

Meeting Minutes
Glenville Wellfield Study Group
October 18, 2011
4:00 p.m.

Attending: Carl George, Phil Adams, Jacqueline Smith, John Garver, Cal Welch, James MacFarland and Kevin Corcoran

Absent: Jason Pelton and Tom Coppola

- Kevin opened the meeting at 4:06 p.m. Those present welcomed Cal Welch, the newest member of the Study Group. In addition to being a long-time resident of Glenville, Cal is the Deputy Chairman of the Glenville Environmental Conservation Commission.
- The Group unanimously approved the minutes of the September 19, 2011 meeting.
- Discussion followed on Carl's request last month, on behalf of the Group, that the Town Board formally recognize the Study Group via appointment as a committee. Jamie responded by noting that he spoke with Town Supervisor Koetzle about the Group's request. In turn the Supervisor has suggested that Carl - and whoever else from the Group would like to be present – attend the Town Board's November 9th work session at 7:30 p.m. Jamie suggested Carl provide a brief overview of the Group's progress to date and that he request that the Board appoint the Group as an ad hoc committee. Carl agreed to attend and speak on behalf of the Group. Carl also requested that other members of the Group attend and offer their own comments, if they choose.
- Jamie noted that Global Foundries has not yet formally responded to the Town concerning our request to be one of the back-up water suppliers for Global Foundries. Town officials read a brief accounting by Clough, Harbour & Associates stating that Glenville will not be selected as a back-up water supplier, but no reason was given, and no one has notified the Town. It is recognized that being a back-up water supplier would benefit the Town financially. It was also noted by Jamie that the Town could not be the sole back-up supplier because we can't produce the several millions of gallons per day that Global Foundries needs, but if we were to connect our water system to the City of Schenectady's system, for example, the Town/City could meet Global Foundries back-up supply needs. There is merit to researching the idea of connecting our water system with the City's, even in the absence of Global Foundries.
- The Group turned its attention to the draft resolution that Carl prepared for consideration. In short, the draft resolution speaks to the strengths and vulnerabilities of the Town's water supply, and it closes with a series of recommended actions that would primarily fall in the Town Board's lap. Since some of the Work Group members were seeing the draft resolution for the first time, it was decided that the Group would revisit the draft at next month's meeting.
- Kevin gave a brief update on the subject of pharmaceuticals in drinking water supplies. Kevin and Jason are trying to reach Lloyd Wilson of the NYS Dept. of Health. Kevin will report more

when he has something substantive to share. For now, however, the Group recognizes that potential flooding of the Town's wellfield is a much higher priority than the subject of pharmaceutical contamination.

- Regarding the subject of pharmaceuticals, Jamie noted that the Town Police Department will be holding its second annual prescription drug collection program on Saturday, October 29th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Town's program is being held in conjunction with the DEA's National Take-Back Day, wherein expired prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and controlled substances can be dropped off anonymously for proper disposal. One of the benefits of this program is that the drugs being collected will have been prevented from being flushed into public sewer and septic systems, and into drinking water supplies. Last year the Town's program was very successful. Town Councilman and former Village Police Chief John Pytlovany is credited for getting Glenville involved in this program.
- Continuing with last month's discussion on the recent Mohawk River flooding, Carl has suggested that the Town Board and/or this group offer recognition to Tom Coppola and his crew for their efforts during and after the flooding. Carl wrote a sonnet to recognize Tom and his staff. Jamie suggested that this group present the poem/commendation to Tom and his staff, with Carl doing the reading of the poem.
- NYSDEC – Region IV has not yet sent anyone to examine the earthen dam that was installed by Scotia Sand & Stone earlier this year to prevent Mohawk River flood waters from inundating their gravel pit adjacent to the Town's wellfield. The dam was breached by flooding from the Irene and Lee storms, which partly contributed to the gravel pit filling up completely with flood waters. The earthen dam appears to have been constructed with substandard materials. According to Jamie, NYSDEC will be sending someone to the site next week to examine the breached dam. It was noted by Phil and confirmed by Jamie that DEC's concern with flooding of this gravel pit has little to do with potential impacts on the Town's water supply from flooding, but rather from potential pollution of the Mohawk River from equipment and operations of Scotia Sand & Stone.
- Jamie noted that the Irene/Lee storms did considerable damage to the Town's wellfield access road (Pumphouse Road). The Town Board will be voting on a resolution tomorrow evening to authorize \$85,000 in expenditures to repair and pave Pumphouse road. Carl commented that the storms created a considerable amount of erosion and washed away a lot of materials on the north side of the road. Road repairs in this area may not hold unless the eroded area on the side of the road is addressed as well.
- Jamie contacted Steve Sweeney, Division Canal Engineer for the NYS Canal Corps, to ask if Steve would be willing to make a presentation to this group. Mr. Sweeney agreed. Jamie will ask Mr. Sweeney if he's available for the Group's November meeting.
- John suggested that the Town write to Congressman Tonko and other elected representatives to make them aware of our wellfield's vulnerabilities to flooding and the fact that operation of the

lock system, particularly Lock 8, can and does influence flooding levels. We should emphasize that the Canal Corps should be managing the locks so as to minimize the damage from flooding, as opposed to making flooding worse.

- John then briefly discussed the requirement of Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for dams, with the Gilboa Dam perhaps being the most scrutinized structure within the Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys. “Incident Reports” must be filed following flooding events, per the mandates of EAPs. However, the NYS Canal Corps didn’t file an incident report for Locks 7, 8, 9, and 10 following the Irene/Lee flooding events. John has learned that the State is not subject to the requirements of EAPs, including the filing of Incident Reports. John finds this mystifying; he suggests that the Canal Corps and NYSDEC should be good neighbors to communities adjacent to locks.
- Carl asked if the Town’s water treatment plant is insured. Jamie answered that yes, the treatment plant is insured. What is not known is if the plant is insured against flooding. Property insurance policies often exempt flooding from coverage. Staff will look into this question.
- John shared with the group some of the historic flooding figures for both the Mohawk River and Schoharie Creek in order to give everyone perspective on the magnitude of the Irene/Lee flooding that seriously impacted both the Mohawk River and Schoharie Creek flood plains.

In terms of total flow, as measured on the Mohawk River in Cohoes, Irene was the 5th most significant flooding event, while Lee was the 13th most significant in the 100+ years of record keeping on the Mohawk River.

In terms of water levels in the City of Schenectady, there are records going back to 1830. Irene was the 9th most significant flooding event on the Mohawk River in the City of Schenectady in respect to water levels. The highest flooding level in Schenectady occurred in March, 1964 as a result of an ice jam. Even though ice jam flooding can result in very high flood waters, ice jam related floods tend to be short-lived as a result of a “pulse” of water that is released once the ice jam breaks.

As for flooding within the Schoharie Valley, the Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irene flood was the worst in recorded history for the Schoharie Creek. And even though record keeping of Schoharie Creek flooding doesn’t go back as far as the record keeping along the Mohawk River, it appears that the flooding from Irene may end up being a 500-year event, once all of the figures are in.

Since 1980, or thereabouts, we have witnessed more frequent, bigger floods within the Schoharie Valley. This hydrologic change seems to be attributable to more frequent, severe Atlantic-tracking storms that bring significant amounts of precipitation to the Catskills, which form part of the watershed of the Schoharie Creek. The Atlantic tracking storms typically don’t impact the Adirondacks, so the West Canada Creek, another major tributary of the Mohawk River, hasn’t been noticeably impacted. Therefore, it is the Schoharie Creek that is largely responsible for worse and more frequent flooding of the Mohawk River. Also to be noted is that

this year we are on target for approximately 55 inches of precipitation, which is about 20 inches above the average annual total.

- Discussion followed noting that the locks on the Mohawk River were very likely not designed to handle the flows and flood levels that are currently being experienced in the lower Mohawk Valley and Schoharie Valley. The dams - and management of the locks/dams - is exacerbating flooding. A number of states are returning rivers to free flow conditions by removing barriers and dams, yet the Mohawk River/Barge Canal continues to be managed and operated to serve a narrow group of people, namely recreational boaters. As a consequence of catering to recreational boaters, numerous landowners and municipalities along the River/Barge Canal are victimized by flooding that would not be as severe were it not for the current management practices of the Canal Corps.
- John suggested that the Town needs to recognize that we have a problem and that we should take steps to protect our water supply infrastructure. The Town should consider constructing a levee around our wells to protect them from flooding. A combination of berms and slurry walls, similar to what has been constructed around the Schenectady International plant in Rotterdam Junction, would greatly improve protection of the Town's water supply. A solution needs to be engineered for the Town's wellfield.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.