

Community Advisory Group Notes

Thursday, September 22, 2016 from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Community Advisory Group Members

Present

Tammy Beideman
Kevin Bloom
Simon Cortes
Frank Durantaye
Reverend Joan King
Lori Lilly
Ken McNaughton
Ron Peters
Bruno Reich
Don Reuwer
Debbie Slack Katz
Angela Tersiguel
Beth Woodruff

Not Present

Senator James N. Robey
Andy Hall
Timothy Kendzierski
Gary Maule

County Staff

Kate Bolinger
Jeff Bronow
Jim Caldwell
Lisa Crow
Joseph Herr
Val Lazdins
Raj Kudchadkar
Phil Nichols
Kristin O'Connor
Jessie Keller

Discussion Topics

Welcome – County Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- The County's Recovery Manager, Joe Herr delivered the welcome mentioning Senator Robey is healing from his ankle surgery but is expected to be back next week.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – County Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- Members commented they would like more detailed items captured in future minutes.
- Minutes from last week's meeting on 9/15/16 were approved.

Follow-up from Last Meeting – County Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- Follow-up items brought up at the last meeting were addressed from the County's Recovery Manager briefly in order to allow time for the substantial presentations. They were as follows:

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- Any issues call 2900.
- Traffic Plan has been manageable.
- Credentialing has been working; no incidents that have been problematic.
- The idea is to maximize everyone's time here.
- Flood work group had an option to sunset or pause because they didn't want to be redundant. They've decided to still continue with monthly meetings.
- Will talk about delineation of intermediate vs. long-term issues/topics.
- We have been listening to the group about overall process and have broken down suggestions/concerns into three overarching categories:

1) Immediate Community Needs/Follow-up Items:

- The Disaster Recovery Task force (DRT) has been documenting these each week and assigning items to the appropriate agency.
- DRT will compile this list and bring it to the group each week.

2) Ideas/Recommendations:

- DRT heard from this group through meetings and emails wanting to capture ideas.
- Working on the process for compiling all of these ideas into a long-term recovery strategy that will tie the process Phil outlined last week.
- Public Engagement Associates (DPZ's consultants) will be addressing the CAG next week on the specific process for capturing ideas and the public engagement strategy moving forward.

3) Experts/Projected Meeting Schedule:

- A draft schedule of meetings was handed out and outlines the speakers /topics of interest to the CAG with tangible outcomes.
 - This schedule will then feed into the overarching process for the long-term recovery process.
- The follow-up items process, ideas and recommendations from the CAG, and meeting schedule will all be discussed more in depth at the next meeting.

Overview of Watershed Maps – Department of Planning and Zoning, Jeff Bronow

- Jeff Bronow from DPZ gave a briefing on the various maps available on DPZ's website.
- Earlier than 1984 there was no flood control. Storm water regulations started in the late 1980s.
- Old aerials from 1943 until 2016 provided great images over time.
 - DPZ will post these maps to the website as well.
- CAG member made a request for the addition of contour lines.
 - DPZ will make this addition.
- There was a lot of discussion surrounding Toll House development that may have been going on in an area marked as undeveloped but has seemed to be paused.
 - One CAG member remembers signs listed in 2014.
 - DPZ noted no plans from Toll House have been submitted at this time.

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- The overall consensus was that Toll House has pulled these plans but they are not forgotten.
- A comment from a CAG member of adding additional layers to the maps.
 - DPZ noted these are interactive maps and additional layers can be added by the user.
 - DPZ also noted they love sharing these maps and getting more information from individuals to make these maps even better.
- A comment from a CAG member on better demonstrating the elevation of Historic Ellicott City.
 - DPZ noted that in an ideal world, there would be a 3D map of Historic Ellicott City.
- Discussion from the CAG surrounding the slow release pipe at Burgess Mill.
 - Never seen water come down the development.
 - 100 year storm development doesn't work in one member's personal opinion.
- The CAG members want to investigate what happened with the Burgess Mill pond.
 - Question surrounding the underwater retention pond.
 - CAG would like to see the inspection date on the report.
 - Question regarding the Burgess Mill slow release pipe and retention tanks.
- CAG member commented that a tremendous amount of water from Ellicott Mills was apparent during the storm.
- CAG member brought up the possibility of new development by the 7-11 property on St. Johns Lane, right next to Shoemaker and the Farming Home, located on Frederick Rd. that will add to the Hudson.
- Discussion from the CAG on redevelopment and moving forward.
 - Have to manage for 100 year storm only for the increase.
 - Need to make sure redevelopment makes it better and not worse.
- One member commented that they'd love to see rain barrels become the new recycle bins.
- Association of State Flood Plain Managers Guide could give more information on ordinances that would be a great resource for legislation on flood management for development and redevelopment.
- CAG member commented on two areas to legislate for flood management 1) legislative mandate component 2) volunteer component.
- Need to get the same mentality for storm water management as we do for recycling.
 - Same pride for recycling need to do the same for storm water management.
 - Get rain barrels for every household.
- CAG member commented that it would take 7 million barrels to hold all of the water.
- CAG comment to McCormick Taylor: anything to get rid of the water would be a helpful practice.
 - Overall consensus is that everything possible should be done with Storm Water Management as the resolution lies within a combination of all the items discussed, not just one single project.

Flood Working Group Presentation — Historic Ellicott City Flood Work Group Chair, Debbie Slack Katz and Bruno Reich

Introduction of the Group, Debbie Slack Katz

- Flood Work Group has met for 15 months.
- Group is comprised of property owners, tenants, and experts that worked with water all their life and have institutional knowledge of flooding.
- Don't always agree, but at the end of the day the group has come together with one end goal.

Overview of Work Conducted, Bruno Reich

Historic Ellicott City Recovery Community Advisory Group

- The Group was tasked with developing a report on what should be done to prevent flooding in Historic EC.
- Report was finished last December.
- Bruno Reich gave a briefing on his personal map of downtown EC and Lori Lilly's map.
 - Lori Lilly's map shows the 4 sub-watersheds.
 - Hudson branch has a lot of reports on where most of the development lies.
 - All branches drain into the Tiber.
- Lori Lilly runs the READY Program and understands the technical side.
- DPW has provided hours of presentations.
- Group had a technical session with Mark DeLuca, who is an excellent source for the flood and knowledge on integrating the different agencies involved.
- Bruno reviewed DPW's charts from his presentation that show the rainfall from the different storms.
- Bruno explained the flooding previously had been the Patapsco rising and the lower end of Main Street floods.
 - This is what happened during Agnes.
- What's happening now, the water comes down fast from the watershed on its way to the Patapsco.
 - Another important fact from the studies: Too small capacity of the culvert, such that water coming down Main Street jumps out of the culvert and into the street.
- Water goes under Main St. starts running down Main St. and fills up Lot D, and then gets combined with everything from Old Columbia Pike and Cat Rock Creek.
- Synopsis: Whether it is it 5 year, 10 year, or 100 year storm event, same areas get flooded each time but at different depth.
- Bruno provided a rain graph that showed how the rain and resulting height of the water reacted in the previous 2011 Tropical Lee Storm.
- 100 yr storm is 2.4 inches of water over a 24 hour period (OCS believes it is actually 5 inches).
- During Lee, EC experienced 4.6 inches.
- July 2016 storm, EC received 6 inches in 2 hours.
- Currently, development is designing for the requirements, but rainfall is exceeding those requirements.
- M & T study showed water retention ponds as a possibility by Route 29 and US 40.
- Flood Work Group did a tour where they visited the area by the Court House.
 - Looked at the steps behind Parking Lot E, channels, storm water management practices.
 - Pond designed in the 80s but it is being redone to be more effective off of Rogers Avenue.
 - Looked at the condition of where the concrete channel goes near the Colored School.
 - The Channel was really deep through the West End and Ellicott Drive.
 - Problem is that water is coming down Main St. and not through the channel.
 - Had a lot of really good education.
- Lori's group READY goes out and cleans up the stream.
 - Several week-long ventures.
 - Pictures of what happens in the stream.
 - Places of where old stone wall is crumbling.
 - Grouting is eroding and ready to collapse.
- A lot of the properties are on private property, subdivided 250 years and aren't well defined.
- How do you work in the channel and coordinate something that belongs to several property owners?
- READY Group can pull out trash, trees, and vines to clean up the channel somewhat.
- Barrier: can't use public funding on private property.

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- Can't be done legally unless there is an easement.
- Provided information on some of the other studies.
- Case Study S & S completed was focused on the damage in that area.
- Another report countywide from 2010.
- Report done in 2012 in Hudson and Plum Tree Branch.
- Focus is on the M & T completed in 2014 in detail.
- Provides good information going forward. It took several meetings to get a good education and then had to decide on the Flood Group's purpose.

Summary of the Report, Bruno Reich

- The Flood Work Group discussed the different questions that were addressed during the 15 month period.
 - What structural approach should we take?
 - What should we tell citizens and the county to help with the flood problem?
 - Education on the community and public about what's going on and safe measures to help mitigate the flood.
 - Funding - How do we go about funding? How much should the county be putting into flood mitigation? What are other funding sources?
 - Focused on legislation.
 - Do we try to restrict development in the watershed?
 - Have been discussing all of these issues over the last 15 months.
 - Should there be some dedicated County effort to maintain on a routine schedule?
 - Should the County dedicate one staff member to go after grant money?
- Jim Caldwell described how all of the different departments work together in the County to work on stormwater management concerns.
 - There are state regulations that developers have to comply with. When they are approved they go to HC Soil Conservation Dept. Goes back to DPW to make sure it meets the standards. Back to DPW to inspect.
- CAG wants the inspection reports from DPW at the next meeting.
- Cleaning up the channels.
 - Idea: The parking lot could be a two level parking garage for storm water retention.
- Tax incentives to do more flood mitigation could be on the table.
- Form a cooperative to pay for improvements on their own property.
- Create step ponds on BGE right-of-way to slow down water.
- Maintenance and monitoring of the report.
- Talked about education and maintaining a permanent webpage.
- Another idea is to hold a water day to educate people about flooding.
- Planning on emergency preparedness.
 - 2 days of SkyWarn System Class to be trained spotters.
- Partner with Volunteer Groups.
- Have dedicated staff at the County to oversee mitigation efforts and go after grant money.
- A lot of back and forth about FEMA insurance.
 - Eventually had a FEMA rep will come to speak to the group.
 - Issues with the NFIP because congress doesn't want to rewrite the bill.
- Most of coordinating and pushing and work on the Flood Group Site.
- A lot of issue is with many private property owners.
- Once you get the work, who is responsible for maintaining it?

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- Talked about easements and private property issues, and there is a big challenge related to private property. Flood Work Group has discussed this issue. Comment is that the wall that exists should be maintained to keep water in the channel. It's an open storm drain system.
- Discussed the legislative process.
- Question regarding the retention ponds being maintained properly and dug to culvert size.
- Discussed the stream wall design and construction process.
- Stream walls were built to speed up the flow of the water in the channel, originally for the mill operation.
- McCormick Taylor came to discuss to the group the work was completed in the 2014 Study, and that work was constricted and constrained due to the nature of the 2011 storm.
- McCormick Taylor is now working on a 6-9 month study that is more comprehensive.
- McCormick Taylor discussed the potential of the use of a big pipe down the middle of main street, and the dimensions that would be needed to channel the water down main street
- How deep is the pavement on Main Street when it was 1700? Possible not have to deal with granite?
- In favor of doing something now to improve the watershed (stream channel and...)
- Suggestion is for FWG to continue working on the technical aspects of the flood study, and provide reports to the CAG
- CAG what should Ellicott City look like when we rebuild?
 - Widen sidewalks
 - Bolt down trash cans
 - Parking on Main St
 - Sidewalk construction
- Is DPW making decisions without the input of the CAG?
- Joe explained that the County is only making short term improvements, and will not make long term improvements without input from the public.
- Is there a rush to get people back down to Main Street?
- We have a responsibility to help with the insurance of property/business owners
- Educate on what folks are insured for and coverage gaps.
- There will be many answers for the questions we are facing.
- There is nothing in the budget to help with the businesses insurance.
- We need to follow the planning process in order to include all of these ideas in the long run.
- How do we incorporate the flood mitigation projects into the longer term vision of the EC?
- We received the declaration, how is that funding going to be used.

The recovery effort for Historic Ellicott City is organized around six principles:

HEALING

Foster the healing process for community members through the access of a wide range of social and financial resources.

STABILITY

Find immediate and long-term housing solutions for residents displaced by the flooding.

ECONOMY

Expedite business recovery and a return to the long-term economic growth.

REBUILDING

Rebuild Historic Ellicott City with an emphasis on resilient infrastructure through flood mitigation.

PRESERVATION

Preserve Historic Ellicott City's unique and cherished architectural characteristics that have always attracted visitors.

ENVIRONMENT

Pursue and implement projects that ensure the continued vitality of our natural resources in pursuit of a sustainable quality of life.

Closing – County Recovery Manager, Joe Herr