

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
UTILITIES & SEWERS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
APRIL 28, 2020 4:30 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

Present: Chairman James Trakas
Councilperson Kenn Synek
Councilperson Dale Veverka

Also Present: Vice Mayor Grendel
Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz
Councilperson Tom Narduzzi
Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
City Engineer Don Ramm
Finance Director Vern Blaze

Chairman Trakas called the Utilities & Sewers Committee virtual meeting of April 28, 2020 to order at 4:38 p.m.

Chairman Trakas asked the Clerk if there were any members of the public who were present.

The Clerk of Council said we have 8 attendees, Alex Holoka, Brian Fitzgibbon, Ed Merker, Laura Bednar, Maggie Osysko, Roger Lesh and Anthony Togliatti.

Chairman Trakas said wonderful, welcome everybody and thank you for being present for the meeting. We have a function here that can chat. So, at the end of the agenda I will ask for any questions if that's okay; and we can ask members. I know we have at least one person who was interested. He asked if that was okay with the other members.

Both Councilperson Synek and Councilperson Veverka replied yes.

Chairman Trakas said the first item of business is the 2020 Creek and Utility Maintenance priorities. As we do oftentimes at the meetings, Don you are the star of the show. Please feel free anyone to make a comment or if you put your hand up for a question. We will try to answer everybody's questions.

Chairman Trakas said Don, why don't you start out with our 2020 projects. Did everyone get a copy of the e-mail from the Finance Director with the list that he sent over to us?

City Engineer Ramm asked Chairman Trakas if he wanted him to start rolling with the agenda items.

City Engineer Ramm asked if the Mayor was in the meeting?

Mayor Kurtz said all set Don.

City Engineer Ramm said I thought it was appropriate to show you what led to why we are here at the meeting, some of the rain data that we pulled together. This is from March 15th to April 15th, and just shows you that we really got slammed there. It's a two calendar day period, March 28th and March 29th; but in essence all that rain, 2.93 inches, really fell in a 26 hour period. I think it really contributed.

The other takeaway is the significant amount of rain leading up to March 29th, and this chart just shows you that in the month of March in 2020, we had 6.53 inches of rainfall; and historically going back 5 years, it was a lot. It exceeded the average; but for one event in May of 2017, it's the highest monthly amount of rainfall.

One other takeaway, so we dialed a little bit deeper into the rain; and it's really the intensity that I think we need to focus on. The intensity is inches per hour, and so we went back to 2012; and the Northeast Regional Sewer District has data dating back 8 years. Again, in March, the highest; but also if you look at the right, inches per hour, the .09 and what we experienced, and that only matched it by one event in April of 2017 that had a little bit higher, 1.22 inches per hour of intensity. We looked at our flood data back in 2017 and found that little to no flooding occurred in that event; and I think the premise behind that is why it causes so many problems here at the end of March was just how wet everything is. Everything was saturated. Those intense rains were complete, pure runoff; and I think it really exacerbated and exposed a lot of issues in the watershed around the City.

This is a map that we comprised from that flood event for those 3 or 4 days there at the end of March. It is categorized by the different items. Of course, the commercial road flooding by the river; and then residential road flooding, basements, yards, debris, trees in the creek, erosion, sewage in the basement; so we got a total of 93 calls, and that's probably plus or minus. We tried to pull the data the best we could from the Service Department and around the City. So, we think it's pretty accurate, but it's a lot. There are a lot of different issues around the City and just wanted to put everything in context of what challenges we had due to the rain.

Chairman Trakas said in terms of the ways you exposed some of vulnerabilities, so what type of vulnerability do we have? What types of remedies are there for this type of an event? We have had storms over the course of (inaudible). If you could explain what the vulnerabilities are in terms of what the City has that these such events are hard to handle.

City Engineer Ramm said that's a difficult question to answer. I think just in general, so you see a lot of basement flooding. Sometimes if storm sewer laterals have roots, are compromised with some roots. Significant rain events and intense storms will bring that, will kind of expose those

problems. That's one simple scenario where the sheer volume and short duration really it shows the weaknesses and the problems.

One major thing that we want to speak to is this Patriot's Way culvert. It's a major tributary, and the volume of water, coupled with the abrasion of the materials that get blown down through a watercourse that's highly erodible with shale fragments, really chews through the bottoms of pipes at that velocity. We think that was a major issue with the culvert that ultimately gave way down there. We have some slides to show you a little bit more in detail later. There's just overall ground saturation. The water has nowhere to go so it shows its face all over. It's a difficult thing to answer Chairman Trakas.

Chairman Trakas said thank you.

City Engineer Ramm asked is there any other questions before we keep moving?

There were no other questions.

City Engineer Ramm said I just wanted to throw this slide on here just so no one forgets about our flood levee. We had commercial flooding, and the river flooded, Commerce Park and Old Rockside Road. I just wanted to keep this on. Just to let you know, this project is still on our radar. It would resolve that commercial flooding. I just wanted to speak to it.

Moving along, I think it's appropriate to show you some bid results of our concrete maintenance contract, and just to remind everybody we had \$200,000 contracts awarded to both our vendors. This is a snapshot of the bid values. We had over 20, 22 drainage alternates; and when you tally everything up, it is pushing down there at the bottom, over \$2,500,000 worth of work. So, of course the challenge is there's way more work than we have funding, and particularly even now with the challenges with the income tax revenue way down and the likelihood that we won't be able to do much, have to focus really on priorities and things that cannot be ignored. A lot of these things I think we would like to do and should do. I am prepared to go through these one at a time, I am just not sure how detailed you want to get with this. We can gloss right over it, but I could share with you if you would like to see any details of any specific projects.

Chairman Trakas said Don if you wouldn't mind, if you could address some of the big events you had just over the course of the last several weeks; and if any of these alternatives address that specific area of town. That would be helpful.

City Engineer Ramm said a lot of these are neighborhood projects in which there is always basement flooding. So, no one particular one stands out. I wouldn't mind talking about the Patriot's Way if you don't mind.

Mayor Kurtz said I think someone had mentioned earlier Mr. Chairman about priorities. This is probably the highest priority because of the urgency of trying to get something resolved before the next storm.

City Engineer Ramm said definitely. The risk of not taking action on this repair is high. So, this is the location in the red circle where it failed, and there's a significant embankment. It's hard to see. Can you see my cursor?

Several people replied yes.

City Engineer Ramm said so there's a headwall here. There was a piece of pipe right here that's no longer there. Here's looking upstream. So, Patriot's Way is up here at the top of about a 40 foot embankment. This is the headwall where the pipe used to sit, and it got stuck down into the downstream end of this pipe when it failed. So, now this embankment, this really has nothing to support it; and as the rain over time, it just keeps eroding. We need to take care of this. These are pieces of the pipe that got sucked in. The Regional Sewer District had a crew out there for almost 2 weeks cutting out with a torch and yanking pieces of this pipe, part of the culvert. They did that to help us out and because this is on a tributary that is part of the Regional storm sewer system. So, the first order of business was to get this pipe capacity back open so that there were no restrictions, and that this pipe could take huge flows while we were still trying to fix and mitigate the repair here.

So, both of our vendors, we reached out to them, drew up some specifications on what we were looking for, and these are the prices that Geotech and Catts came back with. We are prepared to move forward quickly with Geotech who was significantly less. We did ask them to commit to no change orders so that there would be no increases in this number. Some takeaways that I want to let you know that this price includes not only the replacement of the pipe that's missing and repair of the embankment, but there's 60 feet of this pipe that is still intact; but it's a little bit compromised. The invert is a little rusted here, and so we included in these prices what we called field paved invert which is where they reinforce the bottom of the pipe with some concrete and some reinforcement. It just helps extend the useful life and protects the bottom of the pipe from future abrasion and ultimate failure. So, the Regional Sewer District will participate in these costs, and we don't have the final agreement yet; but we have been in contact with them and coordinating with them. We think it's probably 70% or 80% of these costs that might be reimbursable.

Mayor Kurtz asked why are they willing to participate?

City Engineer Ramm said because this stream is on their regional network. It's just downstream actually of the pipe that failed on West Liberty Way, and just late last year Geotech fixed a pipe that collapsed under that road; and I think the funding participation with Regional in that scenario was about 80%.

Mayor Kurtz asked will this go against our storm sewer contribution, or is this in addition to that because of its location?

City Engineer Ramm said this funding doesn't come out of our pot of money, it comes out of Regional's larger overall program funding. It is not our \$.25 on a dollar that we get put back into our account.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, I only mention these questions because I want to make sure everyone is aware of the dynamics. I will continue to do that during the presentation because that way people will have a more robust understanding of the different economic impacts as well as the priorities.

Chairman Trakas said please do Mayor.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I have a question. Is there any reason why that wasn't done originally in concrete piping?

City Engineer Ramm said well I think cost is always a consideration, but these corrugated metal pipes, they are extremely strong and can withstand a lot of force and height fill. It's ironic, even some of the reinforced concrete pipes aren't as strong and can't handle this amount of embankment. So, that's one of the reasons, and they are cost effective. They are pretty cheap. This one has been in the ground since 2002 we think, 2003. So, it's about 18 years before this occurred.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said you get some longevity out of this you are saying.

City Engineer Ramm said well the longevity, the abrasion is really what the kicker, the scour, it just erodes. It chews through the metal. This particular gauge was a little bit stiffer or thicker. We had a failure on Oak Tree Blvd. North back in 2010 and 2015; that pipe was a 16 gauge pipe. This pipe is a 12 gauge. So, that's why I think it lasted as long as it did, but it still needs to be retrofitted and reinforced even at this point.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked what's the diameter of that pipe?

City Engineer Ramm said I believe it's 84 inches. It's a large diameter pipe.

Chairman Trakas asked what areas of town does this impact? Where does this flow?

City Engineer Ramm said it's a major tributary to Hemlock Creek; so it's in our commercial district, but this creek flows as far back south as Chestnut, points from Chestnut Road and even points south into Seven Hills, ultimately this watercourse travels. This is at the downstream end as it's getting closer to under the I-480 interchange and on its way down to the Cuyahoga.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked is this a possibility of what happened here is why we had such a bad incident on Chestnut that evening because of the creek that is up towards Cheryl Ann?

Mayor Kurtz said no, this wouldn't impact that.

City Engineer Ramm said well I think the rain in general, the rain event in general.

Mayor Kurtz said the failure could have been because of the volume and velocity; but the result of all the flooding on Chestnut Road was not impacted by this failure.

City Engineer Ramm said correct. This was quite aways downstream.

Chairman Trakas asked just out of curiosity, why do you believe that this is the highest priority over some of the residential areas? What is the thinking?

City Engineer Ramm said the toe of this significant embankment, and with nothing to hold it together, continued rain events are going to continue to erode away at this embankment. It's unsupported, and the pipe itself needs to be reinforced. So, it could ultimately compromise the Patriot's Way marginal road across that ravine; and it could be then significantly more times expensive than the cost that we are looking at right now.

Chairman Trakas said it will be like \$20,000 to \$25,000, something like that, if the Regional Sewer District does participate fully.

City Engineer Ramm said correct. That is our hope so that we won't be taking the hit. We will still ultimately fund it initially and then get reimbursed.

Mayor Kurtz said so the point being is that this will carve into a good portion of our appropriated funds, Creek Maintenance, at least until, if we are even going to be reimbursed this year. There is no definite timetable for reimbursement.

City Engineer Ramm replied correct.

Finance Director Blaze said so just so I am clear, this expenditure would be proposed to be used out of Geotech's \$200,000 allocated unless Council and the Utilities Committee makes a recommendation to Council today to add this.

City Engineer Ramm said Vern, I think that's the most efficient way to go. We already have them lined up, just executed the contracts. They can certainly attack this work and get it done and loan ourselves the funding and then put it back in later.

Chairman Trakas asked Committee what do you think about that?

Mayor Kurtz said the other thing Mr. Chairman, this new policy; we are going to ask the contractors to ensure not only the quality, but the price and eliminate the vast majority of the change orders that we have experienced the last couple of years.

Chairman Trakas said thank you for that Mayor.

Members of the Committee, what are your thoughts on putting this in the Creek Maintenance; it would chew up nearly 40% of the Creek Maintenance Program?

Councilperson Synek said I think it falls under the (inaudible) sort of category. I often drive by that ravine. That's a very deep ravine there. You can't even see that from the street I don't think, it's do deep down there; and that embankment, there's not a whole lot of ground to begin with between where the road passes over it. It's just straight down on both sides. So, if that hillside

were to go, it may be a major problem. So, based on the Engineer's recommendation, I see no reason not to pursue with getting it repaired.

Chairman Trakas asked Councilperson Veverka?

Councilperson Veverka said I agree. I believe that seeing that we put the time and effort into upgrading the streets in that particular area, that embankment is close to that; and we don't want to risk much greater costs later and do more work on the embankment and whatever else is connected with that project.

Chairman Trakas said I guess my own view is I would rather work on some larger problems in residential areas; and I don't want to defer this too long, but we do have budgetary decisions to make. This is a pretty substantial amount for one creek maintenance project; so that's the sacrifice you get to make with the budget.

City Engineer Ramm said okay, if we are done speaking about this item, I can move through and maybe just show you some graphical representations of some of these neighborhood projects; some of them deal with surface flooding, some of them dealing with erosion, basement flooding. I think it could be mitigated with some of these residential projects.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Don, I think it's your recommendation that we act upon that rather quickly; would you look to see approval at our May meeting or even get an idea. I think, even though you hate to take that big chunk away; to do nothing or to delay it might cause a tremendous calamity and once businesses go back, there's going to be a lot of traffic. It will cause an even more financial problem, but also a problem with our business district down there too once they get up and running. For my two cents worth, I think we definitely should move forward with that and get that fixed.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I agree Dave.

Mayor Kurtz said I don't think we have to do anything with it because we have already appropriated this money. It's just going to limit the amount of additional projects we will be able to do unless somewhere down the road Council amends this appropriation line. So, we are okay to keep going on this today; but it's fully vetted through the committee. We wanted to make sure it was known to be a priority by the Engineer's office, and we just wanted to make sure that Council would allow us to continue with this strategy.

City Engineer Ramm said we are prepared to move forward quickly on this. We have Geotech lined up, and they are already getting their ducks in a row. We are just doing some last minute coordination with the Regional Sewer District to get our agreement; and you will probably see a draft agreement coming soon that memorializes the funding support participation in writing. We are just not there yet.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked how soon do we expect to get that reimbursement from the Sewer District? Is it a whole year? Do we get paid later this year? How does that work?

City Engineer Ramm said I can only refer back to what happened late last year, and they actually did quite well in returning that funding. They wanted to issue the check ironically before the end of the calendar year. So, I believe that work wrapped up in November, around Thanksgiving, and we had the check before the end of December.

Vice Mayor Grendel said well that's a good sign. We can get that funding recouped pretty quickly.

City Engineer Ramm said I can't swear or commit that is how they will do with this one.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked did they say how long it would take to fix that problem?

City Engineer Ramm said I believe the contractor stated that he was looking at 2 to 3 weeks worth of work there. So, now is a good time in terms of traffic being down. We need to close that road altogether when the work is performed, and it's a good time ironically to get in there and do that work.

So, we will move forward. I will just touch base real quickly on these; and if you have any questions, let me know. If I don't hear any, I will just keep rolling through some of these projects to give you a quick flavor for them.

Chairman Trakas asked what companies bid, and we have alternatives that could be expected.

City Engineer Ramm said and as a reminder, the base bid has a lot of work items, token values of quantities; it's really not a specific project per se. So, it's really not allocated for anything specifically other than items of work. So, for what it's worth.

The first one here is the issue on Chestnut Road. Bob Juliani's house is on the right, and the house that, you can see a bigger panned out view; the parcel there with a lot of dirt is where the garage was built last year. So, this project was put out to resolve some flooding and a larger diameter pipe, and we do think there's a possibility that it may be able to be extended this way and maybe look at the more global area here of the problem that has plagued the area of Chestnut Road if things fall together the right way. It's an opportunity.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, there are several areas along the entire, located in red, proceeding west; there are a number of areas that we identified as flooded or the surface area was at least flooded. Before we look at this individually, we should really have the Engineer at least explore what it's going to take to deal with all those rear yards as one project, rather than as isolating this one location. Like he said, it may pick up some of the contiguous properties and solve a problem going further west. So, we might want to look at that as a more comprehensive view.

Chairman Trakas said Don, if possible, after we reviewed all these projects, to prioritize some of the ones that we might make add up to the \$400,000 and not have general maintenance. Would it make sense to us all to, after we heard the presentation on all of these different projects,

perhaps prioritize several of them to include in the project rather than just a general maintenance; but to use specific projects as part of the dollars. Would that make sense to you?

Mayor Kurtz said if he could go through all of them first, and then we can isolate where we had some hot spots; I think that would be appropriate.

Chairman Trakas said thank you. That's what I was looking for. I will be quiet.

City Engineer Ramm said this is kind of a carry forward project. It's a sidewalk flooding issue, nothing too significant here. It benefits a couple of properties, that's it. So, there's not a whole lot of benefit here for this one. It's at North Renwood and Ivandale intersection.

This is an area back off of where the confluence project was done; there's a main storm sewer outfall right here that picks up a lot of the business district and even outlets a lot of our storm sewer water from Fuhrmeyer and Old Brecksville. It's the geometry of how this pipe outlets into the West Creek, it's not ideal; and this project just turns it and gets it downstream. We feel it might hydraulically be an improvement, not a major project or cost.

This is over on East Pleasant Valley. This is the old Roberecki house; so that tells you how old this project goes back. This house has been demolished, but there's some gabions. This is an easement area. In our easement there are some gabions here that are nearing the end of their useful life; they could collapse and block off this major pipe. So, we feel like there's a need there to get that rectified.

This is just an outfall from the Elmwood Drive storm sewer; there is some erosion back here behind the homes. It's not a large project, but one that has been on our books for a while.

The same thing here, this is on Valley Woods; one of the areas that has some problems. This is again the main outfall sewer; there's some erosion and a need to do some treatments here.

Chairman Trakas asked how many properties does that impact?

City Engineer Ramm said this particular one benefits the neighboring properties that are immediately adjacent to the outfall. There are some problems here. This creek feeds in against this embankment. The creek actually was designed to be out here in the easement; and as you can see, it's significantly turning and beating against this edge here of the creek. I am not sure to what degree this work, there's maybe a bigger project to consider; but it's not included in this alternate.

Mayor Kurtz asked Mr. Chairman, the flooding was to the south and west of this area?

City Engineer Ramm said correct. There were some homes at the bottom of the hill. I have some slides later on, we are going to focus more exactly on this area that we will talk about that. The street got flooded here. The debris shoots out into this low spot, and the road actually gets impassable until the water subsides. The Service Department cleaned up a lot of the rock shale fragments that were ejected out of the pavement here.

This happens to be a residential property that when the water main on Hillside Road that's deficient breaks, a lot of the times this low lying house gets flooded; and we were looking to do an improvement here that might better accommodate the drainage. There's a couple benefiting properties there.

Now this gets into maybe more of a residential neighborhood type projects. This is an area between Sunset and Elmwood. There is a main culvert that comes through the neighborhood, a large diameter pipe. This alternate would extend the storm sewer across 5 or 6 yards that benefit both sides of Elmwood. Then this is to the immediate east of that same culvert, again working east, same sort of concept. There's a lot of runoff coming between the two streets.

Mayor Kurtz said Don, we are working as we speak, aren't we preparing to fix a couple of houses that the water main goes underneath Elmwood because of backflow into their basements?

City Engineer Ramm said yes, we have been working. We had a contractor out at resident's Linda Terro's. I am not sure which one of these houses. I think it's one of these.

Mayor Kurtz said it is, right there. The issue is we are going to fix these immediate needs. We are going to look at this as, put that on a list for other projects down the road. Alright?

City Engineer Ramm replied yes. It's primarily dealing with a lot of surface flooding, but ultimately we think that water does make its way to some basement issues. So, we do think that there's a nice benefit and will move forward with it. It impacts a number of different homes on both sides of both streets there. It comes at a cost. These costs, they are not cheap projects.

Here's the one that we talked about fairly recently, the little island area between Highland and Midland. There's about 9 homes here. There is an old deficient existing storm sewer that's ironically in an easement. The easement is not to the City; the easement is reciprocal to all the properties that are benefitting from it. So, it's a challenge for any one resident to try to pull off this sort of project; so that's why we felt compelled to try to come in and look at maybe doing it more globally.

Mayor Kurtz asked Don would you recommend that we try to get the easements first before we can do anything, correct?

City Engineer Ramm said correct Mayor. The one nice way that we have been marching forward is as we get property access agreements quickly; and that access agreement commits the residents to provide us the easements. So, it's a nice quick way to go. It gets us moving, and it gets them signed up; and it allows time for us to get out there and do the work while we follow up with the formal easement agreements.

Mayor Kurtz said and I would recommend that for the next meeting you should identify how many of those homes have flooded basements this last event so that we can prioritize.

City Engineer Ramm replied okay.

Moving on, this happens to be a project that was on our radar screens south of Chestnut, opposite Poplar, east of Beechwood. It's a lot of wet backyards. This project was to install storm sewers and catch basins that ultimately would then come out to an existing storm sewer on Chestnut Road.

Mayor Kurtz asked is there enough of an elevation or a fall there to tie into that?

City Engineer Ramm said yes. We looked at it. The topography is working in our favor. It's all downhill to the north and east; and I believe the sewer is fairly deep here to be able to pull a sewer up and run it with grade and catch a lot of the water.

Mayor Kurtz asked what size is that storm on Chestnut?

City Engineer Ramm said I know down by Wood it's 36 inch, and up here it's probably more of an 18 or 24 inch variety; but I would have to double check that.

Mayor Kurtz said assuming this falls into the I-77 corridor, drains into that, or does it go to the west.

City Engineer Ramm said that's a good point. It may turn north and head down Willow. I am not positive. It can't go under the highway there.

Mayor Kurtz said a major drop into the State storm sewer.

City Engineer Ramm said very possible.

Mayor Kurtz said we should check that.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I remember as a kid they redid the sewers on Willow, and there was some pretty massive pipes that were put through Willow.

City Engineer Ramm said and it could be. The outfall there in the back, northeast at the lot where the guardrail is, I believe that sewer comes out of the ground and outlets to the open channel there and all that bedrock. That might be this very water.

Moving on, this is a simple project. It probably could be handled by our Service Department. It's over there at Granger and West Creek, the connector road. There's a lot of cattails that used to grow up here in this ditch and caused us site problems. It would be a matter of throwing in a catch basin and extending the culvert out to West Creek.

This is a significantly expensive project. It was on Stone Road at the bend in the curve. It was where the truck traffic is no longer an issue now with the mine being closed. I don't think there's much of a priority now as there used to be for this project. It was a lot of storm sewers and catch basins through this S curve and heading out towards the highway easement down here. It's been on our books for a while.

This is a simple project. It really benefits one property, the Stefanko residence. They had problems on the side of their house here; and we were just looking to give them a connection coming out of the catch basin and a small basin to intercept a lot of water, give them the ability to extend the pipe up through their yard, nothing too significant there.

Mayor Kurtz asked Don, is this something that they will participate in or is it something that we would do?

City Engineer Ramm said the discussions we had with them, we thought we would give them this connection to here; and then allow them, give them a stub connection, 6 inch PVC stub such that they could then tie into it here and then extend it. I believe we were looking to possibly handle this portion of it in the right-of-way.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, the challenge in this one is that the elevation from the sidewalk to the house, and what happens is the water collects on the sidewalk. In the winter time it freezes, and it becomes a very dangerous situation.

Chairman Trakas said understood.

City Engineer Ramm said so we feel like by throwing this catch basin here, we could really intercept all of that water before it ices over across the driveway and sidewalk and apron there.

Moving on, and this is an area between Brecksville Road and Hemoga, south of Cherry Street. It's a really wide open area. It's prone to surface flooding; and this just would be some catch basins and a storm sewer improvement that would really benefit a number of homes in this area.

Here's an area plagued with a low lying ground. It's the area south of Chestnut. This is Josephine on the west and Wood Avenue on the east. It's just a real low area back here that the water is trapped, and we looked at the storm sewer improvements and catch basins and outletting the pipe to the existing storm sewer on Chestnut. This is on the south side.

This is an area up on Brookside, this is Massey and Piteo and Sarley sits further north off the page here. It's just an area that's flat, and it holds a lot of water; and the resident here has had some basement issues. This is just again, storm sewers and catch basins tying out into Brookside Road storm sewer.

Mayor Kurtz said I thought we did some work up there years ago when that new subdivision was put in.

City Engineer Ramm said the Meadows. That's a little bit north of here, and I don't believe it had any benefit to this area.

Mayor Kurtz asked now is that something we can tie into or do you want to go to Brookside with it?

City Engineer Ramm said ultimately this is proposed to be a shorter distance, and the way the lay of the land is working, it's trying to come out to Brookside. So, this is keeping everything coming from the right-of-way and extending back.

Besides the 3 immediate properties, we do feel like there's some, a few more lots to the east, that would benefit from picking up this water before it migrated to the east towards Midland.

These next 2 slides were more capital type projects in relation to the future sidewalks projects that are coming up. Hillside Road, lower Hillside and then the next one on upper Hillside near Hawthorn and South Great Oaks. So, these are numbers here, but we really just wanted to get some pricing and see what it would cost us to throw in some storm sewers and catch basins in the corridor while the design of the sidewalks was progressing.

Mayor Kurtz said Don, I thought that we were going to look at storm sewers and sidewalks as well as water lines that needed to be replaced.

City Engineer Ramm said correct. So this work was just the storm sewer component, but the future sidewalk will be along the north side, east of Hawthorn that's just off the page. We are looking at a water main. The water main is scheduled for replacement here, and we are trying to look at the feasibility of getting this all built and how everything would fit if we were to try to come in there and do a sidewalk and some storm sewers in advance of the water main.

Mayor Kurtz asked is there any potential for relief from the Cleveland Water on any of these major water line replacements? Can we explore that?

City Engineer Ramm said you know Mayor, historically they are considered local mains, distribution mains; and but for joining their program, we are pretty much on the hook for 100% of the costs unless we were to get our system, our entire system over to them. Then they would be eligible I think for funding.

Mayor Kurtz said we will have to explore that. Thank you.

City Engineer Ramm said this is ironic. This is a retaining wall issue, so that's why the name of the project was changed a number of years ago to infrastructure maintenance because of the need sometimes to do other things; and there is an old timber lagging retaining wall that were built in the mid 1970's when Pleasant Valley Road was widened, and the grades were extremely challenged. They had to wind these driveways in and build these retaining walls. So, we were approached by the owners of these properties; and the wood lagging is very old. It is failing. The soldier steel piles are still in nice shape, so we put an alternate bid together and the pricing was pretty advantageous from the one bidder. It is not at the point of failure, but they are not in good shape. They are old. They have probably seen their time, and that's why we included it in here for consideration.

This is an area off of Cliffview, Sycamore and Ledgewood, rear yard drainage issues that because of the trees; a lot of the trees were left in place, and it just never really handled the water and accommodated the drainage. There are already existing easements back here, but

unfortunately there's never been a grandiose project to really manage the water in an efficient manner. So, that's why this alternate was put together. It's a pretty simple project, a lot of landscaping issues though to contend with.

Chairman Trakas asked at the end of the street there, is there a detention basin?

City Engineer Ramm said there's a storm sewer that we would be connecting to here, and ultimately right the outfall is just north of here, that's the detention basin that all the storm sewers flow to.

Chairman Trakas said that's what I was thinking of. Thanks.

Mayor Kurtz said keep in mind, we have a number of different issues in these different areas, but that one in particular, we worked through that years ago, and the problem was, as Don indicated, there were a number of properties which had encroached with their landscaping into the easement area that was designed to accept the water. So, you are dealing with a number of different dynamics in that area.

City Engineer Ramm said correct, and but for a project like this, no one owner can really solve the problem. It really needs to be a larger project. It's not cheap, but it would benefit at least 8 or 10 homes here if we moved forward with it.

This project, Mr. Sullivan is the name of the resident who lives here, he brought this matter to our attention; and it's really just a lot of surface flooding, really wet, large backyards that just get a lot of water. This is installing storm sewers and catch basins in the rear yards here to help drain this water out quickly to the creek here on Dora and Elmerge.

Mayor Kurtz asked Don, do all those have to be, give us easements before we can do the project?

City Engineer Ramm replied correct, yes. It's all private property, and there is no existing drainage easements back here where we would be working.

Mayor Kurtz said I was always under the impression that the water sheeted northeast.

City Engineer Ramm said yeah it does, and you can sort of see the contours here that it wants to do that; it's that there's not a lot of elevation there and probably the soil and the shallow rock, shallow bedrock which is pretty common throughout the City. The water just tends to just stagnate and not drain too well.

Chairman Trakas asked when were you planning to do that Don?

City Engineer Ramm said well we had no set timeline; we were aware. We recognized the condition, and we tried to put this alternate together to see what it would cost and got some pricing.

Chairman Trakas asked what would you do differently?

City Engineer Ramm said well, there's the big stream that comes through the neighborhood outlets from a culvert pipe. We would catch it here, put a headwall and just install a storm sewer this way through the backyards and install catch basins that then individual properties could have swales installed or run pipes out closer towards the rear of their homes. We could actually even move this whole storm sewer main up somewhere maybe closer to the middle of their backyards. We are flexible. This just gives you a flavor for what the project would involve and what it would include.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, one of the challenges with all of these slides is the fact that we have to get, first some type of right-of-way or access. The other challenge we are experiencing, for example in the Lafayette area, where we installed a storm sewer in the rear yards; and now we had a 20 foot easement. So, we have everything stubbed to the homeowner's land, but now they have to go in and re-contour their ground, their personal property to tie into the storm sewer that we put in.

Chairman Trakas said understood.

City Engineer Ramm said moving on if there are no more questions here. When we were dealing with that request by Mr. Hatch to look at the issues with erosion and the creek, we had occasion to walk the creek and noticed that our outfall from the Longano subdivision was in rough shape back here. It's in an easement. This pink outline is an existing storm sewer easement, and we have some pipes that have kind of separated; and it's pretty crude. It hasn't been looked at or maintained in many, many years. This project is just to clean up those pipes, put a new headwall in out here. It comes at a decent cost, and maybe I don't think it's causing any problems. Maybe because Longano was on our Five-Year Plan here coming up in the very near future, maybe it's something we can consider just parlaying this work into that overall reconstruction project.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked will this benefit Mr. Hatch's complaint at all Don?

City Engineer Ramm said maybe just cosmetically.

Mayor Kurtz said the short answer is no.

Vice Mayor Grendel said okay.

City Engineer Ramm said I don't think there's much benefit.

That kind of gives you an overview of the alternates.

As far as budgetary priorities which is the next item, I think the Mayor spoke to that in terms of the challenges.

Councilperson Synek said Don before we leave that whole area, can I ask a question or two?

City Engineer Ramm replied sure.

Councilperson Synek said still being kind of new to this, I have this rule in my head that says you can't use public money to make improvements to private property. What is the City's interest in some of these properties? That retaining wall on Pleasant Valley Road comes to mind. Is that clearly the City's responsibility or are we doing a favor for the resident? What's the City's responsibility on that retaining wall and perhaps some of these other things?

City Engineer Ramm said fair question. When the residents approached us, that's the first question we ask is whose wall is it? Who built it? Is it the homeowner who should be obligated to make these repairs? We dug up some really good plans from the County when this job was done in the 1970's, and it really was a requirement of the road widening. These homes probably would have had no access, but for the construction of these walls; and there are still steep slopes up these driveways. So, it definitely was designed and constructed as part of the County widening project; and of course, the City now has assumed that municipalities are obligated to maintain.

Mayor Kurtz said Don I think the bigger question that Councilperson Synek is referring to is a number of these projects relate to work on private property; and the question is what's the City's position? What's the City's philosophy, and why do we feel compelled to go and make these improvements?

City Engineer Ramm said I think the biggest answer is making improvements to the neighborhoods, living conditions. I think these improvements do impact flooding, surface flooding, basement flooding; and then the bigger thing is here recently with the dynamic of the Northeast Regional Sewer District, we all, every resident in the Regional Sewer District's service area; we pay into a storm water utility. We get \$.25 on a dollar, it comes back to the City. So, I think residents are, more now than ever, inclined to say look we are contributing to the pot of money that ultimately comes back to the City. They feel like that some of the money of the proceeds should go back into the neighborhoods.

Mayor Kurtz said fair enough. Thank you.

Chairman Trakas said in addition to that, these are things that really people find very difficult to do on their own. So, you are talking about projects that are \$30,000, \$40,000 or \$60,000. These projects impact the whole community, not just the quality of life; but you are talking about flooding and storm water drainage problems that affect whole neighborhoods eventually. I think our philosophy Councilperson has been that if we can try to take care of these problems that seem to affect a smaller amount of residents on private property. Utilities are a public entity, so we kind of think of utilities a little bit more broadly (inaudible), things that residents can't simply do on their own. That's kind of the approach we have taken over the last several years.

City Engineer Ramm asked does that answer your question Councilperson Synek?

Councilperson Synek said I think so. It also raises a policy question too. Could we get more of these projects done faster if we got the homeowners to commit to 10% or 20% of the overall cost? It would be a cost sharing thing. The list of projects is really long. How do we actually get

some of them done with some sort of cost sharing arrangement with the residents? Of course, everybody wants it for free, expects the City to just write the check to pay for it; but you see the number of projects that are on the board, how do you get any of them done and prioritize them in some reasonable accurate way? Can we develop some sort of policy that perhaps we can move these things along faster if there was a cost sharing arrangement with the homeowners who are affected? Has that ever been considered before?

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman that raises a very good point. We are talking about quality of life issues, we are talking about flooding. We are talking about the public entity meaning the City being the coordinator of these projects. We have now the Regional Sewer contribution; but to Councilperson Synek's point, if we were to ask for a contribution or say you can get your project expedited if your group is willing to participate, that may be a vehicle that we should at least attempt to look at.

Chairman Trakas said I would have no objection to that.

Mayor Kurtz said that's a good point. We will explore that Councilperson Synek.

Councilperson Synek said thank you.

Councilperson Veverka said a couple of the projects, particularly J for instance, relates to flooding basements. We had about 40 basements flooded. I know I had a couple of residents on Chestnut and other residents contact me related to basement flooding; and I guess my question is the priority of basement flooding as it relates to gee I have water on my property in my backyard. To me, it kind of goes back to our conversation related to Braewood in which those folks were definitely concerned about the water in their backyard. The creek was going through their backyard; but it was a great distance from their foundations. So, to me when we have homes that have flooding issues, that needs to be a very high priority as compared to my backyard has all of the water in it and it sits for a while.

Chairman Trakas said I would just say Dale in terms of that, particularly for this year, that would be my approach too. Let's get as many projects done that impact people's actual physical structures, that would positively impact that. Take care of house damage, driveway damages, things that impact the actual home. Yard drainage does also impact people's homes eventually. So, we can't hold off forever on that; but I think that's just the case this year. I would agree with you, prioritize as Don has up on the screen now and how many of these are an issue. For instance, size issues; I would certainly prioritize those and then see how far we get.

Councilperson Veverka said I have a great deal of sympathy for people who do have those water issues on their property, and that it does affect their landscaping or their ability to enjoy part of their property; but as that relates to 4, 6, 8, 12 inches of water in your basement, and the damage in your home. To me, that's priority number 1, and that should be our greatest focus. I know our Service Department did great work in trying to remedy some of the flooding in some of the houses and are examining ways of solving the problem. I know one of the conversations was well if we put a backflow in a storm sewer, that is not a good idea. It's different than the sanitary

sewer; but when we are dealing with a large amount of water in basements, that would seem to trump any of the other projects where we are simply dealing with the surface water.

City Engineer Ramm said moving on. We already covered this culvert failure.

The next thing we wanted to focus a little bit on, Valley Woods particularly.

Here's an overview of the subdivision in question, and the parcels highlighted here in the bold outline were the 33 residents who had submitted e-mails at the last Council meeting and had concerns. Mr. Fitzgibbon had some water here in the basement. Ultimately right here is the problem. This watercourse, and what happens when it can't get into the culvert headwall. It ends up spilling down through the rear yards and ultimately coming out here and flooding the street. So, it gives you an overview of the area.

This is our overlay of our steep slope setback and riparian setback map; and as you can see, these areas are a significant topography and ravines. That's really what a large part of the contributing factors of the challenges that lead to these conditions.

This is kind of a watershed boundary, this outline here. I just did a quick outline, about 23 acres of drainage. The corp. line is right here. So, this is all Seven Hills, and the water, just looking at between Ludwin and Crestwood; there is 96 feet of elevation drop just in that short distance, and then from Crestwood down to the headwall in the back of Mr. Tsevidos's property, that is the stem of the problems, another 60 feet of elevation drop. That is in ravines that are comprised of highly erodible shale material, and it is just a lethal combination of high intense rainfalls on saturated ground coming through extremely steep terrain that leads to the significant issues that we are dealing with in this subdivision. So, this is worthy of making note of it.

Mayor Kurtz said so it's not only volume, it's velocity.

City Engineer Ramm said correct.

Mayor Kurtz said that creates the problem.

City Engineer Ramm said absolutely. In fact, in 2014 or 2015 we had spent a lot of time responding to this same issue; and we spent time putting in trash racks and bollards in advance of the headwall to try to trap the debris. We lined a little bit of the channel bottom with a grout mattress to really try to minimize the eroding of the bottom of the channel, but it didn't take but a few storms and it completely covers the grout mat with the shale fragments. We did a number of things and tried to make best use of the existing structures that are back there. We have put trash grates, these aren't photos from this area, but just to give you an idea of what we are looking at. So, we have a manhole structure that we are thinking to try to better utilize with maybe a trash grate on top of it so that as the water and debris collects down below, and the water rises up, it might have a secondary opportunity to come into a drainage structure before it spills through the neighborhood. So, these are things that we are looking at and trying to again make better efficiency of the major infrastructure that's already back there.

Mayor Kurtz asked Mr. Chairman, do we have all the easements necessary for maintenance, or do we still have to go to the backyards?

City Engineer Ramm said that's a good question. I know Mr. Tsevidos, we had an easement here for access to the headwall. I don't know that the rear is in an easement because the storm sewer main runs out to the street and heads down the right-of-way. So, I think when this has happened in the past, the residents are more than happy to have us come; but I don't believe it's ever been with formal easement agreements.

Mayor Kurtz asked have you been able to diagnose or at least look at a strategy or a plan that we want to implement and look for Council's input or support or is it premature?

City Engineer Ramm said kind of dovetailing into the next topic here about retention basins. One thing looking at in this neighborhood, and you notice a lot of raw, vacant land here and here. I know at one time there was talk about the extension of Crestwood for a development. Ironically, sometimes development does help better manage water because they are required to meet our stormwater management requirements. Even still, we thought about maybe trying to, the potential for a detention basin sitting right in this area. It just helps slow and store that water before it starts screaming down this steep ravine. So, it's one thing we need to look into better.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, Don, let's look at 2 things. If you were to explore the possibility of developing or expanding that subdivision off Crestwood, fully develop it; and at the same time incorporate a comprehensive drainage system that could hold the water rather than let it catch the velocity and go down that 60 foot slope into the rear yards. Rather than just looking at it as a simple catch and release project, why don't we look at the parameters for developing that property and seeing if we can't find a way to offset costs by doing something good for the community at the same time.

City Engineer Ramm said there may be already some existing development plans, preliminarily that exist. We could try to round them up or just lay some things out fresh.

Mayor Kurtz said I think you need to lay it out fresh, and if we can incorporate water management, that would be something I think that would be interesting to explore. If not, then we are just talking about a detention project.

City Engineer Ramm said correct, yes. This is all privately owned property.

Mayor Kurtz said I understand, but it goes back to Councilperson Synek's suggestion earlier about public purpose and private involvement. This may be one of those that we can set an example on a larger scale obviously; but if the people in that area can get some additional equity out of their properties, we get development, retain some more homeowners and we can also solve the problem down the hill. It's worth putting a pencil to. That's my only suggestion.

Chairman Trakas said that's a good suggestion. Mr. Tsevidos did send us a note that there is an easement on his property on 4850 Valley Woods Drive. I wanted to make you aware of that.

City Engineer Ramm said that's an easement we routinely use to get access to the headwall and the storm sewer manhole and the rear yard storm sewer.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, I would just recommend that maybe to just at least consider authorizing us to explore this possibility of doing something that's multi-pronged rather than just continually going back to the neighborhood and fixing the problem or repairing the problem. We put a lot of time and effort and money over the last decade in this situation, and Don seeing it from this perspective, it gives me optimism and hope that there may be a permanent solution; but it's going to have to be more comprehensive.

City Engineer Ramm said it comes with challenges of course, wetlands and private property; but we have to look at it definitely.

Chairman Trakas asked what's the view of the committee on the Mayor's suggestion?

Councilperson Veverka said there's always a bunch of aspects as it relates to detention basins. It's just not build it, and it's done. We have detention basins in town, and there's already questions about who is responsible for them. In some cases, the older ones, the citizens' group is looking for the City to be responsible for the cleaning, dredging and taking care of them. They are potential safety hazards with some of them depending on their location, how close are they to main roadways in areas where they can be an attraction for children to get involved in or possibly drown in. So, not only the initial cost, but other aspects are involved in detention basins. There are definitely values to them. It definitely can help slow and collect the water; but there are many other aspects involved.

Chairman Trakas asked Councilperson Synek do you have any ideas on this?

Councilperson Synek said there's issues there. I am not an engineer, and I know Don has probably spent a lot of time, effort and energy on this to try to find a solution. It's a challenging site, and sometimes the answer is we are doing the best we can. Look, there's a reason that the piece of property was one of the last ones developed in Independence. It's a very challenging site, but we have to do what we can. There's a solution, and it's a big area so it's going to require some sort of joint venture with the City of Seven Hills, whoever owns the property in Seven Hills as well. So, in for a penny, in for a pound; you can't stop now, and Don I look to you and others with an engineering background to recommend a solution.

Mayor Kurtz said we will take a more comprehensive approach to this in an attempt to at least exclude some of the different opportunities, but also potentially to create a new dynamic to this area that gives some peace to the homeowners who are up at night during the situations. So, it's probably a hybrid of a lot of different ideas and concepts, but let's at least explore them; and if we have to just take them off the list one by one, that may be the solution.

Chairman Trakas said I think we should move ahead and look into that. Now we did get (inaudible) to repair the swales behind the homes on Valley Woods that were eroded. That's from Mr. Fitzgibbon.

City Engineer Ramm asked Chairman Trakas to repeat that.

Chairman Trakas said in the chat session, what can be done to repair the swales behind the homes on Valley Woods that were eroded and/or completely blocked from debris upstream?

Mayor Kurtz said I will attempt to better resolve that issue at least from a Service Department standpoint or perspective. The Service Department when things begin to dry up, we will go in, we will try to re-establish whatever we can; and then based on the report and type of repairs we are able to make, we will present that evidence at the next Utilities Committee meeting.

Chairman Trakas said Mayor, I was thinking about having another meeting in either May or June, would that be enough time for you to have that information?

Mayor Kurtz said I would say right now we are finishing up the Hemlock Trail damage, and then we are going to, it's just been too wet to try to get in these rear yards. We need Mother Nature to give us a little time to let things, the saturation dissipate, and then it's our goal to get in there and try to reconstruct, at least manage the situation and at the same time, a multi-prong approach. We will get in there and look at what is reasonable and realistic in terms of prevention further west.

Chairman Trakas said okay, that's fair.

City Engineer Ramm said a couple of quick items I would like to bring to your attention on this slide since it's up. This happens to be this major CEI aerial easement through here; so the towers do run through here. They are not too, it's difficult to change the grades, and then the towers, with berming up material or excavating. So, it's just something to be cognizant of when we are considering trying to do something here.

Lastly, there's a small detention basin here that helps to mitigate stormwater from the subdivision. It outlets to this small tributary, and this is a problematic issue right here for this resident who has taken a lot of damage because of some management issues of the stream here as a direct result of the outletting of this stormwater basin. So, that is something in connection with this neighborhood that is noteworthy.

Mayor Kurtz said you said that the easement area is something that we can look at.

City Engineer Ramm said right here, I do believe we have a small easement. We have a headwall and a pipe in the back corner of this yard that accepts water from this stream. It is heavily eroded. We probably could shore this up to some degree, although at some point it crosses the corp. limit; and it may entail trying to get some permission if we want to continue it upstream.

Mayor Kurtz said I think that you should make that part of your comprehensive review that we will present to Council and the Utilities Committee in the future.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked Jim, did you see the remark from Mr. Merker?

Chairman Trakas said I was just about to read that. Thanks Chris.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said he makes a valid point how the road was impassable. What happens if Fire or Police need to get through there after a storm, and they can't get through that road?

Mayor Kurtz said well, let me just address that; and I appreciate Ed's comment because we know now based on the velocity of the water, we experienced that same situation in Valley Woods, the same situation we experienced at Scenicview and Timberlane and Midland. There were several different areas, these low pavement areas that just got inundated with the sediment. Normally the sediment settles out, but when the velocity gets to the point where it just overruns, and there were larger particles suspended. When it got to a low section, that's when those suspended particles settled down, and that's why we had that inches of mud; and the Service Department, on Sunday I was out there, the morning after, and the Service Department attempted to get as many of those cleaned up as quickly as possible. Now that we know, I guess the answer is for Ed and everyone else, we know that these are sensitive areas based on this dynamic we experienced. We will be watching these more closely.

City Engineer Ramm said moving on, getting back to the detention basins. On record, this one is from an old lower Brookside watershed study from back in 2012 that we had some problems on the watercourse that runs through; and we contemplated, had identified a detention basin up above I-77 south of Sprague and east of Skyline Drive, actually up in the City of Broadview Heights ironically that would help control and manage the water and release it slower, slowing down through the watershed. That project at that time was \$565,000, that was the estimate in 2012; but that was for construction. It did not include engineering, land acquisition, environmental permitting; so we are of the opinion that it could easily approach up over \$1,000,000 to try to pull that project off, and of course, the challenge being it is in another jurisdiction, another municipal boundary.

Chairman Trakas asked what's the legality? Are we allowed to help pay for something that would be out of the City?

City Engineer Ramm said yeah, fair question, and we thought this was the best project to be entertained by a regional stormwater district. So, they didn't seem too high on it, but we felt it was an appropriate project because for that very reason.

So, again, this has been on our books. It's been difficult to try to get any traction with it due to the circumstances.

Mayor Kurtz said you know Don, you just made me think of something. Maybe this joint venture concept on that picture right there; that's something we could talk to Regional about, Independence and Seven Hills joining together on that Valley Woods area, Forest Woods area. Just think about it.

City Engineer Ramm said okay.

I apologize, this slide, I didn't realize it was back there. It just shows the detention basin.

Mayor Kurtz said to go back there Don because of the regional concept.

City Engineer Ramm said the challenge both with this scenario and with the Broadview Heights scenario is that this doesn't really benefit the upstream properties; and I think that was maybe one item that Regional made a comment about that even though it's in another city, it's in the very corner, and all the value is down in the lower watershed which is Independence.

Mayor Kurtz said I would present the argument in a different way. I would probably frame it a little differently saying that the purpose of their Regional Stormwater fee is to be able to transition across corporate boundaries, and those that are downhill are always going to be more subject to flooding. So, I think there's a greater responsibility to manage those communities that are flooding the valley; but that is my perspective. How am I doing?

City Engineer Ramm said it's legitimate. That's why we brought it to their attention. It's valid.

Chairman Trakas asked is there any of the consortiums that we are a part of that might be able to help us with funding for that project aside from Regional Sewer?

Mayor Kurtz said the only thing we could do is to look and explore grant opportunities, but those with the situation we are dealing with right now economically, I don't see a lot of opportunity on some of those projects anymore.

Chairman Trakas said understood.

Don, can you make sure that everyone gets a copy of your excellent presentation, and that it is available on the website so the citizens can view it as well?

City Engineer Ramm replied yes.

Chairman Trakas said going back to the item in terms of a budget and priorities, what is it the committee's pleasure? We heard a lot of different opportunities, but we have a limited budget here. What direction would you like to give the Mayor and Don with respect to an amount? Do you want to see from a philosophical perspective? How do we want to proceed?

Councilperson Synek said I will start. So, bigger picture, having seen this list for the first time, I think we need some sort of prioritization or more of a ranking in category, like how many houses effected? How many residents effected? How many directly and indirectly? Is it commercial? Is it residential? Is there a factor about urgency? That Patriot's Way project obviously has a high urgency to it because of the erosion factors; but a number of additional criteria or data points beyond just the dollar amount of the project. You know, resident participation to me might make a project move quicker to the top of the list if you had residents willing to put some money into the project. Things like that; and so just having seen this list for the first time, I would need a lot more information. I will just rely on others at this point for their expertise. Going forward, we

probably should develop some more of a waiting criteria that incorporates residential versus commercial, number of houses impacted, resident participation, things like that.

Chairman Trakas said thank you. Councilperson Veverka, any thoughts?

Councilperson Veverka said well I go along with what Kenn has said. The only thing of course I think is one of the biggest priorities is it's kind of hard to tell a resident when they have inches of water in their basement as compared to other issues. I realize that other issues in your yard make a difference, and the area close to you, standing water sitting there; but I think that needs to be a key part of the priorities besides the residential and commercial bit. Obviously, the residential part as it directly affects the inside of the home, the proximity of the home in the further part of the yard; that needs to be part of the priority evaluation I believe.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I have a question. You know, with people's basements being flooded and having to put the cost out to repair their basements; and if we come back and ask for them to share the cost of some of these issues, in these times, if people don't have that kind of money to dish out to help fund these, can their taxes be assessed over a period of time to pay for this to help projects like that?

Chairman Trakas said Mayor, I would defer to you. I believe the answer is legally yes.

Mayor Kurtz said we have 2 channels to manage this. One is I give a lot of credit to previous Administrations and Councils for funding with the right equipment, the Service Department because they are on the front line when we have one of these urgent calls or these natural, I will call them disasters. They again responded timely, and we were able to clean up and get as many of these issues resolved as quickly as possible.

What I am going to do is go back to emphasizing, making sure we have enough support here available for flooding, house flooding, basement flooding so that we can quickly deploy our resources that deal with that high priority of flooded basements.

The other component of that would be the Service Department. In other words, they are doing a great job, and then once they are done doing their job, then we have to be able to prioritize; and again I agree with the other members of the committee that residential flooding, both sanitary and storm, is the priority. Once we get that level managed, then we move into some of the more traveled areas, such as in this case. Simultaneously, we were working on major repairs to the Hemlock Trail; and so this past flood definitely opened our eyes to a number of issues.

Going back to Valley Woods and Forestwoods and some of these perpetual challenges we just have to keep layering the cake with different methods to resolve some of these issues; and at the same time prioritize. I would agree with the committee that residential basement flooding, sanitary and storm is the highest priority.

Councilperson Veverka said also when the question was asked related to assessment Jim, if I recall, one of the houses on Brecksville Road when the question of assessment was a possibility, it got pretty darn complicated and pretty difficult of trying to set up some sort of an assessment.

Mayor Kurtz said and the other thing to answer your question Mr. Chairman, the other part of your question as it relates to Councilperson Veverka's point well taken. One of the programs, the No Place Like Home Program that we instituted years ago. A component of that, and I think you and I had a discussion last fall that funding a program that would allow us to assist members of our population who have upgrades to their residential structures, whether it be a roof, a foundation, those elements that contribute to the quality of life and the property values of the home maintenance, funding that program was on the agenda this year. Then we would do it in the form of assessing. We would actually put it on their duplicate; and then the homeowner would have the liability at a very low interest rate; if they chose to pay it down or they sold the property or did some other way of managing the cost. That would be a form of public contribution that I could support.

Chairman Trakas said understood. Chris, does that answer your question?

Councilperson Walchanowicz said yes sir.

Chairman Trakas said very good, okay. We have one more agenda item, and we are getting on an hour and a half or two hours, do you want to move on or try to save that for a later date?

Mayor Kurtz asked are you talking about retention basins?

Chairman Trakas said yes.

Mayor Kurtz said I think Councilperson Veverka eluded to that earlier about some of the challenges that we have had systemically over the decades; and the City has taken on the weight of fixing a number of these over the years. We have several opportunities right now; one that was eluded to earlier where the properties, the zoning changes between our commercial on Rockside and Brecksville Roads. It transitions to residential there. We have the corner home that's been a rental that's in pretty rough shape. In talking with Don, knowing that we have that consistent water problem with water sheeting over onto Brecksville Road and then getting on to Rockside Road. I am not sure how many of you experienced that, but it somewhat cripples our ability to navigate through that as well as a safety issue.

We are in the position now, and I will present to Council before the next meeting, the opportunity to buy that corner property, put some type of detention and also fencing along those property lines to protect the homeowners on the residential side of the zoning, as well as a small area to sit for the residents or whoever is using that area before you transition to go up Brecksville Road hill.

That is one that is on the front burner, and I will present a comprehensive story; and we will back it up with facts, both from a water management standpoint and the protection of our residential neighborhoods from a safety standpoint. That property is available. We did get it appraised as I indicated earlier this year we would do; and then I will send that to Council in this week's update or next week's for sure.

Chairman Trakas said Don, so in terms of that particular property that the Mayor just talked about, what are the alternatives if we don't make that a detention area there? What are our alternatives that we have to perhaps address some of the water flow issues that are there if we don't go ahead and do that?

City Engineer Ramm said I think we have to take a hard look at the capacity of the system there. It's easy to extend, add catch basins and storm sewers west from Brecksville Road through that property; but at the downstream end is where the problem is, then you might be resigned to try to slow it down and store in a basin. So, I don't quite know what the history is there. I definitely know the problem. We have seen it. I have driven through it, and it's just a matter of what the root cause of the problem is. We have to explore that a little bit deeper.

Chairman Trakas asked does that water go down to the main to McDonalds?

Mayor Kurtz said when it's flooding, yes. It sheets across the road when you go. It actually crosses Rockside Road.

Chairman Trakas said wow. We will look forward to hearing more on that Mayor.

Mayor Kurtz said I'll present something maybe even this week at least for that one, and at least give you a perspective or an understanding of the impact due to stormwater?

Chairman Trakas asked any other retention?

Mayor Kurtz said you know what Mr. Chairman, with the uncertainty of the economic impact and a lot of these other; we are going to look at the areas where we can have the greatest impact. We are not going to be blind to what you can have the most immediate impact also; even if it's going to cost something. We need to continue to press and make sure that we don't miss opportunities. We don't want to look back and say boy, if I just would have done this or just would have done that when I had the opportunity.

So, we are continuing to, like I mentioned about the multi-pronged approach, to look at our stormwater, look at sanitary issues, look at pavement issues, sidewalk issues. We will continue to move forward on that, but at the same time I have to be very cautious in terms of balancing that with the anticipated unknown shortfall in revenues this year. It will be a delicate balancing act, and a lot of this, we will do some things as the schedule needs to be done; but a lot of these things we will hit the pause button.

I met with Finance Director Blaze this morning, and we are going through with each department several different scenarios so that we can be on top of it. Again, taking advantage of those that we can take advantage internally as well as prolonging or pausing the button on some of these larger projects.

Chairman Trakas said thank you Mayor.

Councilperson Veverka asked Jim, can I circle back for just a second? As I am thinking about the 40 flooded basements, and we are talking about that property west of Brecksville Road. Was that house or the adjacent house or any of those homes, did those have flooded basements?

Mayor Kurtz said I don't have the answer to that question, but we can find out.

Councilperson Veverka said well, I mean, as we are examining priorities, as we are looking at concerns, I understand water flowing across Brecksville Road and across Rockside and potentially if it's happening when it could freeze. I see that it could be an issue; but it goes back to the prioritization of what's the priority with trying to assist residents with basement flooding as compared to other different concerns? It always circles back to that, and I guess that's my biggest question. I mean it would be nice, and that would be helpful; but where does that fit in the list of priorities? I don't know the answer.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman if I may.

Chairman Trakas said you may.

Mayor Kurtz said the fulcrum is based on opportunity, and then some of these other issues. I understand. I would love to be able to wave a magic wand and solve all the flooding problems and prioritize being the houses always. We have done that systematically throughout the last several decades; and it seems that the more we are able to take advantage of our resources, apply them properly, the more Mother Nature seems to want to challenge us. So, some of these areas that we now are experiencing flooded basements, 10 years ago they didn't have flooded basements. So, there are a number of dynamics that feed into this.

The other thing I am going to suggest is, I agree wholeheartedly about flooded basements being the highest priority; but I also have responsibility to not miss opportunities when they come by because we have done a lot of great things in this community by taking advantage of opportunities by being at the right place at the right time, making the right decision. I will continue to try to use my experience to present that variety of different components to you as Council because you ultimately have to make the decision on how you want to allocate funding. The opportunities, I won't pass on at least presenting opportunities to Council. You will make the decisions when it comes to money; and you make the decision when it comes to real estate. That is your obligation and responsibility, but the Administration still has, it's incumbent upon us to present those opportunities to you.

Councilperson Veverka said absolutely, and during the past 4 or 5, beyond that, I have only been on a shorter period; but I have definitely been involved enough to know that down at the bottom of Brookside where there was that major flooding, we were able to connect with the Sewer District and have some of those homes purchased. I know we have some homes, one home in particular on Highland that has had 3 floodings, lose everything in the basement and the garage. When we are talking about removing a home from the tax duplicate and attempting to solve a problem, to me a home in that situation would be a really high priority.

Having been involved with this committee just a short time, it's a really tough decision to have to make to tell somebody whose basement is flooded out 3 times that we are not interested in purchasing necessarily that home; but we are interested in the possibility because there's another opportunity. So, that's just my thoughts.

Mayor Kurtz said I would just like to balance that by my 4 decades of experience lends itself to understanding priorities, understanding trying to resolve problems, but doing it in a way that is somewhat we can look the people in the eye and tell them here's what we are doing and here's how we are solving your problem. Again, my job is to present opportunities. Your job is to make the decisions, and my job is to implement those decisions. That is the protocol I will continue to follow.

Chairman Trakas asked the Clerk, was there any questions or suggestions for the committee from the public that we are not aware of?

The Clerk replied no, just what I had typed to the committee.

Chairman Trakas asked are there any other topics that you would like to bring up this evening?

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, I don't know if you are going to talk at some point about the proposed legislation about helping the residents and business community or if you are going to use some other time to discuss that when we have more time.

Chairman Trakas said I would sure love to, maybe the Finance Committee or something like that would be more appropriate; but I am always willing to talk about that.

Mayor Kurtz said since you introduced it, I just didn't want you to think it fell on deaf ears. On the other hand, I think it's going to take a more robust discussion, and Council is going to have to as a whole is going to have to weigh in on that.

Chairman Trakas said I would agree, and I will try to get involved and get some other thoughts and send them to everybody so we can get something solid and reasonable on the table. How's that?

Mayor Kurtz said that's great. Thank you. We are going to continue with Patriot's Way. We are going to continue to put something information together, and as these smaller projects become available, but we will stay within the appropriation; and we will make sure the committee is aware of how we are prioritizing things.

Chairman Trakas said like the committee said, anything that impacts the residents home, inside of their home, we consider a higher priority. Outside of the home and then obviously the roadways have to be a major concern. Obviously, the Valley Woods problems affect quite a few people, and I think that sums up everything that we discussed today. Does anybody disagree with that?

Councilperson Veverka said I agree totally Jim.

Councilperson Synek said well said.

Chairman Trakas said okay, great. Well, if there's no other business before the committee, I am willing to entertain a motion to adjourn.

Chairman Trakas said before the roll is called, I want to thank everybody for participating. I know technology doesn't always catch up with us; we are way ahead of technology sometimes. Thank you, and particularly Don Ramm, thanks for your presentation. You are always the star of the show at Utilities and Streets & Sidewalks and maybe a few others that I am not aware of. We certainly appreciate all of your due diligence.

Mayor, thank you for everything and all the great value that you have added here.

Moved by Councilperson Veverka, seconded by Councilperson Synek, to adjourn the Utilities Committee meeting of April 28, 2020. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business, the Utilities Committee meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Debra J. Beal, Clerk of Council
Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 04/30/20
