

**Bloomfield Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee  
Minutes from January 8, 2025**

**MEETING DETAILS**

Date: January 8, 2025

Time: 7PM ET

Location: ZOOM LINK (TBD)

**II. ROLL CALL.**

Present: Tracy Toler-Phillips, Norm Sutaria, Matthew Meisel, Duke Ophori, Martin Ryan, Flint Kinkade, and Councilman Nick Joanow.

Absent: Filip Gzella.

Guests present: Asya Bakhtina (Conger St), Satenik Margaryan (Maolis Ave).

**III. CALL TO ORDER.**

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS.**

**1. Mechanism for soliciting site-specific flooding concerns from residents.**

After discussion, the committee recommends creating a form for residents to submit reports of flooding (or flood propensity) to the committee. The goal is for the committee to collect as much data as possible of locations that have flood conditions. Mr. Sutaria will take the lead on implementing this form. There will be a note on the form that acute conditions should be reported to Township via the Clean and Strong ticket submission system.

**V. NEW BUSINESS.**

**2. Discussion of September 2024 “Bloomfield Stormwater Drainage Study” prepared by Remington & Vernick Engineers.**

The committee discussed its reactions to the report. Mr. Meisel and Prof. Ophori shared concerns that the goals of the report are unclear. The committee notes that township engineer Paul Lasek has been identified as the Township flood mitigation manager.

Cailyn Bruno (Director, Environmental Services, Center for Community Systems at NJIT), provided written comments to the committee. She noted that the precipitation data used in the report is 25 years outdated. Ms. Bruno also noted that some of the flood areas are in environmental justice (“EJ”) areas, for which there may be additional grant funding.

Carrie Martin (Environmental Sustainability Planner, Center for Community Systems, at NJIT) wrote to the committee that Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants are due March 7, and proposed several projects that may be high-impact and eligible for grants. The committee recommends forwarding Ms. Martin's recommendations of projects and funding sources to Township and its grantwriter. Mr. Kinkade noted that Rutgers grant funding is frequently available, even if the township misses the March 7 deadline. Ms. Toler-Phillips will invite Ms. Martin to the committee's February 8 meeting.

After discussion, the committee agreed that pursuing projects in EJ tracts (sometimes called "overburdened communities"), ie, the two southernmost tracts in Bloomfield, is the appropriate priority. Mr. Kinkade noted that these areas are the easiest areas to obtain grant funding.

Dr. Ophori asked if any studies have been done on the causes of flooding in the Township. Ms. Toler-Phillips and Councilman Joanow pointed to a study performed by the Army Corps on this topic, and Ms. Toler-Phillips said she will check on the status of the most recent study.

Councilman Joanow suggested inviting a representative from Remington & Vernick to an upcoming committee meeting. The committee will request a copy of the original solicitation for the work to review before the next meeting.

### **3. Communication from Friends of Watsessing Park.**

The Friends are alarmed by the amount of erosion in the bank of the Second River across from the dog park next to Locust Ave. Ms. Bakhtina, speaking on behalf of the Friends, asked Councilman Joanow of where to direct concerns related to county parks. Councilman Joanow said that complaints/concerns should be submitted to Carlos Pomares, who is Bloomfield's district representative on the County Commission. Ms. Bakhtina asked for a referral to an expert around river erosion issues who can issue some recommendations that would preserve the trees in the area. Councilman Joanow and Mr. Kinkade suggested contacting the County arborist (or the County Parks arborist if the position exists).

### **4. Township master plan.**

The committee discussed creating a best practices recommendation on redevelopment for the township master plan. Councilman Joanow says that he does not know the timetable for potential completion, but reiterates that now is the time to provide any suggestions for inclusion.

## **VI. OTHER ITEMS.**

- 1. Public discussion.**
- 2. Meeting schedule.**

The committee agrees to schedule its next meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2025.

- 3. Approval of minutes of the December 4, 2024 meeting.** The committee approves without objection.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Matthew Meisel

Approved: Norm Sutria, Flint Kindade