

# Town of Shandaken

## S.A.F.A.R.I. Meeting Notes

Shandaken Area Flood Assessment and Remediation Initiative

**TUESDAY September 10, 2024 10:00am – 11:30pm**

**In-Person at AWSMP Office, Shokan, NY**

**Or attend remotely: <https://meet.goto.com/186340189>**

You can also dial in using your phone: +1 (408) 650-3123 - (Phone Access Code: 186-340-189)

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### **In Attendance:**

#### In Person:

Peter DiSclafani, Town of Shandaken  
Supervisor

Eric Hofmeister, Town of Shandaken Highway  
Superintendent

Heidi Emrich, Environmental Planner, UCDOE

Bobby Taylor, CSBI Coordinator, Acting  
Stream Project Manager, UCSWCD

Leslie Zucker, AWSMP Program Manager,  
CCEUC

Aaron Bennett, Flood Hazard Mitigation  
Coordinator, NYCDEP

Andrew Emrich, Sr. Engineer, UC DPW

#### Remote:

Kevin VanBlarcum, Town Board Member  
Max Kelly, AWSMP Watershed Education,  
CCEUC (online)

Adam Doan, Principal Water Resources  
Scientist, SLR

Amanda LaValle, UC Deputy County Executive

Tim Koch, AWSMP Lead Education, CCEUC

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### Town of Shandaken Updates

- **Floodplain Administrator outreach, assistance, permits, issues, applications, etc**
  - Donna has issued a few recent floodplain permits.
  - Lower Winnie Rd streambank stabilization project:
    - Town was looking for guidance on whether a permit was necessary; has requested a floodplain development permit from landowner/contractor.
    - Bobby has been in coordination with the contractor, DEC and landowner; making good progress, difficult site.
    - Landowner is self-financing the project.
    - Downstream landowner's streambank *may* be vulnerable now that upstream landowner has hardened the section along their own property. The project extents were limited to the individual property since it was self-financed.
    - Brief discussion on erosion risk on this stretch of creek. Flow deflectors being installed should limit disturbance to downstream bank.
  - Heidi asked about Mt. Pleasant home with "ongoing" floodway development (stockpiles), which have been of concern:
    - Donna has issued a court notice. Landowner claims they're working to produce a no-rise certificate.
    - Neighbors are complaining.
    - Brief discussion on town's required course of action as an NFIP-participating community.
- **Town of Shandaken Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan / RLAA – Status Update**

- Heidi provides update:
  - Town applied for SMIP grant funding to update Town-Wide Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan & Repetitive Loss Area Analysis.
  - Tetra Tech recommended obtaining a courtesy assessment of the recent UC Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan to see how it scores for CRS points, before doing a town-wide plan, since the town had just done the UCMJHMP (which, in Shandaken's case, included within the town's annex, all the of the town's FHMP recommendations and LFA recommendations).
  - Should be receiving the results of this assessment any day now.
  - Heidi / AWSMP had emailed TT to at least get started with revised scope and cost estimate for RLAA so that can move forward while we wait plan review.
    - TT has been slow to respond and hasn't delivered a cost-estimate or updated scope.
    - Heidi asks, does the town want to keep working with Tetra Tech on this, or consider going to RFP?
    - There is a brief discussion on firms who do this work and general municipal law.
  - Aaron suggests that the RLAA is an update – it could be done in house, or with support from Ulster County? If they have capacity, perhaps resources can be pooled.
    - Heidi points out that she herself might not have the expertise to ensure the town gets all the CRS points possible. Aaron offers to help.
  - More to be discussed on this next month, depending on FHM Plan review.

### SMIP Projects & LFA Design and Implementation Updates

- **Design & Feasibility: Phoenicia Bridge Street Bridge project in coordination with Phoenicia Main Street Bridge & Floodplain Enhancement studies** (funded in part and in full by AWSMP, respectively)
  - No new updates from Andrew on Bridge Street Bridge concept designs or other UC DPW progress. DPW is waiting on SLR to complete Phoenicia Study, however Andrew is concerned that the county needs to move forward.
  - Matt reports on status of hydrology memo: under review; waiting for comments from Doug DeKoskie, DEP Engineer.
    - Still need additional review on methods.
    - Still need to hold a design review meeting.
    - Andrew requests to be included in review of modelling results and reports, so this data collected can be considered when determining final Bridge Street Bridge design features.
  - Matt leads discussion on risk assessment and future flows projection. There is a brief discussion on various possibilities for flood levels, recurrence intervals, climate change, etc.
    - SLR can't model every scenario imaginable but should establish a range of scenarios plausible.
  - Bottom line: Enlarging the infrastructure on its own, is not going to solve the flooding in Phoenicia.
    - Bridge Street Bridge Design Alt 3 with Floodplain benches and with Main Street bridge removed: would significantly reduce flooding on Main Street, however removing Main Street bridge completely is not an option.
    - Bridge Street Bridget Design Alt 2 alone does not pass future flows, but it does with floodplain bench.
    - Group discusses alternatives to floodplain benches; carrying them farther upstream or getting creative.
  - Leslie plans on scheduling regular project meetings (with DEP and SLR) to try to meet deadlines for this project.

- Matt, SLR walks the committee through modelling scenarios.
  - Discussed Route 214. Is there a way to keep water in the channel, under Main Street Bridge and reduce flows through Main Street?
    - Group reviews with SLR, when/where the water leaves the channel, brainstorms options; most not feasible.
      - Making Rte. 214 a floodable road (floodplain); with additional floodplain benches at confluence and along Esopus Creek, downstream, with bridges removed DOES reduce water surface elevations on Main Street, but this is not feasible.
  - Discussion on elevating Main Street Bridge; is there a hypothetical bridge that would work?
    - There are many limitations with developed properties and Rte 214 intersection.
    - If former pharmacy building on Main Street was removed and Rte 214 could intersect with Main Street farther East, then that would allow more water to pass under the bridge.
      - Pete notes that would likely require other modifications, buyouts and structures to be removed.
      - Committee: those structures are at significant risk; they might not be there after the next flood...
    - Leslie reminds us, we can think big or out-of-the-box. Are there any other ideas that should be explored or modelled?
    - Aaron agrees, there won't be a "silver bullet" to fix flooding in Phoenicia, it will be an incremental process. The committee should seize opportunities that may present themselves, even if they don't solve the whole problem.
    - DOT is going to have to replace that bridge eventually; what seems infeasible now, it may be the norm in 20-40 years.
  - Andrew would like to see a bridge alternative that isn't just an island during a flood. Something that doesn't bring in lots of fill, and maybe comes in towards main street at grade.
    - The bridge needs to survive the 100-year flood, but the approaches don't absolutely, necessarily have to pass it. Approaches are more quickly repaired, as opposed to bridge structure which could take a year or years.
      - Matt remarks that this might dictate a different type of bridge (box beam, for one), and consideration for wood and debris accumulation will have to be factored; but Andrew's suggestion could be modelled.
- Committee discusses capturing these discussions to convey to the public just how much work is going into this.
- Leslie suggests advance all modelling scenarios on the current 100-year; then test it against future flows (that calculation TBD); evaluate results.
  - Including future flows analysis in report is important for big-picture-thinking in Phoenicia.
    - Brief discussion on long-term plan; large-scale relocation of homes and businesses upland.
  - Aaron: there is an interest among landowners to seek out long-term flood-resiliency solutions; there have been 10 recent feasibility studies in the hamlet.
  - Heidi to Aaron, does DEP have connections with Army Corp to start a conversation about large-scale projects like this? Phoenicia isn't a major

suburb or metropolitan area, but they may be able to partner in something big?

- Aaron may have a connection... he'll get back to us.
- Sydney, NY – much of the flood prone-structures are being removed; and this isn't without its own problems
  - **POST-MEETING NOTE:** Learn More about Sydney:  
<https://nysclimateimpacts.org/explore-the-assessment/case-studies/flood-buyouts-restoration-and-relocation/> and  
<https://www.resilient-sidney.com/>
- Can Ulster County IDA meet with the town to assist in scoping relocation effort? (Is IDA still in operation?) Or is it Economic Development?
- There is brief discussion about similar relocation thoughts being mulled around in Boiceville.
  - Leslie suggests considering creating an agenda to have local experts present on how to advance larger-scale development projects and see what other people are doing on this topic. This would benefit both Phoenicia and Boiceville.
- **Pine Hill LFA Implementation: Bonnie View Ave project sites 1 & 2 feasibility and concept design** (funded by AWSMP)
  - Eric: waiting for a decision from landowners, on properties that may be needed for bridge replacement.
    - Alternatives may include: Lot line adjustment and/or easement.
  - Town would like to complete the design this winter, and possibly start building next year.
  - This is holding up design which will likely be a 25-ft bridge, and may relocate the stream.
  - Barton & Loguidice have not reached out yet to coordinate Bonnie View Ave access. Next meeting Sept. 30; Heidi will remind B&L to touch base with AWSMP.
- **Mt. Tremper Letter of Map Revision**
  - Update regarding ongoing FEMA discussion.
  - Leslie shares that she *thought* the FEMA- initiated LOMR was dead.... But its alive! FEMA is discussing internally. They are considering conducting a FEMA-led LOMR (updated modelling) for 11 miles stretch upstream of Coldbrook gage, and for "Lower Esopus."
    - Would take about 18 months to complete, not a new full survey, but would be a new model.
    - LOMR is thusly still in a holding pattern until FEMA determines final course of action.
- **McKenley Hollow** (funded by AWSMP)
  - Nothing new. 30% design report is with SLR. SWCD is expecting to receive that soon.
  - Bobby met with a landowner in early August. Landowner was happy with all three alternatives. All other upstream landowners seem amenable.

## Town Hall & Highway Complex Relocation Updates

- **Possible relocation sites**
  - Phoenicia School:
    - With 214 the way it is (being flood prone) there is not really a good scenario
    - Peter had a meeting with Executive's office, Dennis Doyle and Amanda LaValle (Ulster County) were present.
    - They're going to meet Friday morning to look at the school.

- Peter wants to partner with the county, make it a community facility?
    - Not a town hall per say, but offices, rental spaces, recreation facility.
    - Sticking point is the price the school district wants.
    - If anything happens with the school
- **Summary from partners on “Land Swap” process.**
  - Heidi shares details of meeting with DEP Director of Watershed Lands & Community Planning, Aaron (FHM coordinator) and Land Acquisition team; related to land swap logistics.
    - Shandaken is one of a few proposals the DEP is exploring; of those, Shandaken’s process is further along (having already done two feasibility studies and drafting a rough site plan).
    - There are scores of small steps required, however many are not all that different than (many are even the same as) the land acquisition process.
    - This will take time, likely a few years.
    - First step, DEP will need to meet with higher ups to determine if this proposal can move forward.
    - The second step will be to set up a meeting with DEC to see what the process may be, and if they would be willing to remove the conservation easement from the land (temporarily) so that the land can be subdivided and dispossessed, for town use.
  - Aaron notes: lets call it a relocation.
  - There is a brief discussion about the flood buy out at the current town hall/highway garage property.
    - Aaron states DEP might purchase the floodplain land, but DEP would still want the town to own it ultimately. So there is no technical swap.
      - Still done through the NYCFFBO, but they’d have to work out the details on the cost.
      - Eligible costs now include \$500k towards new construction.
        - Are the highway garage and town hall two different critical facilities and each eligible for that \$500k??
  - Aaron shares that DEP Senior Staff have been briefed on the issues, they are amenable, but are currently stretched thin.
  - Brief discussion on funding, and co-location opportunities. Are there additional / other considerations for the DEP parcel? Ambulance? Police, Emergency Operations Center; all TBD. Town may want to consider dispersing emergency services, or have a central campus.

## Partner Updates

- **AWSMP**
  - Upcoming Flood Hazard Mitigation Meeting will have a FEMA Map Service Center tutorial and an Elevation Certificate review.
- **CWC**
  - CWC opened up the stream debris removal program: Prattsville, Andes, Roxbury following recent flood event that hit those areas.
- **NYCDEP**
  - Demolitions for Sage & Shurter and Kirkpatrick will be happening soon.
    - Demo plans for Damiana and Van Baren are done. Bids awarded by November.
- **Ulster County (Planning, Emergency Services, DPW, DOE)**

- **Other:** Brief discussion on whether the town has an Emergency Operations & Response Plan.
  - Peter thought one existed; worth looking into. This is valuable for the town, and can also gain CRS points.

**Review Notes**  
**Adjourn**

**Next Meeting:** **WEDNESDAY** October 16, 2024 @ 10am