

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
Monday, January 13, 2014

Members present: Becca Washburn, Chair; Ken Belliveau; Mary Koen; Judi Kamien; Jason Wulff
Staff present: Steve Lotspeich, Clare Rock, Patti Spence
Public: Roy Schiff, Malone and McBroom, Inc.
Kathy Grace, Waterbury village resident

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

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Roy Schiff of Malone and McBroom, Inc. presented results of the Choke Study and introduced their EPA funded Lake Champlain Basin grant project which will analyze economic and environmental benefits of regulation and mitigation projects.

BACKGROUND:

The consulting firm of Milone & MacBroom was hired by the Town of Waterbury to carry out the so called Choke Study that examined various options to re-connect floodplain areas to the Winooski River and potentially lower flood levels up to one foot. This study was carried out in 2013 with additional funding from the State of Vermont Dept. of Buildings and General Services and Green Mountain Power. The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission has applied for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding from FEMA for the implementation phase of the project. CVRPC is waiting for a reply from FEMA on whether this phase of the project will be funded. Milone & MacBroom was also the successful consultant for the Lake Champlain Basin Program EPA funded project to examine the costs and economic benefits of floodplain protection and regulation. Waterbury and Willsboro, New York, are the two communities being addressed in the case studies for this project. Roy Schiff, works in the Milone & MacBroom office in Waterbury and is a Resources Scientist and Engineer. He is the project manager for both of these projects.

CHOKE STUDY:

The Choke Study was done and completed by Malone and McBroom, Inc. in 2013.

The study was done on areas along the Winooski River in Waterbury. They analyzed areas that may be contributing to flood problems or could be changed to mitigate flood problems. One part of the study, for instance, analyzed the water flow under the Winooski Street Bridge. Would expanding a bridge allow for better water flow? Does the structure of the bridge become a retaining area for debris that then creates a blockage? There were many alternatives such as these that were considered. The Bolton Falls Dam was another area that was analyzed.

- A 13.2 acre parcel of farmland that is privately owned was identified as a key floodplain restoration area. The land in this area if restored to lower elevation would allow for some flood mitigation.
- A 15.6 acrea parcel at the State corn field was identified as another area that could provide some flood mitigation.
- An 8 acre parcel at the State Complex area is another parcel to consider.

MOVING FORWARD

- If the Hazard Mitigation Grant is received these areas will continue to be pursued.
- The private landowners are not currently interested but we will remain in contact with them.
- Coordinate with USGS on the current inundation study.
- Meet with MMI to review the scope of the Lake Champlain Basin Program. (see notes below)
- LIDAR flight to take place this fall to remap the flood zone area.
- Update FEMA floodway and floodplain maps.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN PROGRAM

The second part of the presentation discussed a study with the primary research question:

Do the benefits of floodplain protection outweigh the costs?

Waterbury and Willsboro, New York, are the two communities being addressed in the case studies for this project which is being conducted by MMI.

DRAFT BENEFITS

- Reduction of flood damages
- Lower recover costs
- Increased health and safety
- Enhanced ecosystem services
- Social benefits

Demolitions

DRAFT COSTS

- Possible loss of economic opportunity
- Possible reduced tax base
- Floodplain restoration cost
- Increased building costs to flood-proof structures
- Recovery of structures remaining in the floodplain

The FEMA Mitigation Policy - FP-108-024-01 was reviewed. "The purpose of this policy is to identify and quantify the types of environmental benefits that FEMA will consider in the BCA for acquisition projects."

Current floodplain management regulations in Waterbury will be reviewed and new floodplain management regulations are already being addressed for Waterbury and need to be completed by Fall 2014.

Flood Management Areas:

Designate 4 areas to study

Build-out analysis in those areas

Floodplain management regulations - existing regulations

Hydrology

Hydraulic monitoring

Consider restoration

Consider changes to structures

Damage Modeling (HAZUS and BCA)

The deliverable schedule has the final report being done by December 31, 2014

A flowchart of deliverables is available.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Discussion of the floodplain management program - policy issues and questions - review prior to next meeting (sent by email and hard copy distributed).
2. Regional Planning Commission meeting
3. CBDG grant - award pending
4. Strategy for public meetings

NEXT MEETING:

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on January 27, 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Patti Spence
Secretary

*These minutes were approved on February 10, 2014.