



WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

FLOOD & EROSION CONTROL BOARD

TOWN HALL, 110 MYRTLE AVENUE
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880
(203) 341 1120 www.westportct.gov

MINUTES

Revised

Flood & Erosion Control Board Meeting of December 1, 2021

Present for the Board: William S. Mazo (Chair)
Philip Schemel
Aimee Monroy-Smith
Robert Aldrich

Present for Department of Public Works: Edward Gill, Engineer II

Present for the Conservation Department: Alicia Mozian, Conservation Director

William S. Mazo, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

DISCUSSION

The Chair opened a discussion about the future of the Flood & Erosion Control Board.

At the request of the Chair, Edward Gill explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the future of the Board, and to prepare a proposal of what changes the Board would like to enact in order to present those changes to the Director of Public Works and the First Selectwoman.

Mr. Aldrich asked if current Town policy is specifically enumerated anywhere, to which Mr. Gill stated that it is not. Mr. Aldrich noted that no approval of either the DPW or First Selectwoman may not be required, as the Board's powers are defined by the by-laws and state legislation. Mr. Gill agreed that the Board's powers do not stem from the DPW or First Selectwoman, though the active use of said powers or any redirection of the Board would mark a significant deviation from a status quo, and as such the Board would be best served by seeking support of both the Department of Public Works and First Selectwoman on the new course they plot for themselves.

Mr. Gill noted several areas in which the Board could provide aid in specific facets of flooding issues in Westport, including receiving presentations from the Engineering Department about flood studies conducted in Westport in order to hold informed discussions about the prioritization of different flood prevention solutions. Additionally, support from the Board advocating on behalf of Department of Public Works projects for funding and approval would be of significant benefit to the Department of Public Works. Mr. Aldrich agreed that the purpose of the Board is to serve these functions, so this is the direction that the Board should be moving.

The Board then discussed its existing functions, with both Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Schemel noting that their involvement in Waterway Protection Line Ordinance (WPLO) reviews has become an unnecessary redundancy in the permitting process. Mr. Gill and Ms. Mozian spoke to the fact that when the WPLO was written, many of the modern regulations were not in place, specifically with regards to Coastal Area Management (CAM) and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

through FEMA. Mr. Gill noted that these regulations are further reaching than and as strict or stricter than the WPLO, while Ms. Mozian pointed out that the WPLO was written in a time when those regulations were not in effect in Westport.

The Board also discussed other options for expanding the functions of the Board through a waterway maintenance ordinance, which Mr. Gill noted may be a lower priority for immediate changes, as other options such as advocacy for Public Works projects and aid in prioritization of projects may have more immediate impact.

Mr. Gill asked how the Board would like to vote on items to be included in a proposal for the future of the Board, and the Board agreed to vote on a single proposal once it is prepared, prior to its official presentation to the Director of Public Works and First Selectwoman.

The Board agreed that the following items should be included in such a proposal:

- To advise the Department of Public Works with respect to the prioritization of Stream Improvement Projects and with respect to the general strategy of Town policy regarding such improvements.
- To seek a role within Westport as an ombudsman for flooding concerns, and other involvement that may aid Planning & Zoning to increase the NFIP Community Ratings System (CRS) rating for Westport.
- To reduce or eliminate the Flood & Erosion Control Board's involvement in WPLO reviews.

The Board decided to continue the discussion to a special meeting the following week, on Wednesday, December 8th, 2021, to have Mr. Gill prepare a formal proposal that they can revise, edit, and vote on prior to its submittal to the Director of Public Works and the First Selectwoman.

Respectfully submitted,

William S. Mazo, Chair
Flood & Erosion Control Board

WSM/eamg

Cc: First Selectwoman, Town Attorney, Public Works Director, Planning & Zoning Director, Conservation Director, Chair of RTM Environmental Committee, Chair of RTM Public Works Committee, Applicants, minutes@westportct.gov

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