

Unapproved (Draft) Minutes of Special Meeting
July 18, 2024
9:30 AM
50 Jennings Road, 2nd floor Conference Room A

Commissioners Present:

Michael McGarry, Chairman
Linda A. King-Corbin, Commissioner
Stanley Sobieski, Commissioner
Sita Nyame, Commissioner
Craig Mergens, Commissioner

Also present for GHFC:

Frank Dellaripa, P.E. - Director, Greater Hartford Flood Commission
Nick Casparino, P.E. - Civil Engineer IV, City of Hartford
James Del Visco, Esq. - Assistant Corporation Counsel, City of Hartford
Anasse Quedraogo, P.E. - Civil Engineer IV, City of Hartford
Vanessa Walton – DPW Executive Assistant
John McGrane, GEI Consultants
Jeff Bolton, Eversource
(see attached sheets for additional attendees)

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman McGarry called the meeting to order.
2. **Roll Call of Commissioners:** Vanassa Walton conducted roll call and Chairman McGarry announced there was a quorum present.
3. **Chair's Comments:** The Chairman indicated that the Connecticut Explored Magazine expressed an interest in publishing an article on the Flood Control System and its history. Historical information from the 1930's concerning flooding within Hartford was found in the City's Assessor Office files. This information along with other relevant information could be considered for the potential article.

The Chairman mentioned that a development project located on Scarborough Street will be submitted to the Greater Hartford Flood Commission (GHFC) in the future.

4. Approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting on May 8, 2024

Voted: Approved, unanimously (5-0)

5. Report of Flood Control Director – Frank Dellaripa

- a. **Administrative Approvals:** Eversource Energy vegetation management of the CT-13 Transmission Line right of way in the vicinity of the Clark Dike.
- b. **Materials Innovation and Recycling Dissolution Authority (MIRA) Closure Plan –** Kick off meeting was held on 6/26/2024 with the Authority and their consultant on developing guidance concerning the impacts of the levee system on the MIRA's closure. The GHFC Chairman raised concerns about the abandoned building once MIRA turns the facility over to the State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services. The GHFC's purview is limited to the stability of the levee system, impacts of infrastructure to

remain on the levee system and ensuring a safe working environment within the existing easement for the levee system. The main elements of concern include:

- MIRA owned utility penetrations of the levee system
- The conditions of the infrastructure located on the riverside of the floodwall (i.e., the existing screen houses and the scour and erosion at their foundations on the riverside embankment)
- The existing equipment mounted on the concrete floodwalls
- Worker safety issues related to the existing equipment which crosses above the concrete floodwall.

c. City Projects

- 1) Toe Drain Replacement Project – the CT DEEP is in the process of issuing the Dam Safety Individual Permit and the USACE has issued Section 408 approval for the project. DPW has requested a permit extension from the FAA for the activities impacting Hartford-Brainard Airport.

6. Old Business

- a. **Application by the Connecticut Light & Power Company dba Eversource Energy for the installation of two 115-kV transmission lines as part of the 1722 and 1704 Underground Cable Modernization Project. Transmission Line #1722 will be installed within the flood plain district associated with the North Branch Park River in the vicinity of #1575 Albany Avenue. Transmission Line #1704 will be installed within the flood plain district associated with an unnamed tributary (Kane Brook) of the South Branch Park River in the vicinity of #219 New Park Avenue. The modernization project includes replacement of the existing 115-kV circuits consisting of high-pressure fluid-filled (HPFF) cables in concrete encased metal conduit with a XPLE cable system. The two transmission lines connect Northwest Hartford, Southwest Hartford and South Meadows Substations. The transmission line in the vicinity of #1575 Albany Avenue will be located within the Required Flood Storage Area associated with the North Branch Park River. The transmission line in the vicinity of #219 New Park Avenue will require a stream bed crossing of Kane Brook. The existing HPFF conduits will be abandoned in place once the new transmission mains are constructed.**

Eversource Energy and GEI Consultants provided a short presentation on the installation of the two 115-kV electrical transmission lines as well as the abandonment of the existing HPFF transmission lines. Eversource Energy briefly discussed the transmission line crossing of the South Branch Park River via micro tunnelling in the vicinity of Hamilton Street. This element of the transmission project will be submitted as part of a separate application to the GHFC. Eversource Energy worked with DPW's staff to address the technical comments and concerns.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the application subject to the following technical conditions.

- 1) The applicant must provide pre and post construction survey (T-2 accuracy) within the impacted areas of the Park River Head pool area prior to construction.
- 2) Provide final construction plan sets to the Greater Hartford Flood Commission prior to construction.
- 3) Revise the proposed seed mix to be utilized within the roadway right ways. The seed mix is to be an upland / lawn mix. The proposed conservation mix is acceptable for other disturbed areas which are part of the application

Voted: Approval with the conditions, unanimously (5-0)

7. New Business

- a. **Application by the Town of West Hartford for Phase 1 of the Trout Brook Drainage System Improvements and Culvert Replacements.** Phase 1 includes the replacement of “UCONN” culvert and the Trout Brook culvert within the east branch of Trout Brook located in West Hartford, CT. The existing 275 LF twin 72” RCP “UCONN” culvert will be replaced with a 200 LF 10’ by 6’ concrete box culvert. The existing 120 LF twin 76’ wide by 4” high elliptical RCP Trout Brook culvert will be replaced with a twin 12’ by 5’ concrete box culvert. The purpose of the project is to reduce the risk of flooding upstream of the existing culverts. All of the improvements are located within the municipal limit of the Town of West Hartford. The replacements of the culverts will increase the peak flows in Trout Brook which combined with Piper Brook in Newington, CT to form the South Branch of the Park River which flows through the City of Hartford to the Connecticut River. The Greater Hartford Flood Commission Application only addresses the potential impacts on properties located within the City of Hartford and along Piper Brook including properties located within the Town of Newington.

The applicant submitted a request to postpone the presentation on the application to a later date.

Motion: A motion was made to postpone the presentation.

Voted: Approved the request to postpone the presentation, unanimously (5-0)

- b. **Presentation by the Metropolitan District (MDC) on the Blue Hills / Granby Street Area Drainage Study which is currently being developed.**

The Blues Hills / Granby Street Drainage study is a partnership between the Metropolitan District (MDC) and the City of Hartford. The study is partially funded by a State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection grant. The draft report for the study is scheduled to be available in August 2024 and finalized prior to the end of 2024. The reason for the presentation is to begin the process of educating the GHFC about the study and the anticipated recommendations contained in the study. A formal application has not been submitted at this time.

Scott Jellison, MDC provided background information on the recent history of flooding occurring in the area as well as the need for the Study.

Joe Laliberte and Emily McCarran of CDM Smith conducted the presentation. The two major components of the study include an evaluation of the North Branch of the Park River and the required sewer separation project of the neighborhoods located in the vicinity of Granby Street. As part of the current Integrated Plan and Long Term Control Plan, MDC must complete the sewer separation work in this area by the end of 2028. A decision must be made on the outfall locations for the separated storm systems prior to commencing the sewer separation design. The decision must be made in the near future to meet the deadline. The study will provide conceptual level information on potential improvements to increase the capacity of the open channel segment of the North Branch Park River as well preliminary design information for MDC’s sewer separation project.

The potential river improvements will be nature-based solutions rather than a structural approach. It is anticipated that multiple separated storm sewer outfalls will be required along the open channel segment of the North Branch Park River. The two existing combined sewer outfalls (CSO) would be eliminated as part of the anticipated scope of work.

Scott Jellison, MDC stated that dredging of the North Branch must be completed to address flooding within the area and serve as outlets for the separated storm sewers. MDC's separated storm system will provide capacity for a 10-year storm event. Due to the flooding in recent years, the MDC approach to addressing the CSOs in this area has evolved resulting in anticipated costs rising from \$47 million to \$177 million. MDC's decision on the proposed outfall locations will take into account MDC's opinion of the effectiveness of the receiving watercourse or infrastructure. MDC has concerns about the impacts of the lack of maintenance along the North Branch of the Park River and the City's 90" to 108" Granby Street trunk storm sewer. MDC feels that the City is obligated to dredge and improve the capacity of the North Branch Park River. If the improvements and dredging of the river do not occur, the costs of the sewer separation project will significantly increase. The cost increases will be borne by MDC's member Towns as DEEP Clean Water Fund Assistance cannot be utilized for storm sewer projects. He made a case that a regional approach with the municipalities which have watercourses sending their water downstream through Hartford must be part of the solution.

Mike McGarry, GHFC Chairman inquired if the consultant had evaluated the impacts of the annual freshet (flood of river from melted snow or heavy rain). Based on his experience, he recommends that the consultant ensure that the study takes flooding related to the annual freshet into account.

Frank Dellaripa, GHFC Director / City Engineer asked a series of questions.

- 1) Requested MDC to provide an overview of the Clean Water Project \ Integrated Long Term Control Plan and work completed to date. Scott Jellison, MDC provided the overview.
- 2) Asked if CDM Smith was aware of the City's policies and ordinances related to tree removal. Joe Laliberte, CDM indicated that they were aware of the process and any work would need to comply.
- 3) The majority of the North Branch Park River is located on private property. Inquired as to CDM's input on anticipated required access to conduct the necessary work. Joe Laliberte, CDM indicated that would be the City's responsibility as part of the design process.
- 4) Asked if a full disclosure would occur via a public hearing once the full report is available. Scott Jellison indicated that MDC is required to hold a public for such a project of this magnitude.

8. Public Comment:

- a. Mary Pellitier, Park Watershed – Recommended that green infrastructure and nature-based solutions should be the preferred approach to address flooding. Recommended that the consultant for the Granby Street Drainage Study and the Park Watershed's consultant should meet and coordinate the two current studies to ensure a comprehensive approach. She stressed the project should address quality of life issues and restore access to the North Branch of the Park River.

- b. Jack Hale, Chair of the Hartford Tree Advisory Commission – Discussed the importance of existing tree canopy, environmental benefits of the canopy and the need for its preservation. Mentioned that on past sewer separation projects a significant number of trees were removed as part of the new lateral construction which was a concern. Recommended that new tree planting activities be considered as part of the project. Indicated that the required approvals would need to be obtained for any tree removal activities.
- c. Barbara Robbins, Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association – recommended that measures be utilized to stabilize the existing vegetation as part of the anticipated activities.
- d. Louisa Barton, Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association – Indicated that one of the elements being considered as part of the Park Watershed’s study was the creation of retention areas at various existing outfalls located on private properties. The outfalls for various private parking lots could be modified to add the retention areas. The efforts would result in reducing the coverage of the impervious areas and help to improve water quality and reduce runoff from the sites.
- e. Mike McGarry, Chair of the GHFC – recommended that the impacts and protection of the root balls for the trees be taking into account when looking at solutions.
- f. Chance Carter, Hartford Planning & Zoning Commissioner – indicated that the area has experienced the impacts of flooding for years as well as the need to address the flooding. He stressed the need for public outreach as part of any project to address flooding moves forward. Appropriate public notice of future meetings must be provided.
- g. Charmaine Craig, Vice Chair Hartford Tree Commission – Indicated that nature-based solutions must be utilized rather than structural improvements. Concerns about impacts on wildlife and to the habitat. Any project must take into activities which honor the past of the area. Indicated that the City Council should be part of the process.
- h. Lisa Dayhill, West Hartford resident & Park Watershed Organization – Discussed the importance of comprehensive tree planting. Tree planting and stabilization are required as part of the restoration efforts.
- i. Calixto Torres, MDC Commissioner (Hartford) – indicated that nature-based solution and the preservation of the tree canopy are important but the causes of the flooding must be addressed. The impacts and costs of flooding on residents located in the disadvantaged areas of the City is significant. He stated that MDC will meet its obligations. The surrounding municipalities must be part of the solution including addressing development in the floodplain.
- j. Don Currey, Chair MDC Commissioner (East Hartford) – Acknowledged the presence of Henry Genga, CT House of Representatives. Indicated that the final solution must address the underlying cause of the flooding.
- k. Edith Pestana, CT DEEP – inquired if the information on the Eversource Transmission application and the North Branch of the Park River would be made available. The City of Hartford will make the Eversource project available. MDC would post make the presentation available and post the information on its website.
- l. Mike McGarry, Chair of the GHFC – indicated that a public hearing will be held on the Blue Hills / Granby Drainage study to educate the public and allow for public input at some point in the future.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Voted: Approved, unanimously (5-0)

Adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

GREATER HARTFORD FLOOD COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING July 18, 2024

SIGN IN SHEET

NAME	CONTACT
Jim DelVisco	City of Hartford
Linda King-Corbio	City of Hartford
* Emily McCarran	CDM Smith
* Joe Laliberte	CDM Smith
Sita Nyame	City of Hartford
STANLEY SOBIESKI	TOWN OF NEWINGTON
Nick Casperino	Hartford DPW
Frank Dellaripa	COH
CRAIG MERRINS	City of Hartford
Mike MCGARRY	"

GREATER HARTFORD FLOOD COMMISSION
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SIGN IN SHEET

NAME	CONTACT
CALIXTO TORRES	MDC / Commissioner
Anaone Ouedrasgo	COH-PPW
Bill DiBella	MDC
MARK STONE	MDC
DON CURREY	MDC
✓ EDITH PESTANA	CT DEEP
Jason Waterbury	MDC
Susan Negrelli	MDC
Rick Bush	MDC
✓ Barbara Robbins	AHNA
✓ LOUISA BARTON	AHNA
✓ Mary Pelletier	Park Watershed & Meri LLC w/ NCCD
✓ Chance Carter	P&Z Commissioner
Jeremy Galatz	MDC
Chris Levesque	MDC
Scott Jellison	MLX
James Wolfe	COH
✓ CHAIRMAN CHAIR.	
✓ LISA DAYHILL	
✓ CALIXTO TORRES	

