

Plainfield Flood Recovery Grants Work Group Meeting

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 @ 10 a.m.

Attending:

Karen Hatcher (KH)
Michael Zahner (MZ)
Gary Smith (GS)
Josh Pitts (JP)
Karl Bissex (KB) - not available
Michael Billingsley (MB)
Denise Wheeler (DW) – via Zoom
Arion Thiboumery (AT) – via Zoom
Bram Towbin (BT) – not available
Sheila McGraw & Lauren Scott (TIG) - via Zoom
Celina Barton (Goddard) (CB)
Mike Davidson (Goddard) (MD)

Agenda:

- Goddard Campus Update- Celina Barton & Mike Davidson
- EWPP Site Visit Update - Karen
- Mill Street Bridge Repair Status- Josh
- Village Expansion Project- Arion
- FEMA PA Visit Preparation- Gary
- FHWA Grant Discussion- Josh/Michael Z

Goddard Campus Update - Celina Barton & Mike Davidson

MD – Goddard needs the town and the town needs Goddard – looking for the right size and parameters - he wants to have a creative economy across demographics – 25 to 40 retirement housing units and 30 - 48 affordable units – education on campus, conference center hosting conferences – clamping, lively place, something for everyone. What are the limitations, wants, needs and prohibitions for the Goddard project?

Events/water capacity – envisions 200 -300 guests at an event. There may be up to 100 visitors per day. Estimates 28 – 30 gallons of water per day per person – 10,000 gallons per day.

MB- Goddard has capacity for 1200 people.

JP suggests scheduling a separate Goddard meeting to review needs with the Water/Wastewater Commission.

MD/CB - they are scheduling a couple of events soon to engage with and talk with the community. **Goddard upcoming events: 11/23 Friendsgiving Day and 11/26 more formal invitation.**

Sabrina Brown – strategic planner and events coordination - leading creative efforts – 1-2 eateries, café in a.m. cafeteria at night

GS – FEMA PA funding for alternative procedures to help towns/groups recover, need to research if we could leverage funding for improvements to infrastructure – sidewalk expansion, biomass boiler – to be included in the FEMA application.

KH – Plans at Goddard will add new employment and economic development opportunities. These were included in the regional priority project list – funders are looking at the enhancements that will be gained by funding the Goddard project. MD is looking for grants to partner w/ Plainfield.

EWPP Site Visit Update – Karen

A limited number of properties will qualify. Looking for other opportunities for funding – the group looked at properties from Coburn Rd. and Cate Farm property, Brook Rd., Hudson, Mill, and Recreation field. Properties were viewed from the recreation field. The library fence is on the edge of the ledge. Two adjacent properties may also have issues that qualify. Allyson Hook from NCRS will have evaluation reports done by the end of November that may identify more at risk properties.

MB – 2 more properties to be added on Barre Hill (Chase & Jennifer Harmon) to be assessed for EWP. Gary will also add them to the damage inventory.

MB- there is the potential that the Batchelder Dam could be removed. This will change the Great Brook tributary water course and which will pick up speed and could impact the recreation field.

JP – Concerned about Bunker Hill Circle, gas station and restaurant – making WW and water more difficult if the bridge fails - it would take out water and sewer lines – doing work in the lower village is more feasible than redesigning the Rt. 2 intersection.

Mill Street Bridge Repair Status- Josh

GS - Vtrans is paying for these repairs and they should also be kept on the damage inventory.

JP - there are 13 locations now on the list – permanent locations will go through the municipal project program.

MB said everything is paid through the emergency funding phase by the State – anything not covered by the State should be put on the federal reimbursement list – these projects shouldn't cost the town anything.

GS – we should consider that federal long term funding have different town match percentages. The federal percentage is 90% with the local share of 10%, if projects are both FEMA w/ERAP the federal share is 92.5%, 7.5% to the town.

Sheila & Laureen from TIG joined 11 am

FHWA Grant Discussion- Josh/Michael Z.

MZ – spoke w/ Ross Gouin who said everything from 2023 has been approved - awaiting federal authorization for reimbursement – this should be in a couple of weeks.

MZ - Global decisions need to be made on bridges to move forward.

JP - Long term preferred solution for high water flows now that some houses are gone is to add larger culverts following the municipal assistance process. A larger scoping study needs to be done using the Hazard Mitigation funds from the Hazard Mitigation grant – Ross advised to hire a municipal project manager now to get things going – Michael Z will evaluate three best choices from the “at the ready” list and make recommendations.

KH - The question about the status of funding for the HMGP pre-application was raised. Karen indicated that there has been no word on it. It looks like there will be funding for buyouts.

JP will be the point person to alleviate communication confusion w/ Ross. MZ will support efforts as needed.

The future of Brook Rd. needs a discussion w/ the town and to get public input.

TIG – the new administration's Project 2025 has the potential for FEMA funding to be moved to a different agency – TIG hasn't heard anything official – they are moving forward as usual. TIG will notify us if anything changes at the federal level.

FEMA PA Visit Preparation- Gary

Final repairs whatever they are if paid for by FEMA w/ ERAP is 92.5% funding - keep on federal highway and damage inventory list until told to take them off.

MB - how is the Vt. Municipal Bond bank involved? Are they going to fund the Town's portion? The Bond Bank may forgive some loans.

GS - PA will be at its busiest this week – TIG coming in person – the goal is to optimize time to work w/ Chris, Lauren & Sheila (TIG) – town staff resources aren't 100% available – volunteers are doing the bulk of the work. Need to develop a schedule to make the best use of TIG's time.

Sheila said Chris usually goes around w/his staff w/ Sheila & Lauren to track specific measurements to add to the Damage Inventory – Michael Bingham (road foreman) will go w/ Chris to inventory damages

Sheila will set up a call w/Chris to figure out a schedule.

GS said the first 2 days are crucial – after there will be a recovery scoping meeting and more paperwork and administrative assistance will be needed – there is a meeting scheduled for Wed., 11/20 @ 9 am at the Opera House – FEMA staff and maybe VEM may attend.

Building up to the recovery phase, Chris expects to identify damages and add them to damage inventory – Sheila & Lauren work to build out the damage inventory – and enter information into the FEMA inventory depository – there are 60 days from the 11/20 meeting to get this done.

Batchelder Dam is on the list – can be taken off later.

KH – We have been advised in order to get the most benefit from FEMA, Plainfield needs the most impacted area designation – Pat Moulton said FEMA is working on finding out when/what is involved.

KH - Contacted VLCT to ask how we would get folks paid for doing volunteer work in the event of another disaster. TIG had advised that we need a charter change – Katie Buckley indicated that changing charter in VT needs legislative approval and is complicated. She thought that instead we could amend the local EM plan – so it includes assignment or provision of certain positions to be activated in an emergency and allows for compensation and that this would suffice.

– KH asked Oliva (at FEMA) to take this back to FEMA attorney to check if this was the case. Town needs to put the Emergency plan on the town website.

MB - will be the point person on drafting the language to update the Emergency Management Plan to include the above.

Village Expansion Project- Arion

Met w/ neighbors last Sunday for a site visit walk – will do additional weekend tours.

A preliminary RFP needs to be done this week – need blessing from TIG waiting for TIG response – need to send the RFP to 3 on TIG's list? JP said to follow the ready consultant services process – after approval can't base choice on cost must be by qualifications of those on the ready list.

KH - what are the funding sources for the ready list? Funding for federal assistance?
JP - checked w/ Vt. FEMA folks to assure funding reimbursement. If not federally funded try using PA.

MZ - said there might be funding under FEMA municipal assistance.

AT - the first phase of the project is roads, water & sewer, storm water runoff, etc.
- GS will check w/ Kim Canorecci at FEMA

The "at the ready" consultant list is maintained by Vtrans - reimburse thru PA - JP will send Arion the PA projects list.

MZ - the at the ready list used for the design phase are different firms/consultants than those that can be used for the project work.

JP - AT get clarification from FEMA about the process because it may be different in Vt. and that TIG has experienced in other states.

NO MEETING ON TUESDAY, NOV. 19TH due to consultants being here for a work session and FEMA Scoping Meeting 11/20.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE TUESDAY, NOV. 26TH.