

**MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP
AGENDA
Special Meeting
Thursday, September 5, 2013 – 1:00 P.M.**

This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the statutes of the State of New Jersey.

Purpose of the meeting is to meet with representatives of NJDEP to obtain information regarding the Blue Acres program.

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Presentations - NJDEP

Public Comment

Adjournment

MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP
Special Meeting
Thursday, September 5, 2013 – 1:00 P.M.

This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the statutes of the State of New Jersey.

Present: Mrs. Gross
 Mrs. Ireland
 Dominick Fiorilli
 Richard Boornzain
 Ben Stowman
 Linda L. Costello

Purpose of the meeting is to meet with representatives of NJDEP to obtain information regarding the Blue Acres program. It was noted Dominick Fiorelli is the Regional Director for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs from the Office of the Governor. Richard Boornazian is Assistance Commissioner of the Natural & Historic Resources Div. of NJDEP.

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Costello at 1:05 P.M. and attendance was noted.

Presentations – NJDEP

The discussion initiated by Mr. Fiorelli providing information regarding the potential for buyouts of properties with Blue Acres funding. He advised the Governor has committed \$3,000,000.00 for buyouts allotting for 1,000 properties in Hurricane Sandy affected areas and 300 properties in non-Sandy areas. He noted the Hurricane was not a big rain event but damages were caused by tidal and river flooding. The funding if Federal monies defined through HUD criteria, however it is not restricted to the nine counties designated by FEMA.

Mr. Fiorelli advised an action plan was not submitted for Maurice River Township and if presented would need to provide resiliency planning to keep affected properties out of harm's way.

Mr. Boornazian reviewed how to get a project done and the steps to coming up with a plan. He noted all 21 Counties were designated as affected under a Federal disaster. HUD's action plan was broad based and includes all 21 Counties.

Mr. Boornazian showed a copy of an inundation map of Sayreville and South River which included 76 homes that potentially could utilize Blue Acres funds. He showed Maurice River Township's inundation map which reflected our area was not as severely

impacted. He also noted no letters of intent were submitted. The list of criteria includes looking at big impacts, properties cannot be built on after acquisition, properties are deed restricted, whole streets or blocks are recommended, wetlands can be added to existing parks. He noted a 2" rain event could qualify and questions would include, where do we typically flood, where shouldn't we have built fifty-years ago. Sources of data may include the National Flood Insurance and NJDEP referenced public access points.

Ben Stowman asked if clarification could be provided on what is considered "an area". Mr. Boornazian stated the area has to make a substantial impact suggesting areas for public access or a pocket park with a minimum of one to two acres. They would not look at checker board patterned properties, must be contiguous.

Mrs. Ireland asked if properties are designated by the Township are we responsible for a 25% cost share? Mr. Boornzain replied no, that the State would be making the acquisition and finding the match money. He also stated it is a willing seller program and neither eminent domain nor condemnation will be invoked. They are willing to go through the entire process and if the property owner decides they are not interested the purchase will not be completed. Acquisitions will be based on pre-storm value (prior to October 28th). A physical appraisal and possible adjustments will be completed. It was also noted anything removed from the property would be reduce from the sale price; all acquired structures will be demolished.

Mr. Boornazian noted some issues in Sayerville include track housing and improvements made over the years but not assessed, therefore assessed values are not use as a basis. He noted there is an appeal process on appraisals and a case manager is provided. He also noted Green Acres utilizes certified market values; Blue Acres won't negotiate down, only up. Out of pocket costs to the property owner would include attorney fees at settlement, hiring an appraiser if appeal process sought, and discovery and remediation of any environmental hazards (such as underground storage tanks.) Soil testing will be done by the State.

Mr. Boornazian offered to hold an information meeting for the public but not until early 2014.

Mrs. Ireland commented the Township is probably not interested due to a loss of ratables and asked if there are other mechanisms available for repairs to waterfront properties. Mr. Fiorilli stated no, that would be a different conversation and outside the purview of Blue Acres. He also noted he is aware of the challenges and Mother Nature reclaiming waterfront properties.

Mr. Stowman commented that East Point is the last area with bay front homes. Mr. Fiorilli stated no one is obligated to utilize the program. Mr. Boornazian advised approximately half of the allocated money are spent. He noted if and when the Township is interested there must be justification to the Federal government and usually includes 54 steps for spending funds, including what's the long-term benefit for a buy-out.

Mr. Boornazian stated the first step would be the Township needs to come up with a plan and a cost benefit analysis. He stressed that Cumberland County is not forgotten and Blue Acres funding may not be the appropriate funding source for primary residences.

Mrs. Ireland inquired as to interest by property owners that do not have flood insurance. Mr. Boornazian advised the Federal government will still count it based on inundation mapping and the property could still be looked at.

Mrs. Costello asked the anticipated timeframe for completion of acquisition should a property owner be interested. Mr. Boornazian replied from receipt of plan to settlement six-months to one-year.

It was noted a planning incentive grant in the amount of \$20,000.00 may be considered.

Public Comment

There was no public present at this meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 2:10 P.M.

Linda L. Costello, Acting Municipal Clerk