

**SPECIAL WORK SESSION
MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**January 31, 2024
DELRAN, NJ**

Sunshine Statement: Be advised that proper notice has been given by the Township Council in accordance with the sunshine law in the following manner. Notice advertised in the Burlington County Times and Camden Courier Post on January 25, 2024 and posted on the bulletin board on the same date.

ROLL CALL: Mrs. Apeadu, Mr. Jeney, Mr. Lyon and Mr. Burrell were present. Mr. Smith was absent.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Catrambone, Mayor, Mr. Wright Solicitor, Mr. D’Armiento and Mr. Roberts, Engineers, Mr. Bellina, Administrator, and Ms. Eggers, Township Clerk

DISCUSSION – RIVERSIDE PARK FLOODING

Mr. Catrambone introduced the officials in attendance and gave an overview of how the meeting would be conducted.

Mr. Burrell outlined the underlying issues of the flooding including the erosion and height of the berm as well as storm water drainage.

Mr. D’Armiento explained that in 2012, Delran Township joined a study with DVRP and NOAA resulting in a vulnerability report issued in 2017. The study showed the projected rise of sea levels and category two storms in the Riverside Park area during the next 100 years.

Mr. Burrell explained that this report will be a baseline that will be used to determine potential methods to alleviate the flooding problem. The area is under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers, so the township is obligated to work with them.

Mr. Burrell reviewed various concepts that had been proposed previously as well as how the process will work moving forward. He explained that the Army Corps will conduct a feasibility study and get back to the township with various options.

Mr. D’Armiento explained that the anticipated feasibility study regarding the streambank will encompass the area between the wastewater treatment center to North Chester Avenue. Following that will be the design and implementation. In the meantime, there are some projects that have been completed, and some that will be finished soon, that will help with storm water drainage.

Mr. Catrambone welcomed the Salvation Army. He also thanked Former Councilwoman, Pat Pomeranz for her previous efforts to engage with the Army Corps of Engineers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jodi Klein, 71 Alden Avenue – Ms. Klein suggested better communication for alerting residents about the possibility of flooding and about what to expect in the aftermath of the flood. Mr.

Catrambone explained that a robocall was sent warning about potential flooding. Mr. Burrell remarked that the sign-in sheet at the meeting will be used for better communication in the future.

Vicky Pfeffer, 649 Monroe Street, Riverside – Ms. Pfeffer asked who oversees the Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Burrell stated that they answer to Congress. Ms. Pfeffer asked if a congressperson should be contacted for assistance, but Mr. Burrell explained that the Army Corps has already agreed to work with the township. They are just not moving as fast as we would like.

Joseph Dobran, 57 Stewart Avenue – Mr. Dobran worked for the Army Corps of Engineers and questioned the accusation that their response time is slow. Mr. Dobran advised that the township should be continuously trying to contact them.

Tiffany Otis, 72 Alden Avenue – Ms. Otis asked if, based on the 2017 report, anyone in the audience was notified that there could be a devastating flood in their area.

Pat Pomeranz, 21 Alden Avenue – Ms. Pomeranz referenced the 2017 DVRP report that advises protecting open space. She expressed concern for potential building in the harbor area stating that the master plan was changed, and rezoning was approved to allow for development of housing and businesses in the harbor district. She also noted that the Abrasive Alloys property should be kept as open space. Mr. Catrambone and Mr. Burrell explained that there was no zoning change, and the master plan only outlines possibilities. The Abrasive Alloys property was sold to provide affordable housing as per state requirements, but the project may not move forward. Ms. Pomeranz also questioned the length of time it took the township to accumulate funding to address the flooding issues.

Matt Williams, 37 Alden Avenue – Mr. Williams stated that he is having a problem with water pooling in front of his house when there is heavy rain. The water brings garbage which washes up on his property. Mr. Catrambone asked Mr. D'Armiento to investigate the issue.

Kathleen Selover, 11 Sycamore Street – Ms. Selover explained that she is also having water issues with the Swedes Run Creek that runs behind her property. She stated that trees are starting to fall, and the township has told her that her property is sinking. Mr. Burrell assured her that the problem would be investigated.

Ida Vathis, 60 Norman Avenue – Ms. Vathis asked why Norman Avenue residents were not mentioned in terms of flooding issues. Mr. Burrell and Mr. Catrambone assured her that Norman Avenue is included in all flood-related plans.

Mary Janus, Delran – Ms. Janus asked if Congressman Andy Kim was contacted regarding the flooding issue. Mr. Catrambone stated that he was. Ms. Janus also questioned whether the governor had been contacted. Mr. Burrell and Mr. Catrambone reported that the state DEP is already involved in the project.

Bob Gilbert, 75 Stewart Avenue – Mr. Gilbert reported that the Army Corps of Engineers wrote a letter to former mayor, Ken Paris, outlining the cost of the project in 2012. He expressed frustration in the length of time it has taken to move forward with the project. Mr. Burrell assured him that he

intends to move as quickly as possible to get the issue resolved. Mr. Gilbert also warned residents that some flood insurance only covers items that are permanently attached to the house.

Kevin Devlin, 80 Alden Avenue – Mr. Devlin asked for short term assistance, including a temporary pump to help move the water out to the creek. He was advised that this cannot be done because the Army Corps of Engineers would have to be involved in the process.

Courtney Wald-Wittkop, Manager of Blue Acres, which is part of the DEP – Ms. Wald-Wittkop informed residents that Blue Acres purchases homes at fair market value. The organization then demolishes the homes and creates open space to enhance flood storage and prevent future flooding.

Heather Coleman, Salvation Army – Ms. Coleman announced that the Salvation Army is available to help in a variety of ways.

Dave Morrison, 60 Alden Avenue – Mr. Morrison pronounced that the storm grates and drains should be cleaned regularly. He also asked if other towns have been contacted to see what they are doing to prevent flooding. Mr. Burrell assured him that other towns have already been contacted.

Kim Custer, 48 Norman Avenue – Ms. Custer advised that the Delran Planning Board's master plan should protect open space. She also suggested that the township designate a person that residents can reach out to during a crisis.

Councilwoman Nikki Apeadu, Stewart Avenue – Ms. Apeadu advised residents to contact her if they need help. She declared that the goal should be to work together to get things done.

Mr. Catrambone suggested residents sign up for Civic Ready so they can be kept aware of any emergency situations in the area.

Mr. Lyon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Jeney. All were in favor; the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,

Jamey Eggers
Municipal Clerk