



Floodplain Regulations Stakeholder Meeting

Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2019

3:00 pm

Thomas G. Crowder Woodland Center

Members Present: Milton Carpenter, Jon Callahan, Scott Brookhart, Michael Birch, Bob Mulder, Suzanne Harris, Betsy Pearce, Rick Rowe, Andy Clevenger, Betsey Pearce, Andrew Blackburn, and Matthew Starr

Members Absent: Heather Keefer

Observers: Holt Browning, Donna Browning, Kathy Tambke, Vaushan Adams, Anne Adams, Stephanie Kordick, William Service

City Staff Present: Wayne Miles, Ben Brown, Jennipher Lubik, Ashley Rodgers, Jonathan McNeill, Laura Johnson, Kristin Freeman, and Brad Williams

Opening Statements

- History of why the stakeholder group was created
 - Resulted from a motion made by Raleigh City Council Member Nicole Stewart who recognized that a focus group was needed after hurricane flooding in North Carolina;
 - Focus - development in floodprone area regulations;
 - SMAC suggested stakeholder meetings for all interest groups; and,
 - Information available on the City's [website](#).
- Mr. Starr suggested looking at the floodway as natural environment protecting homeowners. We need to look at the environment as well as consequences downstream. This type of development does have environmental consequences.
 - Ms. Harris mentioned that looking at what exists and new structures retrofitted, changes need to be clear on new regulation or non-conforming projects deemed inadequate. She wants to make sure we're understanding the current regulations on the books. And whether it's thought that the regulation may be inadequate.
 - Mr. Miles stated, we're looking at possibly what might happen from this point forward with new development, there's at least one revision related to a substantial damage if building has more than 50 percent, the costs of its value in improvements that it would have to be upgraded to the current standard.
 - Mr. Mulder mentioned historical damage that has occurred over the years. All this new development has caused incremental damage. Are we making any difference maybe? We can improve things on a regular basis. And maybe it won't improve in our lifetime, but we may see the changes for the future.
 - Mr. Brookhart stated if you were to look at that same floodplain over a 30-year period,



which is your average mortgage, the percent chance of a flood occurring within the 30-year period is actually 26 percent. That is what 1 percent annual chance translates to.

- Mr. Miles mentioned an NPR podcast that coincidentally came out yesterday. It was decided to send the link to the group.
- Mr. Clevenger stated that he lives on Crabtree Creek and has not had flooding issues that caused an insurance claim nor did the previous owner.
 - Mr. Brown said there were pockets of storms last summer (in May and August). And that was a 100-year flood storm.
 - Mr. Clevenger mentioned any restriction is a tremendous amount of economic damage to those of us who are on the floodway fringe already.
 - Mr. Starr mentioned this motion brought up a great point about history and the flooding Raleigh has seen. Being on the Stormwater Management Advisory Commission (SMAC) for almost six years now we are constantly spending taxpayer money to protect those who should have never built homes, where they were built originally. They were platted and built before Neuse River Buffer rules came into effect. That's the kind of the situation where we're at now. And so, we are trying to make incremental improvements so that in 30 years, we're not spending a lot of taxpayer money like we are currently now to protect those homes. Homes could have been moved a little further from a creek or platted in a more appropriate way if we knew then what we know now. Let's remember that we all come from different backgrounds with different experiences. We're looking at a city-wide policy that in the future will be needed to protect homeowners, to protect communities and to protect the environment, which will allow the environment to do what it's supposed to do within the floodplain, store flood waters without them impacting structures.
 - Mr. Clevenger stated all development is done in our watershed and the owners just want to fix our homes with less restrictions. This issue has a profound effect on a select few in the floodplain, not all homes.
- Mr. Miles stated the revised flood map were mentioned at the last meeting, but for those of you who missed it, there are a new set of maps coming out for the entire City.
- Audience Question Are there other groups that are looking at reducing the overall impact of flooding?
 - Mr. Miles responded the he thinks what the question is 'are we looking at regulations outside of the floodplain and restricting development that can occur there to reduce the impacts in the floodplain?'. While the City does watershed planning, we're not looking at those types of rules in a broader sense at this point in time beyond this group.
 - Mr. Brookhart worked for a firm that was looking at flood models and evaluating the effect of development on the overall floodplain, and elevation changes were not that different. Development adds impervious surfaces that can have an impact on stormwater infrastructure (pipes, culverts, etc.) but won't have a large impact on the overall river system if there is no floodplain encroachment. Different riverine systems can react differently, so that does not



guarantee Crabtree is the same, Crabtree has a history, which is very unique.

- Mr. Clevenger stated the city does not experience standing water issues, the current in the flow is in the channel, one side or the other.
- Mr. Brookhart stated the group is looking at new development and to reduce what effects this will have on existing structures.
- Mr. Miles stated replacing a house that has been damaged by a fire by more than 50 percent of the building cannot rebuild without complying with current structures, that is a FEMA minimum. Mr. Miles stated what's on the table is that 50 percent threshold could go lower.

Flood Hazard Mitigation Program Presentation (Ben Brown – City of Raleigh)

- History of floodprone property buyouts
- In late 1990 the City bought 22 properties
- 16 more bought using FEMA grant money (flood benefit cost analysis included cost of swift water rescues from fire EMS)

Flood Communications Presentation (Kristin Freeman – City of Raleigh)

- Visit the website for meeting information
- Audience commented they did not receive a reverse 911 call in the floodplain. Mr. Miles requested their addresses to check if a notification was sent.

General Discussion

- Ms. Harris suggested using tax records to contact clients in floodprone areas about possible changes.
- Mr. Callahan stated you could make parking lot in the floodway at existing grade.
- Ms. Harris asked what the impact of taking away filling in the floodway fringe from a tax value standpoint. If developed at 50 percent fringe what is the economic values to the city and tax base.
- Mr. Clevenger asked about the damage done to the people in the floodplain from an economic standpoint.
 - Mr. Mulder stated a cost benefit analysis would be possible.
 - Mr. Clevenger stated any new regulation is oppressive to property owners. He also questioned if clearing the floodplain is really that beneficial.
- Mr. Brookhart stated Charlotte has been buying more properties to get people out of the floodplain and it has benefited saving lives and money.
 - Ms. Harris asked what it would cost the City for a more aggressive program like that. Mr. Miles stated maybe a study can be done.
- Mr. Miles requested to cancel the next meet for research time. The next meeting would be on June 13.
 - Mr. Miles stated a floodplain expert from NC State University will present at the next meeting.



Audience Questions

- Mr. William Service: Does the 50 percent redevelopment based on cost of structure not based on the cost of the land value allow for more development? Mr. Miles stated that is a federal rule and the change being considered is to keep existing 50 percent rule or lower it to 30 percent. Mr. Service asked if the motion from Raleigh City Council was presented exactly as stated and Mr. Miles stated it is from the October 2018 minutes from City Council.
- Ms. Kathy Tambke stated that residential lots less than 0.75 acres should be exempt and she asked about where on the web to find the SMAC minutes.
- Mr. Holt Browning worries that property values can be affected by 25 percent or more due to floodplain but the tax value is not reflective of that change. Mr. Mulder stated that Wake County can reevaluate a property owner's tax value on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Browning believes the City should be looking at infrastructure improvement to combat flooding on major roadways during storms.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 5:09 pm.

Jennipher Lubik