

WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

MINUTES: August 11, 2008

MEMBERS (E&E): Chair: Abinanti; Legislators: Harckham, Myers, Nonna, Rogowsky

IN ATTENDANCE: STAFF: C. Crane, W. Cadley; GUESTS: Leg. Pinto; Hon. P. Wittner (Mamaroneck Councilwoman); E. Devine (Rockland Co. Drainage Agency); N. Fisher (Hon. A. Paulin's office); Comm'r. R. Butler (WCDPW); Comm'r. J. Mulligan (WCDP); A. Regula, A. Nanna, M. Lepre (Greenburgh DPW); A. Jaffee (GNC); J. Picco (W.P. Times)

Environment & Energy Committee meeting called to order at 3:15 pm.

Item(s) Discussed: **Flood Mitigation and Drainage Management**

Chair Abinanti commenced the meeting with review of proposed legislation to limit vehicle idling. The proposed legislation was revised to only apply the cold temperature exemption to non-diesel fueled vehicles. Upon the motion of Leg. Nonna, seconded by Leg. Harckham, the Committee approved the revised legislation (all in favor).

The Committee then commenced review of proposed legislation to fund and establish flood mitigation studies. The Committee first heard from Edward Devine, Executive Director of the Rockland County Drainage Agency (RCDA), who described the purpose and functions of the RCDA. The RCDA has jurisdiction over certain watercourse segments adopted by Rockland County (now totals approx. 80 miles). The RCDA performs maintenance on these stream segments to remove obstructions. RCDA approves permits for development along these stream segments (within 100 feet from stream banks). RCDA also has permit approval authority over activities within floodplain (and 100 feet beyond) and for proposed subdivisions. RCDA has recently issued an RFP for a watershed study.

The RCDA's operating budget is approx. \$1.6 million, plus expenses for equipment, etc. Various capital projects range in cost from several hundred thousand to several million dollars. The RCDA reviews the county stream segments twice per year

for obstructions, and this activity has received FEMA funds. The RCDA does not own any storm drains; these are owned by the municipalities. Rockland County had considered forming a "super" MS4 to comply with new permits, but it was thought not to be cost-effective because it would be easier for the municipalities to perform these functions (MS4 compliance). Overall, Mr. Devine thinks that the damage from flooding has been greatly reduced in Rockland County because of the RCDA.

Leg. Myers then provided an overview of the Flood Action Task Force appointed by the County Executive. A sub-committee of the Task Force was created to review county-owned property for flood retention or mitigation possibilities. Commissioner Butler noted that the proposed legislation considers evaluation of six sites for flood mitigation. Applicant municipalities must develop ordinances that can lead to reduced stormwater volumes. Chair Abinanti stated that the County Board should participate in discussion of such ordinance development, either through the County Board liaison (Leg. Myers) or directly.

Commissioner Butler provided further details of the scope of the preliminary studies. Leg. Myers stated that the intent is to investigate what measures the County might conduct to reducing flooding in municipalities. Upon request by Chair Abinanti, the capital budget amendment legislation is revised to specifically identify capital project B00097 in body of the legislation. Commissioner Butler stated that an RFP will be issued to solicit consultants to perform modeling of storm water (flood water). He noted that legislation is being drafted to extend the County's permitting authority to the extent of floodplains delineated by the recently revised FEMA maps.

Upon the motion of Leg. Myers, seconded by Leg. Harckham, the Committee approved the legislation (all in favor). Upon the motion of Leg. Rogowsky, seconded by Leg. Abinanti, the Committee voted to adjourn (all in favor). The meeting concluded at approximately 5:05 pm.

[An audio recording of this meeting is on file]