underemployed, he questioned if self-employed people qualify or people who work on commission would qualify. Mr. Walsh stated, yes, they would be asked for a lot more documentation.

Jane Joly appeared to speak and stated that she is 63 years old and lost her job. She had to decide whether to pay her mortgage or her health insurance. She now has no health insurance until she reaches the age of 65. She questioned if she would qualify for these funds. Mr. Walsh stated that if her mortgage is more than 31% of her income, she would qualify.

Senator Lanzi presented a copy of pending legislation regarding authorizing the City to grant Tax Abatements. She stated that this Bill has been introduced and is in the Senate Finance Committee at this time. She asked for public and this Committee’s support when it comes time for the Bill to be heard, either attending the hearing in person or writing a letter to the Senators or Representatives. This Bill is S-0099.

Council President Lupino stated that this Bill will also go before the House. Senator Lanzi stated that, as she stated at the last meeting, Representative Jacquard would be putting in companion legislation.

Marty Madden, 131 Fordson Ave., President of Riverview Terrace, appeared to speak and asked who the letters supporting the State Legislation would be sent to. Senator Lanzi stated that normally, they would be sent to the sponsors of the Legislation. She suggested sending the letters to her and she will forward them to Senator Gallo. She also suggested residents send one letter with everyone’s names and addresses. Senator Lanzi reported that she also introduced another Bill regarding mold and abating of mold looking at creating a study commission from that Bill.

The Committee discussed the following report from the Administration.

- **Report from Administration regarding:**
 - *Mayor's concerns stated in his Veto message for Ordinance regarding tax relief.*

Chair indicated that the Administration's report does not address Councilman Navarro's question of how to proceed with a better Ordinance. Chair asked that this item be placed on the next agenda asking for the Administration's input on fixing the veto message to make it more passable.

Councilman Navarro stated that the only issue the Administration did not address was his recommendation that the City Council Internal Auditor and City Council Legal Counsel work with the Administration to address the Tax Relief issue so an Ordinance can be drafted.

Danielle Marterusi appeared to speak and questioned where the Administration is this evening. She indicated that there was no one from the Administration present at the last meeting either.

Senator Lanzi stated that the Mayor is opposed to the City Ordinance which would create an Abatement. She is concerned if this would create a hurdle when the State Legislation comes up to be discussed and voted on. It is imperative that when the Bill moves forward, the Mayor supports it. This is why he should be present at this meeting to discuss this.

Councilman Navarro stated that Deputy Director of Administration, Gerald Cordy is the person who is the liaison between the City and Federal and State Agencies regarding the flood issues and he has been working on these issues. He asked that this Committee ask the Administration to have Mr. Cordy attend these meetings.

On motion by Councilman Navarro, seconded by Council President Lupino, it was voted to have the Clerk request from the Administration that this Committee needs some type of representation, preferably, Mr. Cordy present at this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

- *\$1,277,000 City received in grants and how this money was allocated and if it has been already spent.*

Chair stated that Fletcher Ave. was not mentioned at all in this grant.

Councilman Navarro stated that this grant was CDBG for Perkins Ave.

Danielle Marterusi, Tweed St., appeared to speak and stated that she was under the impression that this Committee was set up to take care of the whole City and now we have a \$1.2 million grant that was designated to one particular area. She asked if Fletcher Ave. is ever going to be addressed.

Council President Lupino stated that this grant was for the Pawtuxet River floodplain. Fletcher Ave. is part of the Pocasset River.

Chair stated that according to the minutes of the last meeting, Senator Whitehouse indicated that there is a second round of money coming, when, we do not know.

Elizabeth Zanfagna, 40 Fletcher Ave., appeared to speak and stated that the Pocasset River floods into the Pawtuxet. Council President Lupino stated that the buyout was just for the Pawtuxet.

Senator Lanzi stated that the missing key is the City. We need to have the Administration at the table at these meetings. This process will take us forever if we go this way.

Elizabeth Zanfagna stated that all the ponds and dams need to be raised five feet from Old Storm Reservoir because that is the cause of the flooding for all these years.

Doris Bruno stated that there is no excuse for the Administration not being present this evening. She questioned if the Administration is aware of this meeting taking place. She spoke to the Mayor prior to the last meeting and the Mayor felt that he had not been invited.

Mr. Martin stated that there is approximately \$300,000 set aside to study the flooding problem at Fletcher Ave. He suggested putting this money in a fund to be used for rectifying the problem. He proposed that we find out if this can be done.

Georgia Jacques, 59 Wheatland Ave., appeared to speak and stated that an empty lot in her neighborhood has recently been developed. For the last two weeks, the new owner has been pumping water. She questioned how this can be allowed.

Emily Perrotta, 26 Amanda St., appeared to speak and ask questions.

- *Assessment of how many people were displaced or affected by the floods.*

Councilman Navarro reported on the data received from the Administration.

- *Status of issue regarding swampy area behind ball field on Atwood Ave.*
- *Is there a flood preparedness policy currently in place alerting residents of floods and how to obtain help?*
- *Who handles the Scituate Dam?*
- *Explore the avenue of establishing Flood Relief Zoning Districts if Tax Abatement does not pass at the State level.*

Chair indicated that the above four items were not addressed by the Administration.

On motion by Councilman Navarro, seconded by Council President Lupino, it was voted to continue the above four items to the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

- *Fire Chief to provide estimate of number of calls the Fire Department responded to for the March flood.*

Councilman Navarro referred to the report provided by the Administration.

- *Building Official provide the number of notices the department issued to homes that were uninhabitable.*

Councilman Navarro referred to the report provided by the Administration.

Chair indicated that due to the Budget process starting in April, the next meeting of this Committee will be held on Monday, May 9, 2011 and in the meantime, he will make sure the Administration will have a representative at that meeting and he will also check with Senator Whitehouse's Office to obtain status of second round of money coming in.

Danielle Marterusi suggested soil sample be taken from the area and having environmental test done. Senator Lanzi suggested that the residents give the Chair specific areas that they would like soil testing be done and she can introduce legislation requesting DEM do the testing or she can start dialogue with DEM and have a representative attend a Committee meeting.

Marty Madden appeared to speak and asked for copy of the report provided to the Committee by the Administration. Chair asked that he contact the Clerk tomorrow and she will provide whatever information can be given to the public.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni

Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees