

**MINUTES**  
**Morris County-Flood Mitigation Committee (MC-FMC)**  
**Via WebEx - Events**  
**November 15, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Louise Davis, Chair.

Members present:

Louise Davis	Julie Baron
Betty Cass-Schmidt	Joseph Pawelczyk
Gary Large	Andrew Crawford ( <i>arrived 5:38pm</i> )

Also attending:

Virginia Michelin, Flood Mitigation Program Coordinator, Office of Planning & Preservation  
Joseph Barilla, Planning Director, Office of Planning & Preservation  
Mike DiGiulio, Senior Planner, Office of Planning & Preservation  
Jason Rotter, Assistant Planner, Office of Planning & Preservation  
John Napolitano Esq., Legal Counsel  
Stephen Shaw, Commissioner Director

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT**

Louise Davis announced that in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting had been provided and filed with the Town of Morristown, the Morris County Clerk, the Daily Record and the Star Ledger.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Morris County Open Space Master Plan Element** – Joseph Barilla discussed the Morris County Planning Board’s efforts to update the Open Space Element of the Morris County Master Plan. Joseph indicated that he anticipates that the draft content will be ready to be reviewed in the late fall of 2022 by various County Boards including the Open Space and Flood Mitigation Committees. The Committees will be notified well in advance of any requests for feedback.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Louise Davis read the Virtual Meeting Statement related to members of the public attending the meeting and/or making comments. There were no members of the public present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the September 20, 2021, meeting were reviewed. Joseph Pawelczyk noted a typo which was corrected. On a motion by Julie Baron, which was seconded by Joseph Pawelczyk, the Committee approved said Minutes as corrected. The closed session minutes were reviewed and on a motion by Gary Large, which was seconded by Julie Baron, the Committee approved said Minutes.

**PROGRAM UPDATE**

Virginia Michelin provided the following updates:

- **FEMA Maps**
  - **pFIRMs** –Virginia reached out to FEMA about the status of the LFD. FEMA cited issues related to the study of Malapardis Brook in Hanover Township as well as other potential changes in the County, but did not elaborate further on what those were. The LFD scheduled to come out December 15<sup>th</sup> has been pushed back. FEMA indicated that a Public Comment Period may take place in 2022 for the entire County or for specific FIRM panels undergoing revisions on the 2017 pFIRMs. Virginia will continue reaching out to FEMA and NJDEP, post updates on the County website and provide the updates to the Flood Mitigation Committee.
  - **SRPs** – Lincoln Park, Pequannock, and Montville are still meeting monthly with FEMA. Preliminary maps are scheduled to be released in the end of 2022 or sometime in 2023, and will be adopted in a separate process.
  - **NJDEP PMR** – The NJDEP is working on detailed hydrologic / hydraulic studies as part of ongoing physical map revisions for portions of the County, with preliminary maps set to be released in 2022 or 2023. Virginia will update the website and forward information to the Committee regarding these efforts as it is received.
  
- **NFIP Update** – The NFIP is tentatively scheduled to expire 12/3/21 and will most likely receive an additional short-term reauthorization. Officials have indicated that efforts to pass NFIP reforms are ongoing; hopefully legislation will pass some time in 2022.
  
- **Risk Rating 2.0 (RR 2.0)** – New policies went into effect in October with rates determined by the new methodology. Rates for existing policies have been released and will become effective in April 2022. Virginia discussed concerns related to increasing premiums for elevated homes in the SFHA. FEMA is looking into the issue, which would be an unfortunate side effect of RR 2.0. Virginia will continue to provide updates.
  
- **Tropical Storm Ida Funding / NJOEM**
  - Ida affected a number of other counties in the state more severely, and NJOEM has received federal funding as Ida is a nationally declared disaster. Chris Testa of NJOEM reached out to Morris County to gauge interest in potential mitigation efforts, and a meeting was held (11/3) recently between NJOEM, MCOEM, municipalities and the County to discuss funding opportunities for buyouts and elevations of repetitive loss / severe repetitive loss (RL / SRL) homes. Properties that are awarded funds will receive up to 100% of the funds for acquisitions with no matching funding required from the County. The funding is competitive nationwide, and NJOEM is prioritizing high-risk SRL homes as they will be more likely to receive funding.
  
- **USGS Gage Comparison**
  - Virginia shared presentation slides showing tables and graphs of peak heights, flows, flood stages and dates recorded at certain river gages in the County during Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storms Ida & Henri, and additional major flood events which affected local communities. As Ida (September 2021) and Henri (August 2021) are the most recent storms, they offer a good comparison to Irene (August 2011) and other historic events. Gages located on the Whippany, Passaic, Pompton, and Rockaway Rivers were included as examples.
  - Ida surpassed Henri in intensity, and heights / flows did not reach or exceed Irene at any gage. In addition to Ida, Irene and current flows, the next three highest flow (flood events) were shown. Ida's effects in the County were mostly limited to road closures and flooded basements, whereas flooding due to Irene reached heights several feet higher with

significantly greater velocities than during Ida, causing widespread damage.

- Commissioner Director Stephen Shaw inquired as to whether it would be possible to measure and show a correlation between the removal of structures by the Flood Mitigation Program in local riverine floodplains and associated changes to peak heights and flows.
  - Virginia responded that the question has been posed before, and a number of variables may affect these determinations in the specific areas of demolitions, including soil characteristics and buyouts undertaken by other agencies.
  - Virginia added that she will revisit gallonage calculations performed as part of the County's efforts with the USACE Silver Jackets in Lincoln Park, and reiterated that each watershed is different. In areas with concentrated buyouts, it is likely that there are localized positive impacts due in part to increased water absorption.
  - Director Shaw discussed a conversation he had with the mayor of Pequannock following Ida, during which a rough correlation was noted between the efforts of the Flood Mitigation Program and decreased flooding impacts, but added that this was due in part to Ida being a less intense storm than historic major floods.
  - As there are less homes in floodplains in Lincoln Park, positive impacts of the Program are reflected by a reduction of resources needing to be provided as well as less negative press coverage following recent flood events, as noted by Virginia.

- **LEAP Grant / Forerunner**

- Virginia previously sent the Committee an email with information related to Forerunner and the grant opportunity. Forerunner is a cloud-based floodplain and CRS management application currently utilized by about 35 communities nationwide including several in NJ, and is the first of its kind.
- The County has been pursuing a potential shared services agreement for use of the software with municipalities. A meeting was held last week with local communities, which included a presentation by Forerunner to gauge interest in this opportunity. Municipalities have until tomorrow to inform the County of their interest.
- If there is enough local support, the County will apply for a NJ Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) shared services grant, which if successful will cover up to 75% of the cost for communities to use the Forerunner application. Grant applications are due to DCA by January 15, 2022.

- **NJAFM Conference - October 26-28<sup>th</sup>**

- The Conference was held in-person in Atlantic City with about 75% of past attendance, which is to be expected given the circumstances. There were presentations on Risk Rating 2.0, mitigation, and resiliency.
- The NJDEP and NJAFM are looking to set up mutual aid for CFMs to assist communities with post-disaster work including determinations of substantially damaged properties in New Jersey. ASFPM has done this in other communities in the US following major flooding events. Virginia will follow up.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

At 5:49pm, on a motion by Betty Cass-Schmidt, seconded by Joseph Pawelczyk, the FMC closed the open portion of the meeting pursuant to P.L. 1975 Ch. 231, the Open Public Meetings Act, and per the Committee's standard resolution language, voted to conduct a closed session wherein the subject of real property acquisition shall be discussed.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

At 5:55pm, on a motion by Julie Baron, seconded by Joseph Pawelczyk, the FMC returned to open session by unanimous vote.

The following actions were taken, as a result of Closed Session deliberations:

- **Resolution 2021-07 – Lincoln Park – South-11 Project Area – 11 Elm St – Final Approval –** CORE acquisition funding in the amount of \$50,250 to cover Morris County’s 75% cost-share and a recommendation that the corresponding Grant Agreement with Lincoln Park be executed. On a motion by Gary Large, seconded by Betty Cass-Schmidt, the Committee granted Final Approval by unanimous roll call vote.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Joseph Pawelczyk, seconded by Gary Large, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:57pm.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via WebEx.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Michelin, CFM, AICP, PP