

# MINUTES

## MANHATTAN URBAN AREA PLANNING BOARD

City Commission Room, City Hall  
1101 Poyntz Avenue

**September 17, 2018**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Ken Ebert, *chair*  
Phil Anderson  
John Ball

Debbie Nuss  
Neil Parikh  
Jerry Reynard, *vice-chair*

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Gary Stith

### STAFF PRESENT

Eric Cattell, Director of Community Development  
Chad Bunger, Asst. Director of Community Development  
Carol Davidson, Senior Planner  
John Adam, Senior Planner

Ebert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### I. OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the **MINUTES** of the August 20, 2018, Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board meeting.

**Ball moved that the Board approve the Consent Agenda; Reynard seconded. Motion passed 5–0–1, Parikh abstaining.**

### III. WORK SESSION

1. Update of the Wildcat Creek Floodplain Management Plan and recent flood.

Bunger presented an update of the Wildcat Creek Floodplain Management Plan and information about the recent flood event on September 3, 2018. The Wildcat Creek Watershed has been active for many years and floods periodically. The watershed is spread out across the county with 10% in Manhattan, 30% in Fort Riley, and 60% in rural Riley County. The one-day total rainfall reported 10–11 inches in rural Riley County, the largest storm since 2007, which caused flooding downstream within City Limits. The City will continue to protect against flooding through updates to the Wildcat Creek Floodplain Management Plan.

Reynard asked if the flood elevation changed. Bunger said yes, the FEMA elevation increased. Reynard asked what the new elevation is. Bunger said it can vary 10–20 feet depending on the location in the city.

Anderson asked if required improvements to flood-prone homes would include raising the HVAC systems to a higher elevation. Bunger said yes. Anderson commented that would minimize potential damage. Bunger said HVAC systems are most frequently affected and a costly repair when they are flooded.

Ebert asked if there are standards for non-residential properties. Bunger said yes, they are similar but non-residential properties can use flood proofing rather than elevating the structures. An example would be the addition of watertight doors.

Ebert asked how the standards affect residential basements. Bunger said basements make elevating buildings difficult. Per the regulations and FEMA standards, the elevation is measured from the lowest enclosed habitable floor, so the top of the basement floor would need to be at or above the specified flood elevation. A common solution is to convert the basement into a crawlspace to mitigate damage but the homeowner will lose their basement so it is not a popular solution.

Ebert asked if there has been any determination of the value of the damage. Bunger said he cannot release that information at this time.

Bunger continued updating the board on the construction of two regional basins at Cico Park and Vanesta Lake and the current resources available for flood relief from affected residents on the City's website.

Nuss asked what would be discussed about the Wildcat Creek Floodplain Management Plan at the joint City–County meeting. Bunger anticipates the board will revisit the management plan and consider continuing the working group.

Nuss asked if there are other opportunities to apply for federal funding. Bunger said yes, there are funds available but the damage assessment need to be completed first to identify needs. Two sources of funds have been previously used; state funding for disaster mitigation and funding from the presidential disaster declaration.

Nuss said that it is commendable that the Greater Community Foundation set up the fund for community support but it may be more successful if they establish a goal to inspire donation. Bunger said the amount of damage will be released soon.

Ball asked if the flooded structures were built within a defined floodplain. Bunger said some were, some were not. The new development on the west side of town was built using the old regulations which allowed development in a floodplain.

Ball commented that the City has become more directive of what citizens can do within a known floodplain. There is an amount of risk a person must accept with building in a floodplain. The only solutions for flooding is to retain the water and meter it or increase

the flow which results in problems downstream. The only options to protect the structures are to elevate or remove them. Bunger agreed, it will be a combination of those solutions to protect Manhattan from flooding.

Anderson commented that he was surprised by the flooding in the Highland Ridge neighborhood. He asked if those properties were in the floodplain. Bunger said yes, the area is in an existing or future floodplain. There were only a few homes that had flooding that were not in a identified floodplain.

Anderson asked if the watershed district had been implemented yet. Bunger said no.

Anderson said that was one of the recommendations of the working group and thinks implementing the district could be helpful. Bunger said a watershed district acts like a utility district to levy mill rates and tax for a specific use but the watershed districts must be created by the County or a resident's petition.

Anderson commented that if the committee is reformed they may address the district. Bunger said it would create a funding mechanism to improve the storm water infrastructure. Anderson said it could create up to \$250,000 annually. Bunger replied that it would depend on the rate.

Anderson commented that concrete can now be designed to be pervious and would allow for more saturation of water. Bunger said that last four major flood events have followed a wet period so the earth was already saturated.

Ebert asked if repetitive flood damage is a prerequisite for the buy-out scenario. Bunger said no, a buy-out can be used as a preventative measure. The City had applied to buy out a property that had not flooded prior to the recent flood event. The grant from FEMA requires the property to be in a floodplain or at risk of flooding, have a benefit/cost ratio greater than one, the owner must be willing, and the property must remain as City-owned open space.

Ebert asked what the magnitude of the flood was. Bunger said the Corps of Engineers is calculating it but he would guess it was greater than a 500-year flood. He also urged residents to consider flood insurance if they are near a waterway or bridge.

Ebert asked if the standards for developing in the floodplain will be impacted by the recent flood. Bunger said new flood maps were adopted in 2015 so he does not anticipate new flood maps for a few more years. He does not anticipate major changes for the floodplain rules and regulations.

Ebert asked if the development that occurred under the current floodplain regulations were built above the flood elevation level. Bunger said development is required to be one foot above the future conditions model elevation.

Ebert asked if developments built to the current standards experienced flooding. Bunger said there have not been any new developments within the Wildcat Creek floodplain under the current regulations. There is a home on Village Drive that was severely damaged

in 2011 so it was elevated 7–8 feet above the base flood elevation and it did not flood.

Ebert asked if there was a bottleneck to the east of Pecan Circle. Bunger said when you put something next to fill-in, bottlenecks are created. The Scenic Drive, Seth Child Road, and Union Pacific Railroad bridges backed up water.

Reynard asked how the City will take a leadership position to get the water slowed down in the rest of the County and on Fort Riley. Bunger said it can be accomplished through partnerships with the County and Fort Riley. There have been discussions about possible solutions but cost, maintenance, and environmental impact are a concern.

Ebert opened the public hearing.

Mark Small, 7230 Blue Spruce Lane, Keats, said his property has flooded in 2010, 2011, and 2018. His \$250,000 home was built in 1910 and there is no way to raise it. His property use to be in the 500-year floodplain and in the 2011 flood, water was nine inches above the 500-year floodplain elevation. Small suggested the City take action to protect against flooding with water retention because the watershed will flood again. Small shared that improvements need to be made to the alert system because he did not get an alert about the flooding until there was already a foot of water in his home. He also shared that 12.5 inches of rain was recorded north of Keats.

Ball noted that the board represents the Manhattan Urban Area, which includes portions of Riley County.

Brad Fagan, 1125 Garden Way, Schwab Eaton, said his office building was built in 1983 near the Garden Way apartments; at that time the floodplain boundary was much closer to the Wildcat Creek banks. Now the floodplain boundary is on his lot, up to the building. His business received a letter that they would need to flood proof the building as the floodplain expanded but he would like consideration for the expenses of the businesses to mitigate flood risk. His building was not built in a floodplain so they anticipated minimal risk being near Wildcat Creek but the building has been damaged in 2010, 2011, and 2018. Fagan said he appreciates the City updating the floodplain regulations to accommodate future flood events but it does not address existing properties near the floodplain.

Ebert closed the public hearing.

Bunger commented that he will pass along the public comment about the flood alert to the Riley County Emergency Management. Stream gauges are used to gather flooding information but need to be improved in rural areas. In Manhattan a voice-activated outdoor siren system has been implemented. Riley County has a subscription-based alert system. They are also considering an alert system similar to an Amber Alert which will notify the public without a subscription.

Small asked if the tornado sirens could be used, with a different sound, to alert people of flooding.

Bunger said it is possible and he would share the suggestion with Riley County Emergency

Management.

2. REPORTS and COMMENTS by Board Members and Staff

Adam asked if any board member was interested in serving on the Blue Township Steering Committee. Reynard volunteered.

Davidson announced that it was her last board meeting as she is relocating. She thanked the board members for the time they have worked together. The board thanked Davidson for all her efforts. Cattell extended his thanks to Davidson for her efforts while she has been with the City.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by Lesley Frohberg, Planning Intern