

News from the Raritan & Millstone Rivers Flood Control Commission

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December 5, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

US ARMY CORPS TURNS BACK ON MANVILLE FLOOD VICTIMS – THE FLOOD COMMISSION RESPONDS

In an open letter to the Army Corps of Engineers, the Raritan Millstone River Flood Control Commission (RMRFCC) rejected the conclusions of the Corps flood control study for Manville. The letter noted that after spending over \$3,000,000 on a study that took decades to complete, the Corps decided that there wasn't enough flood damage in Manville to justify a project. In choosing to not safeguard the area, the Corps is leaving Manville high, but not necessarily dry.

The Commission's letter noted among other things, that in the study that led to flood-proofing neighboring Bound Brook, the Corps used a much larger geographic area with many more high end homes, to justify their project.

The letter goes on to document the many costs that Manville has suffered which cannot be measured in dollars – the fear and anxiety for their residents, the repeated moving of possessions to higher ground on the news of a flood threat, the loss of home values, the escalating costs of flood insurance (now as high as their mortgage payments). And on a community basis, the decline of businesses downtown, all leading to a declining tax base and higher tax rates. "Because of the Corps refusal to act, this has become a self-fulfilling downward spiral that will continue indefinitely", said Manville's mayor.

Assemblyman Jack M. Ciattarelli summed up the Commission's position quite nicely, "The Army Corps analysis seems to reveal a terrible flaw in its methodology. Flood mitigation relief should not be based primarily on lost value, but on the number of lives affected by repeated flooding."

"It is simply not fair," added Frank Jurewicz, RMRFCC Chairman, "to penalize Manville residents because their homes are more modest, especially after repeated flooding has cut the value of

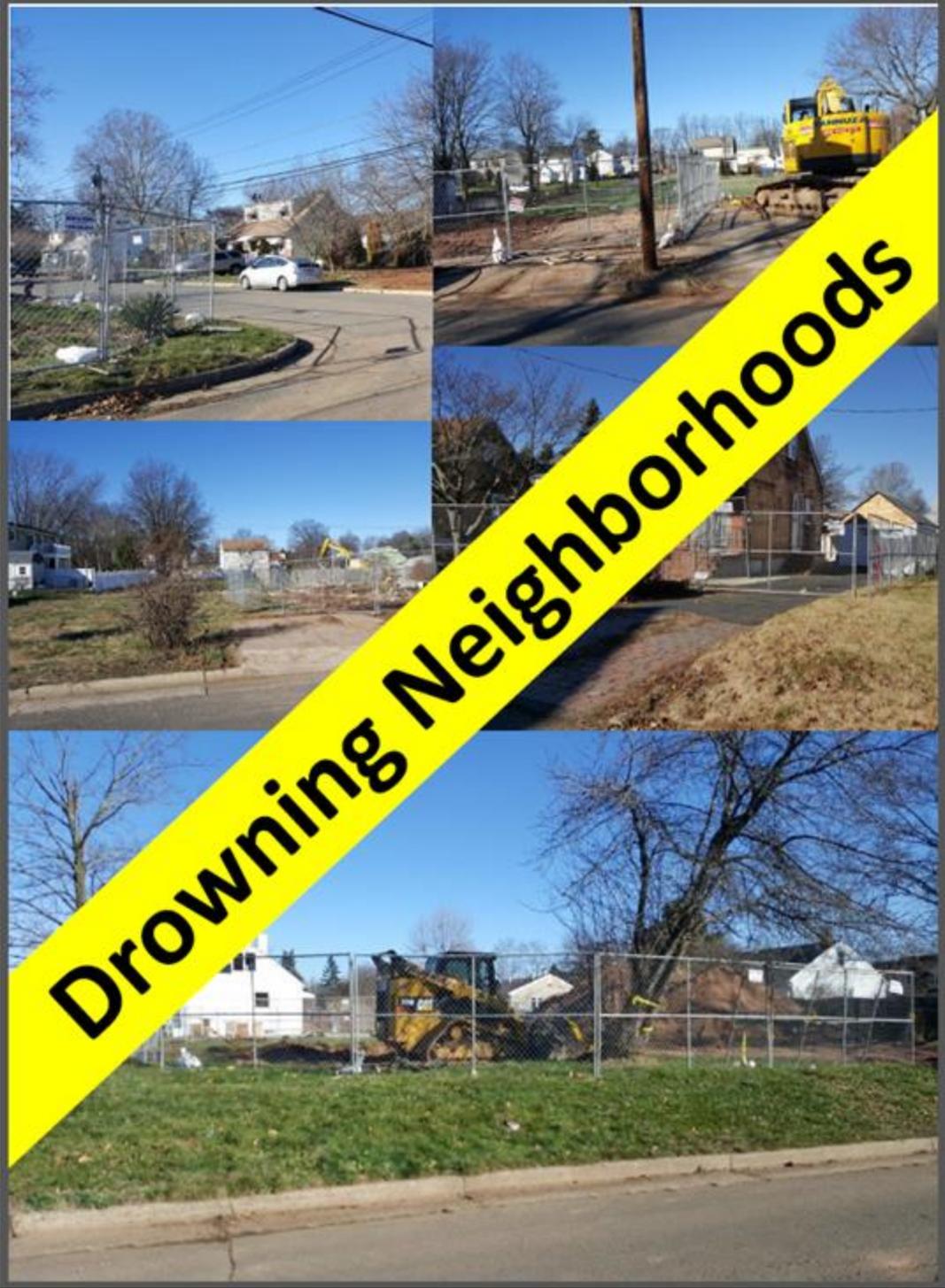
their homes in half. Their heartaches are even more real, in that they can least afford the repairs and clean-up costs that the Corps is leaving them exposed to in the future. Government should not exist just help the “haves” in our society. “

He went on to note that the Corps study even admitted that the danger of future flooding is inevitable, and will get more severe as our climate continues to heat up, threatening not only Manville but the entire river basin. “These floods affect our homes, schools, businesses, emergency response times, and cost millions to clean up. It is not just an issue for Manville – it is an issue for our entire region”.

Assemblyman Zwicker also supported the Commission, adding: "Our government is supposed to work for everyone, not for the few or for the privileged. By turning their backs on Manville, the Army Corp of Engineers has put people last. Manville is a community, not simply numbers on a spreadsheet. The Corp has turned its back on the people of Manville that must now unnecessarily bear the cost of future flooding. Their ruling is, quite simply, wrong."

After noting numerous perceived errors in the Corps study, the Commission’s letter closes with an appeal to the Corps for aid they can fund thru other programs. “The Commission will continue to fight for our residents. We will seek funding from as many sources as we can, until our problems are solved”, said Jurewicz.

The letter was also sent to all local, State and national representatives that represent the river basin. It can be read in its entirety on the RMRFCC website.



Drowning Neighborhoods





- Bull-dozing a neighborhood



- A downtown in decline



- Empty lots mean higher taxes and lower home values.