

Herkimer Levee System, Herkimer County, NY
Local Levee Partnership Team (LLPT) 3 Meeting Notes
January 3, 2017
2:00 p.m. (ET)

Attendees

Village of Herkimer Officials

Anthony Brindisi, Mayor
Peter Macri, Superintendent
Tony Carlisto, Consulting Engineer
James Franco, DPW
John Spanfelner, Fire Chief

Jim Houston, C.T. Male

Chet Szymanski, C.T. Male

Richard Coriale, NYSDEC

Kerrie O'Keeffe, NYSDEC

Brad Wenskoski, NYSDEC

Alan Springett, FEMA

Thomas Song, RAP

Cara Spidle, RAP

Stephanie Nurre, STARR II

The conference call and webinar began with a welcome and confirmation of attendees and included the following discussion. A copy of the presentation is included with the meeting notes.

- FEMA project funding is difficult without a disaster.
 - FEMA can provide disaster fund access for 75% of the project cost and the State may kick in some funds of a varying amount depending on the extent of the disaster
 - Could model how much water could come through (i.e., Mirror Lake) and how fast it could fill and potential maximums to expect
- Reason for Levee Analysis and Mapping Procedure (LAMP) - Slide 4
 - The LAMP process is being performed because the levees in and around the Town and Village of Herkimer did not submit data to FEMA, in accordance with 44 CFR 65.10, to accredit the levee
 - FEMA accredits levees, but only after an engineer (licensed by NY or other federal agency with authority) certifies that the levee meets the minimum requirements for accreditation
 - FEMA has not received certification data to show that the levee system provides protection from the 1-percent-annual-chance flood
- Finalize LAMP study methods for Phase 2 Analysis - Slide 6
 - Phase II – using more data, will go from a 1D flood analysis to 2D analysis
 - This will allow community to identify the streets that will flood/be too dangerous during a flood event

- Zone D is “undetermined, but possible, flood risk”
- Preliminary Floodway – West Canada Creek and the Mohawk River have floodways identified
- Concurrent Map Revision - Slide 7
 - Will allow county stakeholders to get a picture of all the flooding in the county
 - One of the panels that was targeted for seclusion in the upper part of the Village/lower part of the Town – there is no levee that has been identified here so FEMA will most likely not seclude this panel
 - Any subsequent map updates to the secluded area will reflect the detailed analysis in Phases II and III (modeling and mapping, respectively)
 - In the upper section of West Canada Creek, the channel banks are eroding, and the ground behind the floodwall is higher than the 1-percent.
 - Bellinger Brook
 - This will be an area of concern if flow can access the landside of the levee and cause flooding
 - LAMP process can help identify the areas of concern and what the community wants to do (i.e., extend the levee)
 - Can reconsider the earlier benefit/cost of extending the levee that was in consideration a few years prior
 - Can be identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan as an issue to get funding to help build it
 - USACE could provide some funding to extend levee upstream without having to go to Congress to get a separate allocation of funding
 - Village of Herkimer had verification from USACE that they were supposed to start work on the levee in the area by Church Street on Christmas Eve
 - NYSDEC said they’ve been petitioning USACE and believe the project that was approved is for repair work
 - Herkimer is next for the repair project – part of the storm damage from 2013
 - Repair usually does not include extending a levee to a new area – need to get the exact wording
 - USACE normally sends a sheet with information once a project is approved
 - Only one Herkimer project is listed on their website and it is not on the right section of Bellinger Brook
 - 500-year flood has been exceeded in a number of areas
 - Discussed Mirror Lake issues
 - Need to determine why flooding won’t go down when the gate is closed

- Why a focus on flooding?
 - Community noted that the focus on flooding appears recent and more pronounced than in the past
 - 1996 had flooding related to snow melt, but the area really has not experienced significant flooding since until 2006, and then in 2011 where Lee caused a lot of destruction
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is one way to access 75% funding from FEMA
 - Putting money into projects isn't buying equipment, but fixing things Mother Nature screwed up
 - Trying to prevent future flooding problems
- Herkimer wants to use HMP as a pilot to do some enhanced planning
 - State will be available to help
 - Herkimer and Hamilton are the only two counties in NY who have never had a HMP
 - Have 31 flood insurance policies in place – don't have a great history of claims but there have been some claims in the past.
 - Flooding from Bellinger Brook was declared a disaster
 - This was not a special flood hazard area so residents did not have to buy flood insurance which resulted in the low number of filed claims
 - It's important that property owners in special flood hazard areas have the option to pay for insurance
 - Insurance plans for St. Francis Church and School and the State Housing Authority were both over \$1 million
 - The community now has approximate modeling estimates to give them a better idea where the Zone AE floodplain areas have the increased risk
 - Can present to home owners in impacted areas and discuss flood insurance implications
 - There has to be a disaster declaration to submit claims
 - (Showed a preferred risk rate for those who don't live in a special flood hazard area but are still vulnerable to flooding)
 - Even though they're not in that specific area of the map, they should still be aware of their risk and what they can do to help recover from it
- The levee at the high school had eroded and they did some emergency repair there with stones on the field
 - This is the area the USACE is supposed to repair around Christmas

- There was also a pipe near the levee along on the Mohawk River that had failed
 - Can get a write up for the levee
 - Fixed the pipe where the root ball was located and completed repair on the 44 inch pipe
- USACE had looked into design calculations along Bellinger Brooke but they had minimal information at best and there is miscommunication about the status of the project
 - Herkimer sent the USACE large amounts of information on this project and haven't heard much in response
 - Existing MMI study information didn't go far enough to the inundating area that is east of the Village that FEMA was identifying
 - MMI report did note that there was flooding as far south as the railroad but their cross-sections didn't extend this far so they did not capture as much inundation area as the LAMP estimate
 - MMI report focus was more of a transportation study and aimed to improve the channel where there had been some downstream erosion (more focus on downstream areas)