

Bloomfield Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee Minutes for February 5, 2025

MEETING DETAILS

Date: February 5, 2025

Time: 7PM ET

Location: Zoom Meeting upon request

II. ROLL CALL.

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

Absent: Martin Ryan.

Guests: Cailyn Bruno, Clare Mooney, Ted Glick, Jane Califf, Mike Loconte, Joan Hussey.

III. CALL TO ORDER.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

IV. OLD BUSINESS.

1. **Introduction of Caylin Bruno**
Cailyn Bruno (Director, Environmental Services, Center for Community Systems at NJIT), Chair Bloomfield Environmental Commission

2. **Update discussion of September 2024 “Bloomfield Stormwater Drainage Study” prepared by Remington & Vernick Engineers, with Cailyn Bruno comments.**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c-JB_UraEq75BZWGHfiCeNgnoYp0is4fL7BnG3V8cU/edit?usp=sharing
Remington and Vernick Report::
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Cd3qwj4EbdXRDHzM9tQT-jfLFrT49BSE/view?usp=sharing>

Ms. Bruno provided a summary of her review of the Remington & Vernick report, as it related to her work on the township environmental commission and also for how the report might inform the new township master plan. She said that she couldn't find anything in the report around methods, or rationale for the reports recommendations. In addition, to the extent that methods were described, there was modeling that used a NOAA precipitation data set that went through 2000. (NJDEP believes that precipitation data that is that old is not representative of today's climate due to the changes in intensity of heavy rainfall events, and has revised its rules accordingly of appropriate precipitation data set.) In summary, Ms. Bruno questions how appropriate the recommendations are to the future. There was no mention in the report of climate change or of the intensifying rain events.

Ms. Bruno did appreciate the report's inclusion of recommendations for green infrastructure.

Prof. Ophori asked if there is any streamflow data nearby. Mr. Sutaria and Councilman Joanow note that USGS streamflow data is available for Third River and Second River in Bloomfield and Belleville, respectively.

Third River:

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/01392500/#dataTypeId=continuous-00065-0&period=P7D&showMedian=false>

Second River:

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/01392170/#dataTypeId=continuous-00065-0&period=P7D&showMedian=false>

Councilman Joanow says that he will try to obtain any streamflow data that was provided in association with the Lion's Gate development.

Mr. Sutaria will draft a letter to township engineer Paul Lasek on behalf of the committee, summarizing the committee's response to the report.

3. Touch base for data collection site-specific flooding form for residents.

Mr. Sutaria reports that he has created a **draft** form and is asking committee members for any feedback on the form by Friday, February 14. The current form is at the URL below, and Norm will circulate a revised form to the committee by Friday, February 7.

<https://forms.gle/i4a1UqCmiRH9QXcz6>

Councilman Joanow agrees to forward the completed survey to the township administrator for posting on the township website.

4. Bloomfield Flood Mapping Form update

This topic was addressed in the prior agenda item.

V. NEW BUSINESS.

1. Discussion about creating best practices recommendation on redevelopment for the township master plan. Master Plan will be due soon with a Public Comment period.

Conservation Element section of the early 2000s master plan:

<https://www.bloomfieldtwpnj.com/DocumentCenter/View/619/VII-Conservation-Element-PDF>

Ms. Bruno's written comments to the master plan:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1phrlvO6qjhraO05dTHHaXshJ_0rL8_V-/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100292645780091507670&rtpof=true&sd=true

Ms. Bruno notes that the master plan is not ordinance but rather is meant as a set of guidelines for the township. She says her written comments are meant to reflect best practices of several relevant NJ organizations, e.g., NJ Future, ANJEC (Association of NJ Environmental Commissions), and Sustainable Jersey. Her comments also reflect the sentiments of the township environmental commission, of which she is a member.

Mr. Meisel asks Ms. Bruno if she believes that the principles in the master plan could increase construction costs within the Township. Ms. Bruno responds that that would depend on which ordinances (if any) would be passed pursuant to the recommendations of the master plan. Ms. Bruno also notes that the master plan does carry some legal weight inasmuch as it requires the zoning board to require that any projects before it are in accordance with the master plan.

Mr. Sutaria suggests that the master plan have clear definitions of “development” and “redevelopment.” Councilman Joanow notes that any future development in the township is by definition “redevelopment” as there is no empty space within the township.

Ms. Toler-Phillips asks the committee to review Ms. Bruno’s comments and to add in members’ own comments to the master plan by February 26. Ms. Toler-Phillips also suggests the committee align its recommendations with those of the township environmental commission, to which there were no objections. Ms. Toler-Phillips says that she will work with Councilman Joanow and Mr. Kinkade, who are environmental commission members, to coordinate efforts.

VI. OTHER ITEMS.

- 1. Approval of minutes of the January 8, 2025 meeting.** Minutes are approved without objection.
- 2. Public discussion.** The public must give a name and address. Comment limited to three minutes.

Ms. Califf (guest) asks Ms. Bruno about heat islands shown in her maps.

Ms. Califf asks if there is any recourse if the township declines to include the committee’s recommendations in the master plan. Ms. Toler-Phillips replies that the committee has no binding legal authority. Ms. Mooney (guest) asks about the township’s 2006 stormwater management plan. She asks if the plan will be updated based on new precipitation data. Councilman Joanow says that the township typically is just following the minimum regulations as required by NJDEP. Ms. Toler-Phillips plans to email the township engineer via Councilman Nick Joanow for his response.

3. Meeting schedule. Confirmation of next meeting on March 5, 2025.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Matthew Meisel

Approved: 3/5/2025 by Duke Ophori and Flint Kinkade