

A public informational session of Bloomsburg Town Council was held Tuesday, October 18, 2011, beginning at 6:07 p.m. at the Bloomsburg Fire Hall, 911 Market Street, Bloomsburg, PA. Present were Mayor Dan Knorr; Council Members Diane Levan, Paul Kinney, Sylvia Costa, W. Carey Howell; William Kreisher and Claude Renninger; Town Administrator Carol Mas; Chief of Police Leo Sokoloski; Public Works Superintendent John Barton; EMA Coordinator Joe Wondoloski; Fire Chief Bob Rupp and Assistant Code Enforcement Officer Ralph Magill.

Mayor Dan Knorr presided. He explained the purpose of the session was to find out from the public what worked and what didn't work during the most recent disaster. He began with a powerpoint presentation outlining the day-by-day procedures taken by emergency and volunteer personnel. The flood of record was caused by Tropical Storm Lee. The Susquehanna River crested at 32.75 feet on September 9, 2011.

Diane Derr, St. Luke Lutheran Church, is coordinating the missionary volunteers arriving on October 22nd and 29th. Anyone that is still in need of assistance should contact the church.

Dolores Bauchspies, 637 West Main Street, wanted to know why Council was looking back when they should have been looking forward five years ago. We know what happens. How are we going to prevent this from happening again? The ground is saturated and the banks of the creek are washing away. The creek has no depth. Maybe we should all just walk away. Mayor Knorr knows her situation will not go away. There are two paths that the town can take, flood protection or buyouts. B. Kreisher offered a third option, raising the level of the homes.

Joseph Martarano, 259 East 10th Street, believes everyone needs to work together especially if the majority of the property owners on one block are looking at raising their structures. That would include the cooperation of the town and the code office.

Eugene Hamilton, 247 West 12th Street, has lived to see a lot of flooding events. He is not against a floodwall but he believes dredging is the answer.

Isabel Tarr, 246 East 9th Street, did everything right after the 2006 flooding event. She raised her home and still got 4 feet of water on her first floor. No one talks about protection for the east end of town but Kawneer is allowed to build a wall around their plant.

Mark Rodi, 237 Port Noble Drive, can't imagine living anywhere else. Everyone was there to help and he applauds their efforts.

Curt Laubach, 1055 Harriet Street, just purchased his home in June. He plans on raising the level of his replacement home but asked what red tape can he expect to go through to get his approvals from the code office to do so? He needs to demo the current structure and was told the demo permit would be \$.10 per square foot for a total of \$91. He asked if Council was going to waive permit fees. He will pay if he had to but would they consider reducing the fee if they did not waive it entirely. Mayor Knorr said that Council has not discussed the permit issue. He suggested Mr. Laubach go to the code office with his plans and ask his questions.

Sandy Whitmire, 125 West 11th Street, spoke on behalf of her sister who lives at 1051 Harriet Street. They have made many trips to the code office to get the permission to remove the mobile home on the lot to make way for a new home. There has been no movement. Mayor Knorr noted that the town only has two full time code officers. R. Magill said that he and E. Fegley had been on the streets for three weeks going door-to-door after the flood and understandably they are behind in the office.

Carmel Minster, 907 Country Club Drive, believes what was done right was canceling the fair, sending the university students home and asking for the National Guard. She also believes in dredging and that something has to be done about the zoning office.

Dan Bauman, 417 West 3rd Street, stated that everyone is trying to reinvent the wheel like the comments that we should build a lake at the Streater property or dredge the river. The Army Corps looked at dredging for Wilkes-Barre. They would have had to dredge 12 feet deep for 25 miles from shore to shore for a cost of \$90 million. Then spend \$1 million each year to maintain the depth. He suggested those interested in flood protection to write their legislators.

John Long, 908 West Main Street, watched the house next to him go down. He has spoken with everyone, FEMA, PEMA, Representative Millard, and he knows there is money for buyouts. They have not seen any insurance money yet. He cannot raise his home. He was told that the ground will not support it. It is going to be ugly there for a long time. They are all ready to walk away. Mayor Knorr said Council will discuss the buyout grant program at the next Administrative/Finance Committee meeting, but he still feels flood protection is the answer.

Richard Brooking, 1330 Ferry Road, thinks a house will still go down even if it is raised. This is the first time he had water on his first floor. He reported the town years ago for filling in areas off Ferry Road and at the old cinder tip on 9th Street which he believes contributes to the flooding situation.

Speaking on behalf of his fiancée, Dorothy Johnson, 245 West 11th Street, Jerry thanked the town and volunteers for the prompt and courteous action at the start. Agape was great. The University and students were great. Bloomsburg has a great community.

Larry Hopper, 1070 Railroad Street, a WHLM employee, worked through the flood even though his home was inundated. He thanked everyone for the information that they tried to get out to the public as soon as possible. Thanks to the Mayor, L. Sokoloski, B. Rupp, J. Barton and Bloomsburg University. He loves this town.

Kathy Zimmerman, Wonderview, worked with the Mennonite Disaster teams. She suggested leaving the portable toilets out longer. Even though the water is back on, there may not be bathroom walls. There was no where for the volunteers to go.

Dor Remsen, 207 Port Noble Drive, had 5 feet of water on her first floor. She was away before the flood and did not have time to prepare. She praised the town's response but what we need now is disaster prevention. It needs to be a permanent item on Council's agenda. She also commended the town for the second pickup of debris.

Eileen Chapman, Agape, would like to see brochures with contact information that they can hand to victims. They are not reading the newspapers. They are not using the computer nor are they listening to the radio. J. Wondoloski had considered that issue. A phone number had been assigned for people to call but town hall did not have the infrastructure to allow for several lines to ring using the same number.

Dave Schwartz, 352 West 5th Street, wanted to know what the town was going to use as their next command post. Why not use the university's facilities? Mayor Knorr wants the command center to remain at Town Hall. We need a new generator which would be placed outside and not in the basement.

A question was asked about mandatory evacuation. Those that refuse to leave put others at risk later when they want to be rescued. J. Wondoloski explained that we do not have the authority to make someone leave. Only the Governor has that authority.

Mary Chamuris, 163 West 3rd Street, was not flooded but asked if there was a standard place a person could go in any type of disaster.

Oren Helbok, 705 East 5th Street, agreed that a dedicated center is needed. There were people that were asked to leave their homes at 2:00am and were told to get out of town.

Art MacMahon, Catawissa, stated that the Red Cross has a disaster plan and have several areas in the plan that they utilize each time.

Sue Sylvester, 643 West Main Street, had read the brochure that was available at the meeting. She reported debris in Fishing Creek since the brochure says it is unlawful to dump debris in the channels.

Jodi Graham, 518 West Main Street, loves her house. There are 10-12 houses with "For Sale by Owner" signs on West Main. We need to do something now.

Mike Wallace, 999 Market Street, asked if we still qualify for protection. Do we still have the cost/benefit? Mayor Knorr explained that we have our funding in place to complete the design and engineering phase but the federal government has not made any allocation for the project. It was 1.38. He does not know where the cost/benefit ratio is at this time.

With no further business, the hearing adjourned at 8:09p.m.

CAROL L. MAS
Town Administrator & Secretary