

**WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**Monday, June 23, 2014**

Members present: Becca Washburn, Chair; Judi Kamien; Ken Belliveau, Jeff Kampion, Mary Koen  
Staff present: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner  
Public: Roy Schiff, Milone & MacBroom, Inc.

The meeting was opened at 7:05 p.m.

**DISCUSSION WITH ROY SCHIFF OF MILONE & MACBROOM RE. EVALUATING THE ECONOMICS 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.

Mr. Schiff is looking for guidance on the buildout analysis. He explained that a build analysis determines the approximate carrying capacity of the land, based on current zoning and constraints to development such as natural resources. In the event of another major flood, we need to know how re-development will be focused, i.e. where should road infrastructure that is destroyed, be re-constructed.

In examining the benefit/cost analysis of floodplain protection, we can now place a value on the function of the open land in the floodplain for mitigating flood damage.

The study will also model elevation data including approximate first floor elevations for the existing buildings in the floodplain areas. Land Cover classes will be taken into considerations too. This data shows the levels of development and types of general natural land cover such as forest and agricultural lands. The economic values are tied to these land cover types that are classified in the National Land Cover Data (NLCD). Population levels for our area may be reflected in land cover model/map. Damages done by a flood such as Tropical Storm Irene are factored into the calculation of values.

The table of "ecosystem services valued" was discussed in terms of their relationship to land cover and priority items. These ecosystem services are the basis of the economic model used to determine the value of protection. It was agreed that the values for these floodplain areas should be generalized for any presentation of the general public.

Roy Schiff presented a map of the Village of Waterbury that shows the current FEMA 100-year floodplain and a revised 100-year floodplain delineation that is based on surveyed cross-sections. The importance of the Designated Downtown was discussed in terms of allowing denser development, since it is an area of mixed commercial, industrial, and some residential use. More exclusively residential areas such as Randall St. may

be handled differently in terms of regulation. In addition, these areas could be divided into areas that were flooded by Tropical Storm Irene and those that were not.

The types of maps that will be presented to the public on July 14<sup>th</sup> were discussed. It was agreed that the goal of having a greater level of understanding regarding the vulnerability to flooding is important. By showing the 100-year floodplain, the area inundated by Tropical Storm Irene, the existing land cover types, and the Designated Downtown overlay, discussion of which areas not to develop and those to re-develop will be encouraged. Presenting a climate change model and the associated mapping should be included in the presentation as well. The focus should be mostly educationally as well as getting public input on how different areas might be regulated.

Roy asked for suggestions on basic concepts and scenarios for regulating the floodplain such as: allowing higher density in the Designated Downtown outside of the 100-year floodplain, no net fill allowed in the floodplain, a higher level of regulation for residential development and re-development in the floodplain. For follow up Roy will propose some ideas for scenarios for the Planning Commission to react to prior to the public meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

Roy and Steve will come up with a proposed outline for the public meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup> and circulate it to the Planning Commission for comment. The proposed mitigation and floodplain re-connection in the “choke study” will be incorporated. The risks of berming areas to prevent flooding and shifting impacts to other areas was discussed.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes of March 24 were reviewed.

**MOTION:**

Judi Kamien moved and Mary Koen seconded the motion to approve the minutes of March 24, 2014.

**VOTE:**

The motion was approved unanimously.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on July 14<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed to have the public meeting last for 90 minutes with time afterward to conduct other business. It was requested that we have an outline of the future public meetings available at the next Commission meeting. A matrix will be drafted including scenarios for flood hazard regulatory levels in relationship to the federal minimum standards and in relationship to the regulations for nearby communities.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted:



Stephen Lotspeich  
Community Planner

\*These minutes were approved on July 14, 2014 \*  
Planning Commission Approved Minutes, 6-23-14