

Meeting Minutes
Glenville Wellfield Study Group
December 19, 2011
3:30 p.m.

Attending: Carl George, Phil Adams, John Garver, Jason Pelton, Jacqueline Smith, Cal Welch, Mark Kestner, Roger Harrison, and Kevin Corcoran

Absent: Thomas Coppola and James MacFarland

- Kevin opened the meeting at 3:35 p.m. The minutes of both the October 18, 2011 and November 15, 2011 meetings were approved.
- The group engaged in a follow-up discussion on the presentation last month by Howard Goebel of the New York State Canal Corps. The message that everyone took out of last month's meeting and presentation is that communities and landowners along the Mohawk River are on their own. We should not expect much help in the way of flood control from the NYS Canal Corps, or anyone else, for that matter. In reaction, Jacquie pointed out that we need to be thinking about wellfield protection instead of flood control.
- Kevin asked the group if we have any questions for Mr. Goebel in follow-up to last month's meeting. Carl and others suggested forwarding the following three questions to Mr. Goebel:
 1. What is going to become of, or who is going to remove the flood debris that is located within the Mohawk River but outside of the navigation channel, since the Canal Corps is only concerned with the navigation channel?
 2. Are there any plans on the part of the Canal Corps to modify the dam/lock gates during flooding events to better manage debris?
 3. Has the topography and/or soil around Lock 8 been modified to let flood waters flow around Lock 8 during future floods? The group recalls Mr. Goebel likening this to a fuse, whereby the fuse is blown by flooding, thus minimizing flood depths and protecting the locks/dam, in theory.
- The Group then kicked around the idea of installing elevation gauges at the Town's Water Treatment Plant and along the access road leading to the plant. Mark Kestner and Roger Harrison shared some of the existing elevations with the group, noting that all facilities are at least two feet above the 100-year flood elevation. The finished floor at the pumphouse is 245 feet. The Irene flood in August produced a water level of 239 feet.

Roger is willing to order gauges for installation. Carl and Phil volunteered to do the installation, with Phil asking if the Town has surveying equipment. Kevin noted that yes, our Engineering Department has the necessary equipment to shoot elevations.

John suggested that the Town install electronic gauges that can be read remotely. The group was in agreement that this would provide for additional data collection and monitoring of water levels. John suggested that we could approach Schenectady International for telemetry data if we wish to pursue electronic monitoring. The contact person at SI is probably Bart Kiwalis. This triggered a discussion, led by Roger, who indicated that he only has dial-up internet service at the pumphouse, and that it is not reliable. The Town is close to securing internet access via Time Warner through a connection to the existing cable wiring at Arrowhead Marina. However, attorneys representing the owner of the marina and the Town's attorney need to work out the mechanics of an easement over Arrowhead's property before the Town can extend its conduit for connection to Time Warner's cable. The group suggested that urgent attention be paid to this matter so that the pumphouse can get on-line.

- Discussion once again turned to the subject of debris within the channel of the Mohawk, and along its banks. John noted that \$20 million in federal funding has been earmarked for debris clean-up along/within the Mohawk in our area. Mark wondered if debris could be removed as a preventative measure, acknowledging that removing trees within the floodway would result in a trade-off between flood damage prevention and aesthetics.
- Turning back to the issue of monitoring, and the Town's unreliable internet service at the Water Treatment Plant, Carl asked Jason if the Intermunicipal Watershed Board could assist the Town with this problem. Jason noted that the Board has never addressed such an issue, but there's no reason why they couldn't take it up in discussion. Jason did note that the Board doesn't really involve itself in operational matters of the individual municipal water departments. Kevin added that the Watershed Board has a broader mission, being charged with implementing and enforcing land use regulations around the various wellfields.
- Discussion followed on the subject of interconnecting the Town's water system with neighboring municipalities. Roger and Mark noted that the Town already does have a connection with the Village of Scotia, whereby the Town could meet the Village's needs if something were to take the Village's water system out of operation. The Village could also return the favor to a portion of the Town, but differences in system pressures between the two municipalities as they are currently configured would make it impossible for Scotia to supply most of the Town in the event of the Town's system going off-line.

The Town also has connections with Clifton Park, Ballston and Charlton, whereby our Saratoga County neighbors could theoretically provide water to Glenville, if needed. Although, our Emergency Action Plan doesn't address just how this would be accomplished, given unknowns about the pumping abilities, valve configurations, capacity, etc. of our neighbors.

Roger noted that in the event of a catastrophic flood of the Mohawk River, having the Town interconnected with the City of Schenectady/Town of Rotterdam may not help much, because our Schenectady County neighbors would likely be facing the same emergency as Glenville if the Mohawk were to suffer severe flooding. Mark added that a workable connection to Saratoga County has more value to us when it comes to potential flooding problems. Still, there is considerable merit to interconnecting with the City of Schenectady. Such a connection has not

been seriously explored. Jason noted that separation of Schenectady and Glenville by the Mohawk River poses an obstacle. The most logical place to look for a connection might be via Rexford Bridge, or Freemans Bridge.

It was suggested by the group that the Town needs to engineer and develop intermunicipal connections. More immediately, the Emergency Action Plan needs to be revisited and updated, with an emphasis on what actions the Town must take should we lose our water supply.

- Moving on to the next agenda item, the group quickly agreed that it would be beneficial to invite Jim Eldred of NYSDEC Region IV to attend one of our upcoming meetings to discuss, among other things, the status of the project to repair/replace the berm on the northwest side of Cranesville Aggregates/Scotia Sand & Stone's gravel pit. Two years ago an erosion channel formed here, thereby allowing Mohawk River water to flow into the gravel pit. The channel was repaired via a berm, but it is our understanding that the berm got washed away with the August floods. Mr. Eldred could perhaps also educate the group on permit conditions that are in place for CAC/Scotia Sand & Stone.
- Regarding berms and barriers, it was noted that FEMA suggested to the Town that rip-rap barriers be installed on the Arrowhead Marina side of the Water Treatment Plant access road. The rip-rap would be targeted at the low spots along the road.
- Carl briefly updated the group on the status of Congressman Tonko's "Mighty Waters" initiative, and Stockade resident Jim Duggan's efforts to draw attention to Mohawk River flooding that he largely blames on the Vischer Ferry Dam. John noted that Congressman Tonko's initiative has morphed from an economic development and historic preservation effort to a flood recovery and rebuild undertaking.
- On the subject of protecting the Town's wellfield from flooding, Phil suggested that the Town should consider installation of a levee or berm all around our wellfield and the gravel pit. There was discussion on the part of John and Jason that funding is available for this kind of work, and there has never been a more opportune time to pursue grants for this type of project. Mark noted that if we wish to pursue some sort of project, we need to get it shovel-ready by taking care of the environmental review and permitting as soon as possible. There seemed to be agreement that the Town should begin to engineer a flood prevention solution for our wellfield. Whether or not placing a levee around our wellfield *and* the adjacent gravel pit is practical or would be effective would be determined through preliminary engineering. We want to avoid the situation that occurred in Clifton Park/Vischer Ferry, where a berm/levee was installed around the wellfield to protect their water supply from Mohawk River flooding, but the berm ended up trapping water within the confines of the wellfield.
- Carl initiated a discussion on the idea of testing sediment he collected following August's floods. Input was offered on what should be tested, who could do the testing, whether the Town would make arrangements for lab testing, etc. Jacquie and others cautioned that if we get a positive test result we would be obligated to report our findings. Do we want to pursue

lab testing, not knowing exactly what we should test for, not being sure what we would do if we find something, and not wanting to alarm the public? The group decided to hold off on testing of the sediment.

- Carl asked Cal to share with the group his recent effort to identify risks to the Town's water supply. Cal noted that he used to perform risk assessment for First National Bank and that the process is very similar to evaluating risks to the Town's water supply. Cal identified some of the more notable risks, including flooding (from various scenarios), contamination from adjacent mining operations and potential contamination from a derailment on the rail line adjacent to the gravel pit. The Town should consider "bulletproofing" its water system through intermunicipal connections, for starters. What we as a group should do in the meantime is prioritize the risks, and by association, dismiss those things for which we have no control. Cal asked committee members to read his three-page summary and make additions, as appropriate. The group will revisit this subject at a later meeting.
- Lastly, Kevin informed the group that a Glenville resident by the name of Sarah Newell is interested in joining the committee. Kevin passed around copies of Ms. Newell's resume. She is a geologist with Clough, Harbour & Associates, and appears very well qualified to serve on the committee. Several of the committee members know Ms. Newell. The group unanimously recommended that the Town Board appoint Ms. Newell to the committee. Kevin will arrange for such through Town Board resolution in January, 2012.
- In regards to the group's January, 2012 meeting, at the request of Carl and others Roger has offered to host the meeting at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP). The meeting will take place on Monday, January 16th at 3:30 p.m. at the WTP. *(Note: Following the meeting it was noted that the 16th is Martin Luther King Day, which is a holiday for Town employees. Consequently, the meeting has been moved to Monday, January 23rd at 3:30 p.m., at the WTP.)*

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.