



Flood Advisory Committee

Minutes of April 23, 2009 Meeting

- **The** fourth meeting of 2009 for the Cranford Flood Advisory Committee (FAC) was called to order by Chairman Mark C. Smith at 7:37 PM in room 108 of the Cranford Municipal Building.
- **The** following people were in attendance:
Mark C. Smith, Ed Trush, Martha Garcia, C. J. Decotiis, Leo Coakley, Rick Marsden, Ellen Hunt, Joseph Musillo, Louis C. Lambe, Mike Pender, Elaine Meyer, Tom Mineo, Bob Puhak.
- **The Minutes of the March 26, 2009 FAC meeting** were distributed by e-mail prior to the meeting and individuals in attendance given the opportunity to comment on or correct them. Hearing no requests for corrections, Mr. Smith requested a motion for the acceptance of the minutes. A motion was offered by Mr. Trush and a second by Mr. Decotiis. Subsequently, the minutes of the March 26, 2009 meeting were accepted by attending members of the committee.
- **Mr.** Marsden reported on the **Cooperative effort of the Township and the County to restore the dike** to its original elevations by redistributing and reinforcing the soil. He stated that on March 22, Cranford finished staking the areas that are in need of filling. Station 13+00 was reported to be in the worst condition. Some spots are higher and he warned that the finished product may look odd or even unfinished. Mr. Marsden suggested making the elevation differences more subtle by distributing fill but the county was opposed. He assured the committee that they will fill to the approved elevations on the permit. Mr. Tom Mineo echoed Mr. Marsden's point and stated that we must stick to the approved elevations. He went on to say that the entire repair should be done in about a month. Mr. Marsden added that the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) should be close to doing the necessary borings along the river in the upcoming weeks and months. Mr. Pender asked, "What is being used for the repair?" Mr. Marsden replied that the county is going to choose a clay mix that has some cohesive properties. Ms. Garcia wanted to know how long this fix will last. Mr. Marsden suggested that the USACE will give us a better idea once they have taken their samples and performed their analyses. Mr. Coakley suggested that some spots of the dike may possibly fail because of their height and angle of the embankment. Mr. Pender suggested that trees could compromise the stability of the dike. Mr. Marsden agreed but stated that right now we may have to leave well enough alone. If we start cutting down trees we will have to deal with the roots which could make things worse. Mr. Puhak suggested that it might be wise to have the DPW maintain the landscape and mitigate the growth around the dike to prevent potential problems from developing.



Flood Advisory Committee

- **At update on County's review of Phase 3 & 4** – Mr. Trush opened the discussion with a question about a statement made by Mr. Marsden in the previous meeting. Mr. Trush wanted to know what was unprecedented about our **Phase 3&4** plans. Mr. Coakley responded that the plan includes provisions which would allow Cranford, if it had the funding, to affect improvements to the dikes at a lower cost which are proactive and would enable the Township to more readily adopt any future regional plan. Mr. Puhak expressed a concern that because our USACE contact, Mr. John O'Connor, does not actively attend the FAC meetings that we could possibly not be considered for any future funding opportunities via the USACE and that his presence at our meetings would facilitate better progress. Mr. Mineo, Union County Engineer, stated that Mr. O'Connor has suggested that we **"moth ball"** our 3&4 plans until we can predict what its upstream and downstream impacts are. Mr. Coakley stated that some regulations have changed which may make 3&4 more of a challenge. Mr. Coakley reviewed that about 1.5 years ago, the USACE began its process of analyses by obtaining the maps and data from Cranford and Union. The study of the dikes, cross sections, and borings will monopolize this years funding. Next, the data will be evaluated to project the cost benefit of designs for different levels and storms. Once this is done the USACE will advise Cranford as to how it will proceed. All of this could take several more years to complete. Mr. Puhak queried, "Would the fluctuating real estate market values have an impact on the cost benefit analyses and/or the USACE's final response?" Mr. Coakley stated that the cost the USACE considers is the cost to repair the damages from a storm and not the local market values. Mr. Marsden reminded the committee that when the USACE first became involved, it estimated a 7 year turnaround and they are progressing at about that pace. Mr. Trush asked Mr. Marsden if Cranford needed the USACE for anything more than the potential for funding. Mr. Coakley replied that the Rahway River is a waterway which falls under the jurisdiction of the USACE and therefore, must seek its approval for plans to improve or change the current conditions. Mr. Decotiis questioned that if a project was done which offered improvements upstream and downstream, would the USACE condone the plan? Mr. Marsden stated that he really would not care to speculate as to what the USACE may or may not do and would prefer to arrange for Mr. O'Connor to attend a future meeting and address these questions directly.
- **At Update of Funding Efforts:** Mr. Smith reported that the Cranford Township Committee evaluated the hiring of a lobbying firm to assist Cranford in obtaining funding for its remaining phases. Unfortunately, given the current fiscal climate, there was no support for the idea without a guarantee of a return. Mr. Smith advised the CFAC that he had contacted Assemblyman Jon Bramnick's office and they have offered to help arrange for us a meeting with individuals within the state that can assist us in moving towards obtaining funding for our projects. Mr. Musillo asked if there was any funding for 2.B? Mr. Smith stated that it is on Mr. Marsden list of projects but it remains without a source of funding. Mr. Musillo then asked if there was any funding or provisions for a consultant to work on the Community Rating System. Mr. Smith responded that there is not and all past work in this regard was done by staff or volunteer. Mr. Trush made a formal suggestion to have the Township Committee seek the assistance of any out of work professionals that may be able to help our cause in any way while they are actively seeking work in their respective professions. Mr. Smith suggested that he would publicly request for professional help from within the community to assist the Township with various un-funded municipal projects.



Flood Advisory Committee

- **An Update on Phase 5** – Mr. Smith explained that he had recently spoke with Ms. Drake of Union County regarding the property on Park Drive and she informed him that she is waiting on the second necessary appraisal which is due to be delivered any day. Ms Hunt asked, “Is there any other property in this general area that would suit our purpose?” Mr. Smith offered the possibility of using the property that is at the end of the paved street to construct the pump station should the appraisals come in too high. Ms. Hunt advised that if the pump station is constructed where it is proposed then the foot path will need to be diverted around the station. She went on to ask if the placement of the pump station on Park Drive will protect the homes on Park Drive from the ever encroaching lake?. Ms. Meyer agreed that the lake does seem to be awfully shallow as of late. Mr. Mineo concurred that the lake is in need of some maintenance and assured the committee that this park is scheduled for a de-silting effort in the not so distant future.
- **A Final** comment was offered by Ms. Hunt who stated that on 4/21/2009 she received a county alert advising her on the state of the storm and flooding conditions in Kenilworth. Ms Hunt questioned why Kenilworth would see such high flows during the rainfall and then all of a sudden have no street accumulation at all. Mr. Marsden suggested that the accumulation and high flow conditions were more than likely the direct result of a local clog that corrected itself by virtue of the pressure within the system.
- **A Motion** to adjourn the meeting was offered by Mr. Marsden and seconded by Ms. Meyer.
- **Since** our meeting took place took place on the birth and death day of Mr. William Shakespeare, I’ll let him have the last word.

**2.B or not 2.B ?
Where is the funding?**

