

## MAYORS COUNCIL RAHWAY RIVER WATERSHED FLOOD CONTROL REPORTS PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS FOR RAHWAY RIVER WATERSHED FLOOD MITIGATION

There were promising flood mitigation solutions contained in a preliminary US Army Corps of Engineers report provided to the Mayors Council at their April 3 meeting held in the Union Township Municipal Building hosted by Mayor Joe Florio. Mayors of Springfield, Kenilworth, Cranford, Rahway, Union and Millburn were present.

The report indicated that the storage solutions upstream, including up to 2 feet of water in the South Mountain Reservation, could hold significant benefits to the downstream communities from Millburn to Rahway. While stressing this was preliminary findings of the Corps hydrology study, the Mayors Council expects that they are on the right track to find optimal solutions to mitigate some of the flooding issues. The USACE will now be finalizing its evaluation and developing a cost-benefit assessment.

The Mayors Council also are encouraged by their request to the US Army Corps of Engineers and NJ State DEP to include the East Branch of the Rahway River into the study of flood mitigation alternatives. The effort is to try to assess whether there is flood storage potential at golf courses and other open space areas as far up the east branch of the river as South Orange.

As part of this effort, Springfield Township will host a meeting of the east branch communities on April 23 to discuss the possibilities of various flood mitigation strategies.

At the Mayors Council meeting Union County Freeholder Chairman Al Mirabella praised the group for its work and pledged county cooperation to find ways to mitigate flooding. The chairman requested a more narrow version of the Council's open space proposal be considered to be only acquisition of flood prone properties adjacent to parkland and recreation. Also, that the county will be further engaged in needed river maintenance.

A decision to request a meeting with all relevant parties was made to resolve an impasse between NJDOT and NJDEP on debris cleanup under a state highway bridge that is causing localized flooding. Six months after Irene, numerous river maintenance issues, including routine maintenance, have been held up due to onerous regulation on desnagging and routine maintenance.

Each of the Mayors were asked to have their communities pledge to implement changes to reduce the impervious surfaces at their school and municipal facilities by 10% by 2015 to set an example for the rest of the community. Also, to review their ordinance to ensure they encourage best practices for storm water management.

The meeting concluded with a resident informing the Mayors that the promising developments mentioned were fantastic but have not been implemented yet. That reality and the recent estimate that residents had suffered over \$60 million in damages are key to the continued engagement of the Mayor's Council to implement its plan.