

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SITE VISIT
MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP ---MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 at 10:00 am**

PRESENT: Ken Whildin, Mayor
Joe Sterling, Committeeman
Cormac Morrissey, Engineer
Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Notice of this Special meeting of September 12, 2022 at 10:00 am was advertised in the Friday, September 9, 2022 edition of the South Jersey Times and Daily Journal and posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on September 7, 2022 and has remained continuously posted as required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

Mayor Whildin called the meeting to order; the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Roll Call: Mr. Whildin, present
Mr. Ashton, absent
Mr. Sterling, present

Attendees:

Vincent Mazzei, Assistant Commissioner NJDEP
Becky Mazzei, NJDEP Land Use
Todd Stueber, NJDEP
Erick Doyle, NJDEP Coastal Engineering
Thomas Brinckman, NJDEP Local Government
Kunal Patel, NJDEP Flood Engineer
Michael Sheehan, NJDEP Land Use
David DuMont, NJDEP Climate Resilience Planning
Chingwah Llang, NJDEP
John Donegan, NJSP Public Assistance
Rosa Karina Torres, NJSP OEM, Compliance/County Lead
David Fanz
Barry Creamer, Public Works Manager Maurice River Township

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss issues in the Township related to NJDEP and site visit.

Site Visit & Discussion

The meeting was scheduled to discuss the permitting for the East Point Bulkhead repair and also to review and discuss various sites along the waterfront and how small towns with limited funds historically address flood control. During the course of this site visit, other projects in-progress in the Township were discussed.

1. East Point Bulkhead area

This meeting started at 10:00 am at the East Point Bulkhead all parties listed were in attendance. A discussion took place regarding the section of the bulkhead that required immediate repair due to a severe storm that caused a 40-foot-long blowout.

Below you will find keys points discussed as well as information or assistance that the Township is requesting to close out the FEMA grant and/or permit that may be required by NJDEP.

- History of the area was provided: bulkhead has been present, in one form or another, for over 40 years.
- Cement emplaced was due to a breach with a 40' blowout of the bulkhead/seawall

Assistance Requested:

- Clarification of whether a permit is required for the emergency repair. If so, what type of permit?
- Guidance on permanent more accessible structure.
- Knowledge of any funding opportunities to update the structure

Discussion:

- Mr. Mazzei indicated that he would like to see a long-term solution towards protection of this area
- Funding of long-term structure was discussed. Ms. Torres indicated that emergency funding would only pay for one fix. Permitting and engineering costs would be reimbursable.
- It was stated that FEMA BRICS funding is available and that the Township should pursue grant funding through that program.
- Mr. Doyle indicated that while Coastal Engineering has limited funds, his office might be able to provide some technical assistance in the design of a new structure.

2. Thompsons Beach

Thompson's Beach pathway was the next stop on the site visit. Below you will find key points discussed as well as information being sought to proceed with conceptual project.

- Concept plan to pave the pathway to make it more accessible was explained with a pavilion at the end.
- Pre-application for NJDOT Transportation Set Aside Grant has been scheduled for this project.

Assistance Requested:

- Support from NJDEP for the project
- Information on any permitting that will be required.

Discussion:

- Mr. Mazzei indicated that paving a bike path over the gravel pathway should not be a big lift from a DEP permitting perspective as the improvement would be within the existing development limits.
- It was suggested that the turn-around and pier/pavilion at the end might involve some wetland mitigation.
- DEP stormwater rules are less restrictive for bike paths.

3. PACT – stop at Heislerville United Methodist Church

The group next stopped at the Heislerville United Methodist Church where Mr. Whildin provided an explanation that regulations under the PACT plan are not conducive to many of the homes/homeowners living in Maurice River Township.

Below you will find key points as well as requests for consideration regarding PACT regulations.

- Under the new proposed guidelines this will put a strain on most homeowners in the Township when they are looking to improve their homes.

Assistance Requested:

- Exceptions for certain types of repairs/remodeling
- Consider the cumulative costs of regulations i.e.: septic and raising of structure combined, discourage investment. Not financially feasible to invest approximately 1/3 of the assessed value before any remodeling takes place.

Discussion:

- Mr. Mazzei acknowledged the problem that the requirement for raising a structure when an improvement is made which is 50% of the value of the home or greater creates for homes of lesser value. Small improvements can quickly exceed 50% of the value of a lower value home than the more expensive homes that you might have on the ocean side.
- Alternatives to this approach were discussed and the DEP is willing to consider options that would be more equitable to lower value homes.
- It was pointed out that FEMA rules require the 50% threshold.
- It might be possible to have an alternate approach for areas in the DEP expanded flood zone but outside the Federal flood hazard area
- It was suggested that using the Consumer Price Index might be a way to consider value that would lessen the impact of the 50% rule.
- It was also suggested that basing the improvement on a percentage of floor area might be another approach.

4. **Matts Landing**

The group next met on the on the dike just past Popeye's Marina and a review of the history of the area was provided. Below you will find key points and assistance requested from NJDEP.

- The Township is working with the State to acquire this marina area with the Ogden Rooney process being set for this fall
- History of the disappearance of the salt hay area due to tide conditions, and other natural incidents with breaches in the dike due to heavy storms was discussed.
- Projects conceptualized and proceeding to replenish some of the eroded material and to provide a buffer for the dike area.
- This marina area is the last marina area within this portion of the Maurice River with several ship repair and building businesses located along its stretch within the township.

Assistance Requested:

- Support from NJDEP with acquisition of the marina properties
- Guidance for Marina owners regarding permitting moving forward.
- Continued support and effort to create physical barriers to protect the area from erosion.
- Support for dredging of the river.

Discussion:

- Work with Army Corp of Engineers to design and implement an in-water structure that will hold dredge materials to help prevent future erosion, and possibly provide an area for disposal of dredge material from other areas of the State.

5. **River Road Sluice Pipe**

The group met at the Boat World Marina which is adjacent to the ditch sluice pipe in question. Please see key points discussed below.

- Sand bags were placed above the sluice pipe approximately 20 years ago. This was noticed by NJDEP while doing a plan investigation presented by Maurice River Holdings. MR Holdings has no part in the placement of these sand bags.

Assistance Requested:

- DEP support in resolving this issue in the review of the Maurice River Holdings environmental permit applications.
- Guidance on most cost efficient and permitted repair options

Discussion:

- It was represented that this is a typical example of how small towns historically address flooding issues and that this dike had been in place for some time.
- It was suggested that this area could possibly have been repaired under an emergency permit authorization.

- It is evident that this dike requires repair in its current condition as water was flowing through the structure.

6. Maurice River Holdings Shipyard (additional stop)

The group stopped at this site as it was along the way. Mr. Whildin and Mr. Morrissey provided a description of the work that this new owner will be undertaking on the property which is provided support for the off-shore wind industry.

Key points of discussion can be found below:

- This site was visited to show the area where the Township is requesting a Node designation.
- This site is crucial in supporting the governor's clean energy initiatives through support of the off-shore windmill project.
- This site is a prime location along the eastern seaboard as it provides a large lay-down area proximate to deep-water access.

Assistance Requested:

- Support for the Node designation on this property

Discussion:

- The Township will forward a link to the Municipal Self-Assessment prepared in December 2021 wherein the node was discussed.

7. Mauricetown Bridge Area

The entire group met at the parking area next to the Mauricetown Bridge. Mr. Whildin explained that this property was recently donated to the Township by PSE&G and the Township would like to create an area of access and recreation for the community here.

Below please find key points discussed:

- Maurice River Township acquired through donation from PSE&G the properties located on either side of the bridge.
- Maurice River Township sees this area as being a prime site for recreation such as a boat ramp and/or fishing pier.

Assistance Requested:

- Support from NJDEP to proceed with the plan for a recreation site/public access.
- Guidance on any permitting or other statutory requirements to proceed with this plan.
- Funding opportunities to see the plan to fruition.

The consensus was to not proceed to the Township Hall to close out the meeting as all topics had been discussed as the site visit progressed.

Mr. Sterling called for an adjournment; seconded by Mr. Whildin

Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk