

PLAINFIELD FLOOD RECOVERY GRANTS WORK GROUP
Tuesday, September 10, 2024 @ 10 a.m.

Attending:

Karen Hatcher (KH)
Michael Zahner (MZ)
Gary Smith (GS)
Josh Pitts (JP)
Karl Bissex (KB)
Michael Billingsley (MB)
Denise Wheeler (DW)
Arion Thiboumery (AT)

FEMA representatives:

Sam Young (Greensboro, VT) Interagency & Recovery (case manager) (SY)
Mark Leese (Denver CO.) (ML)

Updates:

PA- Gary and Josh:

GS and JP are continuing their work on the FEMA PA application. FEMA PA specialist Robert (??) has been hired for 2 months to assist Plainfield. ML will talk to Mary Kusenski. about enlisting Robert's help (Robert will be invited to attend the next meeting on 9/17). SY said PA funding is slow to receive;

LONG TERM RECOVERY PLAN:

1. KH will work with Sam Young and Karl to schedule a special Selectboard meeting to discuss a long term recovery plan. Invite Long Term Recovery staff (VLCT, USDA &VCRD) single point of contact to attend. VCRD does a good job moderating big meetings discussing difficult issues. Provide dinner?
2. Ask the Selectboard to appoint an advisory steering committee. VCRD will work with this committee and move the project ahead – they are good at engaging the public.
3. JP commented that we need to make sure community members understand that good communication is key to a successful outcome.
4. SY recommends community brainstorming to identify local projects – the community would vote however it would not be a binding vote.

BOND BANK

KB will need a cost estimate as required for the Vt. Municipal Bond Bank with as much detail as possible. Karen, Karl and Bram will work on this.

VILLAGE EXTENSION- Arion

1. Karl mentioned that the Univ. of PA engineering students can do a free housing and flood plain study.
2. Village Extension project. 20 acres out of the flood plain to be purchased from Bram Tobin & Erica DeCosta. Develop 30 buildable lots. AT developing google questionnaire. This project is separate from the Goddard housing project.
3. Phase 1 – purchase property and install infrastructure – town will need a low or no interest loan. Needs Selectboard approval.
4. Phase 2 – sell lots, a % will be devoted to “affordable” housing, develop design process, discuss with Down Street, what funding is available to the Town to purchase the land? FEMA can’t fund to purchase land.
5. Long term planning opportunities and development process
 - Housing
 - Economic
 - Recreation (tourism – bike trails)
 - Education
 - Cultural
 - Child and elder care

The Village project is more about housing while the Goddard project is a bigger picture project.

Find a way to connect the two projects to make it feel more of an inclusive community.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

- ML said the FEMA has 6 different federal agencies with pots of money available to different projects HUD, USDA, Economic Development, Dept. of the Interior (natural & cultural), Health Dept. and Army Corp of Engineers. May need new policies and changes to Zoning. FEMA identifies what falls under what. SY will send flow chart.
- A community planning process is important when applying for grants to show support.
- MZ – the preapplication grant is really a master plan. When to present it to the public? Wait until FEMA invites the formal grant submission.
- AT said people don’t know if they want a buyout until they have more information about the future plans of the Great Brook.
- MZ & AT to make a presentation at the public meeting.
- JP make clear that road placement and rebuild will ensure emergency services are available to residents. JP said there is an immediate need for \$300K for emergency WW action.
- JP – decision on what roads to rebuild made by Selectboard and Road Commissioner. Put temporary roads parallel to Brook Rd. w/o replacing bridges – will require significant engineer funding.

- MZ met w/ Ross Gouin, Vtrans and Peter Young they will work on federal aid to highways and bring in federal staff to assist.
- GS questions: Who prioritizes projects and who are the decision makers? Town needs its own bridge engineer to help categorize projects i.e. full replacement or partial fix? GS wants to make sure he is doing the correct work.

Action Steps

1. AT & MZ to have a separate meeting to discuss watershed;
2. KB to schedule a special Selectboard meeting with VCR, VLTC, etc.
3. GS & JP to schedule conference call with SY & ML re: PA
4. Schedule special Selectboard informational public meeting for Tuesday, Sept. 24 at the Opera House.
 - AT & MZ grant application and master plan process
 - KH – FEMA funding update
 - AT – village extension project
 - JP – roads study

Next meeting is Tuesday, September 17 at 10 am.

KH unavailable 9/25 to 10/11

AT gone first 2 weeks Oct.

Mission Statement: Identify, explore and secure resources for flood recovery – no dollar left behind.