

East Branch Flood Commission Minutes 3.29.12

The meeting opened at approximately 6:05p.m. Supervisor Miller introduced herself as Commission Chair and pointed out Nelson Delameter, Deputy Chair as well as Innes Kasanof, Supervisor for the Town of Halcott and Paul Osberg, Supervisor for the Town of Hardenburgh. Also in attendance were: Larry Reilly, Todd Pascarella, John Roucek, Jake Rosa, Iris Mead, Bill Stanton, Dave Budin, Ivan Collberg & Michelle Meehan of Freshtown, Carol & Phil O'Beirne, Len Utter for the Arena F.D., Rob Sweeney for the AFD, Pat Davis, John Biruk, Karl Von Hassel, Patrice Delameter, Henry Friedman, John Reynolds, Graydon Dutcher, Billy Allison, Phil Eskeli, Dean Frazier, Kent Manuel, Mike Jestremski, Alison Miskiman of Tetra Tech, & Brian Sweeney who left prior to the power point given by Graydon Dutcher

Miller asked those assembled to accept the Commission's charge and without exception it was; the mission stands as follows:

- Identify flood risks in the Town of Middletown, Villages and outlying areas of Halcott, Hardenburgh and Roxbury
- Educate and inform residents, businesses, government officials and local agencies of flood risks
- Work with local, state and federal officials and agencies to:
 1. Identify projects and programs that reduce the incidence and impacts of flooding and
 2. Work together regionally to fund these projects and associated programs throughout our area and
 3. Enhance and encourage economic development in flood safe areas and
 4. Educate the wider public regionally as to the mitigation & flood planning and recovery efforts that are in process

Miller then introduced Alison Miskiman of Tetra Tech, who is one of the consultants working on the Hazard Mitigation Plan updates for Delaware County. Ms. Miskiman went through a power point presentation that pointed to the HAZUS software specifications regarding FEMA and the several ways in which municipalities can use the data, add to the data and mold the data to make site-specific modifications for future potential funding needs in the event of another flood or other disaster. The annexes for the three local municipalities are still in draft form and can be improved upon. In that vein Pat Davis pointed out that the Mountainside Residential Care Center is listed as on the flood plain or within harms way, which is incorrect.

Graydon Dutcher of Delaware County Soil & Water gave a presentation entitled 'Working with a Stream's Natural Processes' from which some of the major points were:

- every decade since 1895 has seen an increase of .65 inches of rain and the major events are increasing in number and frequency
- 1% chance per annum of a major flood event is the same as what is confusingly called '100 year event'
- streams move more than water and stressed streams erode and deposit sediment in various ways
- there are several stream types (step and riffle) which obey certain physical laws
- bankfull is what we would call 'spring high water', and is prior to flood stage, where the bankfull point is overflown
- floodplains function as energy dissipation during flooding events, are part of a natural process of topsoil formation and floods are the most common natural hazard in Delaware County
- due to development, today's floodplains are not tomorrow's
- when a channel is disconnected from the floodplain, velocity of stream and subsequent erosion & infrastructure damage increases
- streams become unstable due to dredging, channel straightening, berms, large floods and floodplain development – instability leads to higher flood stage levels
- reconnecting streams to their floodplains, allowing them to meet the bankfull elevation, which creates less velocity/damage/erosion, is a goal

As Peg Ellsworth was ill and unable to attend, Miller spoke briefly on the subject of the Long Term Community Recovery Grants, a meeting regarding the same with DOS two weeks ago and basic templates for priority projects that came out of that meeting. Next step is for the municipal leaders to meet and an RFP to be written for a planner.

Pat Davis spoke on the subject of where the new flood maps and ordinances are; Middletown has adopted the new flood law, which is identical to the old although today's maps in relation to that law are in 'HD' compared to the old in black & white. Post-event there are other maps being drawn in a 3-6 year process that will also require adoption and which will reveal the flood plain in great detail. He also spoke to the impetus behind the commission, which is high post-Irene but which, in 2-3 years, gets tougher as memory and energy can wane especially when facing tough decisions regarding development. He also read a brief statement from the Freshtown representative attending, which said

they were installing shelves soon, fridges are in, as are coolers and they hope to be fully operational by June 1st.

Nelt Delameter spoke to the frustrations of waiting ten years for 3 agencies to agree to a proposed project to protect Arkville as well as a lack of communication regarding current projects that are in the works in terms of letting the community know what is going on and when.

Pat Davis spoke of the 90million available to NYS via the Federal Gov't with NYS pointing to Middletown, Sidney & Walton as the top three priorities for the funding of projects re: mitigation. Miller mentioned that one of the primary functions of the Flood Commission is to coordinate communication efforts throughout the community.

Dutcher spoke regarding all EWP projects being done through Hazard Mitigation grants, with 13 slated for Fleischmanns and another half dozen and more in Middletown as a whole. Dean Frazier spoke about the Watershed Affairs Department willingness to help administer all grants and projects for the communities.

Ric Weidenbach then spoke to the errors made after the '96 flood, when the stream science being practiced was not as it is understood today. The opportunities available to the area post-event are vast. HAZUS is great but it treats the symptoms. Learning to utilize the flood plains and making a flood routing study to significantly reduce flooding especially in the villages is his recommendation. He urged all present to do the hard work of continuing the commission in light of the energy and funding now available.

Miller suggested all mark their calendars for the community-wide Remembrance Day, 6p.m. August 30th, 2012 at the MCS Gym where Dutcher will also be presenting some kind of stream & flood plain education session for the general public.

Questions were raised re: hard choices, where the priority projects are slated (Dutcher: Arkville Trailer Park, above Georges Bridge, all of Fleischmanns – and he will get a complete list of all projects to Miller), and how we can better communicate the kind of info that was received tonight to the community given that the local news did not attend.

The meeting was closed at approximately 8:45p.m.