

ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes –September 7, 2011

The Ulster County Planning Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. – Surrogate Courtroom, 3rd Floor
County Office Building

The Executive Committee Met

Present: Mr. Wilkin, Ms. Elwell, Mr. Watkins, Ms. Pecora & Mr. Budziak
Excused: Ms. Hokanson

Mr. Wilkin called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Leibowitz to read the roll call.

1. ROLL CALL - Present: R. Pecora, P. Hakim, J. Konior, T. Marion, K. Lovelett, L. Biggin, T. Wilkin, M. Baden, F. Greitzer, P. Economos, M. Watkins, R. Budziak, R. Elwell, M. Maclary, R. Kinnin, S. Finkle, D. Doyle, R. Leibowitz, B. Samuelson **Excused:** J. Katz, T. Hokanson, M. Calimano, H. Grant, K. Holmquist, A. Yuran **Absent:** G. Matichuk, E. Hooper

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Mr. Economos stated that he voted “no” on the Ice Cream Castle referral (UCPB#2011-116). Ms. Pecora made a motion to approve the August minutes as amended. Second by Ms. Biggin. All were in favor.

3. FINANCIAL REPORT - 2011

Mr. Doyle stated we are in the 2012 budgetary process. We have signed a contract and have a kickoff meeting scheduled for September 9th for the Transportation Development Plan. We have an RFP for the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) for communities along the waterfront. We anticipate contracts by end of year. We a staff position open since April from the Transportation Council and hope to have it filled by November. Mr. Finkle asked if the LWRP has been shared with the other municipalities. Mr. Doyle stated he would send the information to Mr. Finkle and agreed that it was a good idea to share with the other municipalities. Mr. Finkle asked if there would be an Advisory Committee. Mr. Doyle stated yes, but it hasn't been formed yet.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

5. COMMUNITY REPORT

- Hurricane Update – Mr. Doyle asked for reports from members respective to their own experiences or their community's experience to (Tropical Storm) Irene. He added that we'd like to acknowledge those who were helpful during this storm and what we have learned and ask what do we need?

Mr. Baden stated the areas of Rochester that don't have cell service are totally cut off during situations like this. Their Supervisor set up a command post at the Accord Fire House until rising floodwaters forced them to move to the Rescue Squad on Route 209. Mr. Kinnin stated the only cell site is in Resource Recovery at the Transfer Station. Mr. Baden stated there is a second site behind the Rainbow Diner. Mr. Kinnin stated after 9/11 the FCC made a quiet mandate to the cell phone companies about power to the cell sites. Some sites have extended battery life and some have generators based on the population.

Ms. Elwell stated she was impressed with how well the Town and Village of New Paltz coordinated together. She added that Supervisor Hokanson has been very hard to reach because New Paltz has been flooded again. Ms. Elwell stated that Route 299 is closed again and all those west of the Wallkill are isolated from emergency services again. Ms. Elwell stated the one thing that was very strongly enforced was the importance of the flood plain law that passed last year, which stresses the

importance of health and safety. This law was challenged with an Article 78 and still passed. She added the worst damage around New Paltz was not to structures, but to farmland. Many major farms had their Fall crops wiped out, which is a significant economic hit, both directly to the farms and the Fall tourism industry. Mr. Doyle added that there will be a meeting tomorrow in Goshen; notice has been sent to the farm communities. Ms. Elwell stated that it was very heartening to see the support that the farm communities give to each other. Mr. Doyle stated the State announced \$15 million available for farm assistance (at least \$10 million available for equipment replacement). Ms. Elwell stated she is also involved with the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, which serves as an emergency access during flooding. She added that this was the first time that parts of the trail were under water. They have had many volunteers come to help clear the trail.

Mr. Doyle asked if anyone used Social Networking. Mr. Maclary (Village of Saugerties) stated that they were finding out information faster using smart phones than through the news. He added the ability to pass on information to others was incredible. Mr. Maclary stated his wife is a pastor in Woodstock and she informed him that the food bank money in Phoenicia is gone and they are having difficulty getting information from the County with coordination or getting direction as to how to move forward.

Mr. Lovelett stated that the town of Lloyd was using Facebook to communicate. Mr. Kinnin noted that cell telephone service may be interrupted during these types of circumstances but texting was a viable way to communicate. Mr. Budziak stated there is a dramatic appeal for cell service in communities like Shandaken.

Mr. Budziak added that in Town of Ulster people are still complaining that the DEP is responsible for the flooding. Mr. Budziak stated he doesn't believe that is the case – he believes they are trying to work with the lower Esopus communities. Mr. Doyle stated that he has been involved with the request for releases and the process can become complicated. Mr. Doyle informed the Board that the releases began in mid-July and we are now expecting a protocol for pro-active releases.

Mr. Finkle asked about the amount of rainfall. Mr. Doyle answered that there are different estimates for the amount of rainfall from approximately 12 inches in the mountain towns to 7 inches down here. Mr. Finkle asked how the frequency would be categorized. Mr. Doyle stated the frequency on the Upper Esopus is more than 100-year but less than 500-year flood, the Lower Esopus is less than 80-year, the Wallkill frequency may be a new record, flooding on the Rondout was at 100-year.

Mr. Finkle stated all of the improvement done in City of Kingston during the last 18 months held up very well: the bulkhead, the walkway, an erosion control project at Kingston Point, etc. The sewer treatment plant also held up well. Mr. Doyle stated that we've been helping the City with issues associated with the sewer overflow. He added that the plant's ability to treat 13.5 million gallons without dumping any, when it was designed to handle less than 10 million gallons, was a good thing.

Ms. Pecora stated that Connolly (Town of Esopus) flooded in both directions – both bridges were overflowed. There was no access to the Robert Graves School. The Plantasia Kill will need more focus on how it flows. She added that their Supervisor reached out to the County but didn't get any assistance; adding that their Supervisor has been very busy. Sleightsburg had 8 or 9 trees down and a house came off it's foundation on Tilden Street.

Mr. Doyle stated that we have put out a memo to all communities that are eligible for Federal Aid/FHA eligible highways. FEMA will be expecting change assessments, highway Superintendants are familiar with the process. The County Executive has requested that the State pick up the local share (12.5%). In past local floods the State has picked up the Local share.

Mr. Doyle stated in summary that this has been the worst disaster this county has experienced because of the scale of the disaster county-wide. At one time approximately 75% of houses in the county were without power and with major roads closed, including: Route 28, Route 209, Route 32, Route 299 and portions of the Thruway. We had enormous amounts of efforts from DPW to clear roads for emergency crews. The Shandaken area was extremely hard hit. It amounts to millions of

dollars of damage. The railroad system up there has been destroyed. Some streams have relocated channels. Frost Valley was cut off on both sides (bridges were out) with several hundred people trapped. ATVs were used to evacuate people from several areas. In New Paltz the access road to a nursing home on Jansen Road was lost. Crews continue to work.

Mr. Doyle stated that there was an Emergency meeting of the Housing Consortium this morning to try to assess damages. We have asked the state for emergency section 8 vouchers for housing. We have asked for help with emergency structural/heating systems. We are asking all agencies with affordable housing to let us know their vacancies. We will ask the Feds if we can temporarily house people in the subsidized apartments. We may have more displaced people as time goes on. He added that anyone who has suffered from storm damage the first thing they should do is register with FEMA.

Mr. Doyle stated that in the long term we need to assess bridges and roads as they are fixed. Mr. Doyle informed the Board that UCDPW had a temporary bridge that they moved to a new location and installed where it was needed. Mr. Finkle mentioned using large culverts instead of bridges. We will need to move to a longer term discussion of planning issues: Flood plain legislation, Comprehensive Plan, site plans, etc. We have a lot of people that are in harms way; are we going to rebuild them in the same way? Mr. Doyle mentioned that there is a blog site asking if Phoenicia should continue to stay where it is since they have been flooded 3 times in the last year. Mr. Doyle stated the answer to that question requires further discussion.

Mr. Kinnin asked about the new FEMA mapping and if they were accurate as to the damage that occurred especially in the Ashokan area. Mr. Doyle answered that maps have not been issued for the Upper Esopus (watershed area) as yet. He added that in the mapped areas the flooding seemed to be accurate although some streams are not in the same places as when they were mapped. The difficulty is the smaller streams were not mapped and that is where the problem is because they jumped out of stream lines and flowed over roads and culverts. Mr. Kinnin suggested the county focus on those minor streams.

Ms. Biggin stated that in Marlborough the Lattintown creek continually floods its banks. The County put in a higher and larger bridge, which still overflowed by 2-3 feet.

Mr. Greitzer mentioned power surges; at his house (Town of Rosendale). The control panel on the furnace was damaged. Mr. Doyle told him to call his insurance company and FEMA.

Mr. Baden mentioned that he drove around Rochester over the weekend with the FEMA maps and found them to be fairly accurate based on where the mud lines were.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

No member comment

7. OLD BUSINESS

(Discussion held after New Business)

Mr. Kinnin stated he was not at the July or August meetings, but he wanted to thank Jennifer Schwartz Berky for helping to organize the DEC training at Tivoli Bays in June (canoe trip). He also asked if there was an update on the DEP Wawarsing homes. Mr. Doyle stated that we are in contract negotiations with DEP right now. We have solidified our preferences with regard to seepage and had discussions on outreach. WE have requested an extension from the State to submit the application. We have not worked on it because of the current flooding associated with the hurricane. The County is intending to move this forward and implement.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. **NYS Dept Environmental Conservation (DEC) Wetland Seminar – Mid-October (date TBA) to be held at SUNY Ulster Student Lounge 7:00-9:30pm**

Mr. Doyle stated that we have been having conversations with the Board regarding discussions on Wetlands mapping with DEC. He added that Mr. Wilkin had asked DEC recently why we were

having difficulty in getting answers, which resulted in us setting up a seminar with DEC. We were confirming dates with DEC and the community college when the hurricane hit. Bill Rudge of DEC lives in Oliveria and has not been able to make it to his office. Mr. Doyle added that we have had really good discussions with DEC regarding the mapping.

- b. Environmental Notice Bulletin & Grant Opportunities– *No Member Comment*
- c. Zoning Referrals – *See Separate Zoning Minutes*

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.