

Meeting Minutes, City of Prospect Heights Ad Hoc Willow Road Committee

Held on February, 27, 2019 at 6:30pm, at Prospect Heights City Hall

Call to Order-At 6:30PM, the meeting was called to order.

Roll Call for Quorum: Committee Members Colombe, Kupczyk, Ludvigsen, Williamson and Wade were present.

Election of Committee Chair and Secretary: As this was the first meeting of the Committee, Mr. Ludvigsen was elected by the membership to serve as Chair, and Mr. Wade was elected by the membership to serve as Secretary.

Chair Ludvigsen referenced the reason for the Ad Hoc Willow Road Committee, to gather public input concerning the proposed project.

Mr. Kupczyk introduced a power point presentation (attached for the record) he had prepared, and asked everyone to keep an open mind about the project and to make sure issues are addressed. He described his concern about the project being controlled by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) and the intergovernmental agreement concerning the project would be provided by the MWRD. He referenced past history of Hillcrest Lake, advising the Lake was formerly owned by the Hillcrest Lake Homeowners Association. When the Association no longer desired to maintain ownership of the Lake, he said there were offers from the Park District, City and MWRD. The association felt it was best to transfer ownership to the City. The Association was concerned about losing control of the Lake to MWRD. He noted similar concerns of losing control of the Lake to MWRD are related to this project.

Mr. Kupczyk advised the Committee that homeowners' within the impacted area have authorized his representation of their position and concerns regarding the project proposal. He has been in communication with these homeowners and has distilled from their comments the areas of concern.

He introduced what are considered the major areas of concern. He said that the common denominator of these issues from area homeowners is that if there is no resolution of these matters, no one will be in favor of the project. These major areas are:

1. No Silt Control Provisions for Willow Road as Reconstructed-Mr. Kupczyk noted he had been advised by a former City Engineer for Prospect Heights that if nothing was done to address silting in Hillcrest Lake, it would fill in. The engineer advised a catch basin-like structure is needed.

2. Destruction of only wildlife refuge area on Hillcrest Lake (southeast corner of Lake). It was noted there are approximately 75 trees in this area, which if removed, would destroy the area's bird habitat.
3. 600 per cent increase in Lake outflows coupled with lower invert elevation of the new culverts.

During discussion of the silt box/catch basin possibility, Mr. Ludvigsen noted the City might consider a location at Elmhurst Road, where the creek begins to form the slough. This may be more effective in trapping silt carried by McDonald Creek.

The Committee undertook particular examination of the Lake outflow item. Mr. Kupczyk noted concern about the possibility the project will lower the level of the Lake, and during flooding situations, will displace water to the rear of Owen Court homes, with the water moving toward Wheeling Road.

Mr. Colombe suggested, based on his observation and experience, raising the grade of Owen Street only one foot, which would allow safe passage of vehicles.

Mr. Ludvigsen expressed concern of the impact of segmenting grade changes of roadways around the Lake on the displacement of flood water. He further noted the issue of a possible lowering of the Lake level and displacement of flood water toward Wheeling Road was something which needed information and evaluation from MWRD.

Mr. Kupczyk said his communications with area residents identified secondary areas of concern. He stated residents of Hillcrest are not in favor of the road project and are against the disruption of their property and loss of mature trees. The secondary areas of neighborhood concern are:

1. Major prolonged construction disruption to homes along Hillcrest.
2. Flood waters are being diverted behind homes along Owen Court.
3. Permanent standing water in side yard directly west of 408 Owen Court
4. Aesthetic changes to Owen Court caused by 3 ft. road raise and guardrail.

In summary, Mr. Kupczyk said issues needed to be addressed regarding the impact of the project on the Lake level, related to silt control and the proposed outflow of the Lake, and the possibility of diverting flood waters to the area behind the homes of Owen Court. Because of the culverts under Owen, water may go to the homes even if the grade of the road is raised. He stated an independent evaluation of silt control may be needed.

Mr. Ludvigsen asked to hear from members of the audience attending the meeting.

Mr. Cyrus, 420 Hillcrest, said he recently bought a home in the neighborhood and flooding is not a concern to his home or property. The secondary effects of the project, a guardrail and raising the road level would be aesthetically damaging to the property.

Mr. Williamson asked if the project could be adjusted from an improvement to address 100 year storm water events to one of 50 years, 25 years or 10 years.

Mr. Kupczyk asked if the project could be tailored to raise the Owen grade somewhere between the present grade and the proposed 3 foot increase.

There followed considerable discussion of the possibility of segmenting the project, with a lower than the proposed 3 foot grade increase to Owen and no grade increase to Hillcrest. This possibility would be referred to MWRD for review and evaluation.

The Committee reviewed the five potential compensatory storage sights identified by MWRD. Mr. Wade advised three sites had been identified as adequate by MWRD. Securing these sites would be the responsibility of the City. If the project is adjusted, by not raising the grade of Hillcrest or Owen, the amount of compensatory storage needed for the project would be revisited.

General discussion followed regarding framing identified questions to the MWRD. Mr. Kupczyk asked about the City obtaining a cost estimate for a silt box.

Mr. Ludvigsen said the effectiveness of a silt box on the Lake would be needed first.

Mr. Wade said the Lake is already filling in without this project and cited an Illinois Department of Natural Resources study in the 1970's showing Lake depths of 7-8 feet which are now 2-3 feet. He noted shoreline erosion is a problem.

Mr. Siok asked about the massive amount of death and destruction to property-trees, yards, driveways. He is concerned the project will change why people live here.

Mr. Ludvigsen discussed the challenge of balancing the interests of the project, as interests on Hillcrest may be different from those on Owen.

Mr. Columbe said the aesthetics of the Lake do matter to the people on Owen.

Resident (name not known) expressed concern about disruption of neighborhood, loss of trees and costs of property restoration left to residents. Silt is an important concern.

Mr. Ludvigsen noted this is a man-made lake and the project did address erosion control, which is something the City could not do on its own.

Resident (name unknown) said she was concerned about people being able to park because of the project and the view of the Lake. She said she was concerned about one of her trees.

Mr. Williamson said the impact on the noted tree would need to be reviewed individually, as the location in reference to the project is not known.

Resident (name unknown) said the intersection of Hillcrest and Owen generally never floods. He suggested raising Owen to the level of the intersection.

Mr. Williamson cautioned that water will seek its own level. Displacement of water at one point will cause it to go elsewhere.

Alderman Rosenthal, Ward 2, said he has been interested in this project for many years and suggested the Committee put the questions together and submit them to MWRD.

Mr. Ludvigsen said follow-up issues from this meeting would be coordinated with MWRD

Mr. Williamson said communication with MWRD should respect the project manager, Cedric Robertson.

Mr. Ludvigsen said the City Administrator should be the only point of communications to MWRD and Globetrotters Engineering.

Mr. Ludvigsen said the next meeting would be dependent on the information flow from MWRD.

City Clerk Morgan-Adams said a meeting date needs to be scheduled.

Mr. Ludvigsen said he wants a meeting but the Committee needs information.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Joe Wade