

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES
Monday, July 14, 2014

Members present: Becca Washburn, Chair; Judi Kamien; Ken Belliveau, Jeff Kampion
Staff present: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner; Patti Spence, Secretary
Public: Roy Schiff, Milone & MacBroom, Inc.; Anne Imhoff; Natalie Howell; Skip Flanders; James Gorham; David Luce; Barbara Farr; Mary Nealon, Bear Creek Environmental; Kathy Grace

The meeting was opened at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION

Roy Schiff of the consulting firm, Milone & MacBroom, Inc. gave an overview of his firm's project that is: "Evaluating the Costs and Benefits of Floodplain Protection Activities in Waterbury, Vermont". The study will examine the economic value of undeveloped land in the floodplain in terms of protecting developed areas and conserving natural resources. Earth Economics is the sub-consultant working with Milone and MacBroom on placing values on floodplain property. The first phase of the study is looking at the delineation of floodplain zones including the downtown area, and the second phase is determining the cost benefit analysis of developing vs. not developing these floodplain areas. The topic of the existing Zoning Districts in these floodplain areas will be taken into consideration as well.

This public meeting was held to discuss the project.

Floodplain mapping is currently an approximation, which is standard for FEMA to use when better mapping is not available. However for Waterbury there are several organizations working on better mapping and that will be available as this study progresses.

Mr. Schiff discussed the results of the so called "Choke Study" that examined various options for floodplain re-connection and options for attempting to reduce the flood levels in the Village of Waterbury. Areas of potential floodplain re-connection include:

1. Harvey field, along the River Road, north-west of the Winooski St bridge (The landowners are not currently interested in the change that would be required to be made to their property).
2. State corn and hay field between Randall Street and the Winooski River., 12 +/- acres
3. Hay field adjacent to south end of the State Complex

There is a great deal of work and excavation required for these projects and part of this study is to determine the cost benefit of this undertaking. FEMA has agreed to fund the next phase of engineering design for these sites.

The study Evaluating the Costs and Benefits of Floodplain Protection Activities in Waterbury is moving into the second phase of examining whether the benefits of floodplain protection outweigh the costs. This matrix was presented.

BENEFITS	COSTS
Reduction of flood damages	Possible loss of economic opportunity
Lower recovery costs	Possible reduced tax base
Increased health and safety	Floodplain restoration costs
Enhanced ecosystem services	Increased building costs to flood-proof structures
Social benefits	Recovery of structures remaining in the floodplain
	Demolitions

Draft floodplain management scenarios for the study include:

1. Business as usual
 - a. full floodplain development to current zoning
 - b. see current local floodplain management regulations.
 - c. use FEMA minimum requirements to fill gaps
2. Elevate
 - a. all new development to be elevated xx feet above the 100 year flood level
 - b. elevation requirement following flood damage
3. Avoidance
 - a. migrate out of the most at risk areas with deepest 100 year flood levels
 - b. all new development or flood repairs to be elevated xx feet above the 500 year flood level
4. Extreme flood risk avoidance
 - a. abandonment of majority of structures in the 100 year floodplain following substantial flood damages
 - b. elevate essential buildings and select historic structures following flood damages selected to remain.
 - c. Severe floodplain development restrictions.

The following public input to scenarios was offered:

1. Add a scenario where there is no fill and no additional building is allowed within the 100-year floodplain.
2. Elevating utilities above the floodplain.

This study will also look at and analyze changing regional hydrology including the trend of an increase in intensity of storms in the area and region, changing pattern of when the storms occur, and an overall increase in rainfall. Another area is what trends we may find in the floods that are occurring.

Next steps:

1. After the build out analysis have a joint meeting with the Trustees and Selectboard to involve them in this process.
2. Two more demonstrations of the flume will be occurring - July 31st and August 14th at the Waterbury Farmer's Market

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes of June 9, 2014 and June 23, 2014 were reviewed.

MOTION:

Ken Belliveau moved and Judi Kamien seconded the motion to approve the minutes of June 9, 2014.

VOTE:

The motion was approved unanimously.

MOTION:

Ken Belliveau moved and Jeff Kampion seconded the motion to approve the minutes of June 23, 2014 as amended.

VOTE:

The motion was approved unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. The Floodplain Management Working Group has been working on updating the project list in the Waterbury Hazard Mitigation Plan. This should be ready next month to present to the PC.
2. Invite Ryan Morrison, Zoning Administrator, to the meeting when the build-out analysis in the Milone & MacBroom study will be discussed.
3. Considering expanding the PC to 7 members - have Steve discuss with the Selectboard.

NEXT MEETING

July 28, 2014 - tentative pending Mary Koen's availability to make a quorum. The possibility of a field trip to the Winooski and Thatcher Brook to examine floodplain areas in the community was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 09:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Patti Spence
Secretary

*These minutes were approved on August 11, 2014 *

