

**FLOOD & EROSION COMMISSION  
DECEMBER 5, 2012**

**MEETING**

Present: Rick Grauer, Tim DeBartolomeo, James Baum, Joe Michelangelo, Laura Pulie, Tome Steinke and members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 by Chairman Rick Grauer.

1. Rick Grauer made a motion to keep the current slate of officers, Tim DeBartolomeo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rick Grauer, Chairman  
Tim DeBartolomeo, Vice-Chairman  
James Baum, Secretary

2. Rick Grauer made a motion to accept the dates for the 2013 meetings, Tim DeBartolomeo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Drainage from the flood plain behind beach

Mr. Grauer stated that in his opinion the DPW did a good job with the storm by renting the large pumps even though it caused beach erosion but that they had to get the water out. Mr. Grauer stated that after the 1992 storm he had proposed that bigger pipes be installed at the dike over the sewer outfall and he would like to put that on the table again. Mr. Michelangelo stated that when the water comes in all at once it is the choke point and getting it out in one 48" pipe with the flapper open and no obstructions is difficult.

Mr. Melvin Silverman – 710 Rowland Road stated that he feels that the Pentway is keeping the water in and that two volunteers took the boards out and the water rushed out but some still stayed because it had nowhere to go. Mr. Silverman also stated that the DPW should be the ones removing these boards.

Mr. Michelangelo stated that we need to give the water another way out on Fairfield Beach Road at the end of Rowland Road. He also stated that the First Selectman has asked for a formal report from DPW and possible recommendations for the future of what we can do to both keep the water out and if it gets in, get the water out.

Mr. Grauer stated that the sluice gates worked well but it is not big enough. He feels we can get away from the flapper and just install a sluice gate. Then you can just turn a valve and it free flow. There was a discussion regarding the bulkhead at Penfield requesting Federal money.

Mr. Grauer asked how the Commission could make a request for a bigger pipe or sluice gate. Mr. Michelangelo stated that they needed to make a motion. Ms. Pulie stated that the drainage pipe was acting properly under normal conditions but under hurricane conditions it exceeded its capacity. She also felt that with debris fencing it would improve. Mr. Grauer made a motion that the Engineering Department look into additional storm relief drainage over the sewer outfall to relieve flood waters from behind the beach. Mr. DeBartolomeo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Penfield I – Mr. Leigh Hannum – 644 Rowland Road stated that after the initial water surge the tide went back out. He said the flood gate at the pentway did hold back water. He said the water was going through the stormdrains but something was clogged easterly and wondered what clogged the pipe. Mr.

Grauer said the pipe on Fairfield Beach Road at the first hump is where the sewer lines go out. He said the water goes into the marsh behind Edward Street first and then to Fairfield Beach Road out through the channel then out to a 48" pipe that was clogged with debris. Mr. Michelangelo stated that one of the solutions that were suggested was scooping out the embankment behind the Fire Training Center where the 48" pipe is but the area downstream was still surcharged. Mr. Grauer stated that he opened the sluice gate and Wednesday morning the street had puddles but was basically dry. There was a discussion regarding the height of the seawall. The Commission feels that going forward we need to make adjustments so it doesn't happen again.

4. Penfield I – Building Repair and Bulkhead modifications – At first DPW thought that using marine plywood buried would do the job and passed a motion to put the bulkhead in closer to the deck with movable stairs. Eventually it was changed to go seaward to the stairs with weir boards. Mr. Michelangelo stated that he was talking to a structural engineer and some considerations are elevating the entire building to appropriate level after getting new elevations from FEMA and that will be the target and to create a permanent bulkhead once the building is raised and we will see if it will benefit adding height to the building. There are a number of things under consideration. Mr. Grauer stated that we need an adequate tie in near the east end and stone wall. Mr. Pulie will get back to the Commission regarding the tie in.
5. Fairfield Beach Club flooding – Mr. Grauer stated that he asked to have this on the Agenda because Mr. DeBartolomeo's company is involved. Mr. DeBartolomeo stated that the company has been asked but that he is not involved and could not comment on this.
6. Private property owner sea walls – It was asked if there were any way to simplify the permitting process. Mr. DeBartolomeo stated that the DEEP's policy is that if the structure is not currently authorized, you can't repair it. Structure has to predate 1995. If it is after 1995 it shouldn't be there in the first place.

There was a discussion regarding seawalls vs. no seawalls and Mr. DeBartolomeo stated that the policy is that you may use taxpayer money for in front of public structures. It is possible that you might not be able to use private money to put seawalls in front of neighboring private structures. Mr. DeBartolomeo further stated that the DEP will allow municipalities to protect infrastructure with seawalls but a home owner is not considered a water dependent use so the wall is in a different category. Coastal Jurisdiction is new and people would have to go through the local Coastal Area Management process.

7. Fair Acres Pentway at Rowland Road – this was originally designed to stop water from coming in and this time it served as a means to let it out until it reached an elevation of where the concrete is and you can't go below that. Mr. Grauer's concern is that if you take that concrete out and have weir board go further down you have a chance of eating out everything behind there when it races out. Mr. Grauer feels it is better to keep the water out than letting it out. He thinks you should get it out through Pine Creek. Fair Acres Association has control of the Pentway. Mr. Hannum asked who built the end of the Pentway, the Town or Fair Acre Association? Mr. Grauer believes it was a cooperative project.

The owners of either side of the Pentway need to give permission for anything else built on this property. Mr. Grauer made a motion to have the Engineering Department come back to the Board with a recommendation to mitigate future flooding on the Pentway on Rowland Road. Dr. Baum seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Erosion and replenishment of beaches
12. Southport Harbor Dredging – Disposition of material

Mr. Grauer stated that these are somewhat combined and asked Mr. Michelangelo what are the plans for the sand? Mr. Michelangelo started with South Benson Marina and said one of the things they are going

to propose to FEMA is to collect the sand in the Marina channel and use that sand to replenish Penfield Beach. The material in Southport Harbor has some sand that cannot be used at Southport and Sasco Beach because it is not all sand. This remains to be seen. Mr. Grauer asked that the acceptable sand will be put back on the beaches and Mr. Michelangelo said it would. Mr. Michelangelo said there was a stockpile of sand at Penfield Beach that the residents have been taking.

9. Second sluice gate at Fairfield Beach Road. Ms. Pulie said it would be installed at Neary's and all they have to do is get the COP to DEEP.
10. Berm at the Marina – Mr. Grauer commented that he was surprised the boats on the beach didn't suffer more damage. He said the water was coming in near the Guard Shack because it is lower ground and it was also coming over the hill. Police took the rope down and used that road for evacuations. Mr. Grauer wondered if it was feasible to tie it to the berm behind Jennings Beach. The entrance would have to be changed. Mr. Grauer made a motion that the Engineering Department come back to the Board with their thoughts and recommendations on how to minimize flooding in the Ash Creek Area particularly between the dune on Jennings Beach and the northeast corner of the Marina. Mr. DeBartolomeo seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
11. Pine Creek Dike – Mr. Grauer stated that he asked to have this put on the Agenda after a conversation with Ms. Pulie. He believes that is at an elevation 12. Ms. Pulie said it is 10.5 to 13 and Mr. Grauer said we came real close to topping that and the homes would be under water. Ms. Pulie suggested that they look into raising part of the berm. There was a discussion regarding this project. Mr. DeBartolomeo said the question is does the existing Town dike offer the level of protection based on the flood maps and that is what should be looked into. Mr. DeBartolomeo made a motion that the Engineering Department review the future flood maps by Pine Creek and provide a report back to the Board on their findings. Mr. Grauer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
13. Coastal Jurisdiction Line Elevations Mr. DeBartolomeo explained that State Legislature adopted a new law identifying what is now called the Coastal Jurisdiction Line for the Connecticut DEP and for regulated work in tidal waters. It was prior to that called the High Tide Line which was a very confusing name and definition. This law gives actual elevations per municipalities. What it means to Fairfield is that it is at elevations plus 5.2. Mr. DeBartolomeo explained that it is about a half a foot higher than what it was prior to October 1, 2012. The DEP now has six inches more jurisdictions. There was a discussion regarding the past and present property lines because of this change.

Mr. Grauer made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeBartolomeo to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.