

Johnson Planning Commission Meeting: 2024-1212

MEETING MINUTES

1. Meeting was opened at 6:36
2. Attendees
 - a. Mark Leese- FEMA CA
 - b. Samantha Holley- FEMA CA
 - c. Johnson Planning Commission
 - i. Paul Warden, Chair
 - ii. Adrienne Parker
 - iii. Charlie Gallanter
 - iv. Kyley Hill
 - v. Linda Edwards, Prospective JPC member
 - d. Re-imagine Johnson Downtown Reconfiguration & Redevelopment Task Force
 - i. Adrienne Parker, Co-Chair
 - ii. Paul Warden, Co-Chair
 - iii. Jan Gearhart
 - e. Seth Jensen- Deputy Director, Lamoille County Planning Commission
3. Tonight's meeting was a regular JPC meeting, but with a special topic (Seth Jensen's presentation on the Lamoille River Hydraulic Model) rather than regular business and with the DR&R Task Force invited.
4. Seth Jensen's presentation
 - a. Deputy director- Lamoille County Planning Commission
 - b. Provided handouts of the Lamoille Hydraulic model, hydraulic modeling and flood evaluation in Johnson, and flood mitigation master plan for Jeffersonville
 - c. Lamoille Hydraulic Model
 - i. Hydraulic Model Common Applications
 1. Extend of flooding (floodplains)
 2. Flood mitigation studies
 3. Evaluation and design of dams, bridges, and culverts
 4. Planning floodplain restoration
 5. FEMA floodway delineation
 6. Bridge scour calculation
 7. Hydraulic alternatives analysis
 8. Natural stream channel design
 - ii. Defined a 50 year flood as a flood that has a 1 in 50 chance of happening any given year
 - iii. Prior to 2023, they were planning for 100 year + 2 feet, now the LCPC is realizing that is insufficient and will now be aiming to plan for a 500 year flood
 - iv. Lamoille River model overview covers the entire county
 - v. Hydraulic model timeline for towns within Lamoille County provided in the handout
 1. 2025 EDA Lamoille Recovery and Resiliency Grant

- a. Refine Main Stem model in villages, including Johnson
 - b. Extend model up first 2.5 miles of Gihon River
 - c. Extend model into Northeast Kingdom (Hardwick only) and Franklin County, include additional tributaries
- vi. Holmes Meadow project in Johnson already underway, design stage, grant agreement in place, building schedule is tentative completion in 2026
 - 1. Goal- reconnecting the floodway, building a floodbench
 - 2. Protects infrastructure by reducing pressure on Routh 15 at sharp river bend and catch and store sediment, ice, and debris
 - 3. Plan to lower the land to restore the floodplain by reconnecting the floodplain so water can spread out and revegetate the area to slow down the water
 - 4. Projected life of a flood bench for budget calculations is 50 years, longer with maintenance (removal of major debris)
- vii. LCPC is evaluating potential locations for the spoil/spill removed from the river or potential repurposing of the fill in local roadway repair projects
 - 1. Because of the location, the fill is considered urban soil and therefore requires testing, or must remain in a certain radius
- viii. Showed case study for Jeffersonville Modeling and Planning for Resiliency from the spring 2011 flood
 - 1. Sometimes, mitigation efforts give you additional time to respond during major storms like the July 2023 event
- ix. SLR will be doing the modeling project for Johnson
 - 1. Charlie asked if they can kill two birds with one stone and test the soil while it is dredged, to test for phosphorous that creates an algae issue in Lake Champlain
 - 2. Dredge- digging below ordinary high water (Channel Management – digging above ordinary high water level – much easier to get approval)
 - 3. ANR is most likely to allow dredging below the high water when it's alongside another project, for example a project that mitigates the reason for gravel shoal formation in a given location
 - 4. Attendees discussed the issue of Japanese knotweed and the impact this invasive species has on native plant life
- x. Mark asked Seth is there is a version of the floodmaps that the Downtown Reconfiguration committee can use to move forward with their projects
 - 1. Seth discussed how the grant they've received may be able to help a bit with the discussion
 - 2. Seth said he could make a map if a list of layers is provided, Mark said he would provide the list via email
- xi. Paul discussed projects for Johnson
 - 1. Holmes Meadow- underway
 - 2. Skate Park near the mobile home community (C on the Johnson map in the handout)

3. Seth stated there is a large amount of hazard mitigation funding available through the state, and looking at “Area C” on the Johnson map is already an approved area to do technical assistance and engineering
4. Paul asked about SLR’s timeframe for the modeling
 - a. Seth responded starting in January, discussing specific alternatives in April or May
 - b. Model will be fully built out by end of 2025 and will have a larger selection of alternatives at that time
5. Charlie stated his concern is Route 15, area around the gravel yard downstream of Johnson and also upstream of Johnson - lots of erosion. Losing Route 15 would be very bad for the town and village – especially upstream, loss of easy access to Copley Hospital in an emergency situation.
 - a. Seth responded that this could be a potential spot for looking at the velocity that the team previously had not considered, will look into it
6. Kiley mentioned the concern expressed by local citizens regarding the bridge at Moog’s (Rt 15 & Hogback Rd) and the extent to which the bridge girders/road deck function as a partial dam once the flood water reaches a certain height.
 - a. Seth said he has heard that also and that can be looked at and modelled – great local input. Possible reconfiguration, flood benches with culverts, etc.
7. Adrienne asked about limitations on what the town would be allowed to put in buyout areas- can they put lights in the park, water fountains, food trucks, etc.? Seth will get specifics on what is allowed.

d. Adjourn 8:15pm

- i. Next Meeting, JPC: Thursday January 9, 2025 6:30pm, Johnson Municipal Bldg.
- ii. Next Meeting, DR&R - TBD, January 2025, Johnson Municipal Bldg.

Submitted by: Samantha Holley, FEMA Community Assistance