



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998

<http://www.mvcca.org>

June 27, 2022

Dear Supervisor Storck, Chairman McKay, and the Corp of Engineers

Subject: COE Proposed Flood Walls and Pump Station Resolution (Board 2022-01)

The MVCCA voted on June 22, 2022, to support the concerns of the communities that will be seriously impacted by the proposed COE's flood walls and pump station. Our resolution is attached and outlines the concerns.

Furthermore, we learned after our General Council meeting that the COE, at their 6-16-2022 virtual meeting, stated that the pumping station they intend to put on River Towers property would only be working when there are storm surges. And that they intended to shut down the pre-existing pump station and tide gates that manage the water in the canals in this community area. See attachment 2 for the full details. Their removal would be catastrophic for the communities.

We strongly request that you stop the COE from moving forward and that you ensure they work with the impacted communities, the National Park Service and commercial businesses before they go any further with their ill-conceived planning.

Regards,

Katherine Ward

Katherine Ward

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MVCCA

Attached: 1. MVCCA Resolution -- Flood Wall Impacting the residential areas of Belleview and River Towers Condominiums, New Alexandria and River View Single Family residential communities and the commercial properties on Belle Haven Rd (Board 2022-01)

2. Info sheet on Tide Gates functionality and purpose.

Attachment 1

MVCCA Resolution -- Flood Wall Impacting the residential areas of Belleview and River Towers Condominiums, New Alexandria and River View Single Family residential communities and the commercial properties on Belle Haven Rd (Board 2022-01)

WHEREAS, the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments(WMCOG) has proposed a Flood Wall on private property in New Alexandria, River View, Belle View Condominium, and River Towers Condominium; and along the commercial properties on Belle Haven Rd and

WHEREAS, the COE and WMCOG failed to notify the affected homeowners and business owners ahead of their report and failed to invite the commercial owners to the in-person meeting held on June 14; and

WHEREAS, the COG chose their flood wall plan without citizen input, and, further, set the comment period deadline for June 30; and

WHEREAS, after the COE in person meeting on June 14, 2022 with citizens/home owners, county staff, Supervisor Storck plus representatives for our state elected officials and Delegate Paul Krizek the COE agreed to provide more details of their decision making process and alternate plans they discarded, plus look into how they can extend the comment period deadline.

THEREFORE be it resolved, the MVCCA demands true community engagement and full disclosure by the COE, to include a new presentation of details and alternate plans for the residential areas and commercial areas; and

THEREFORE be it resolved, the MVCCA demands a several month extension for the comment period.

Approved June 22, 2022, at the MVCCA General Council Meeting

Attachment 2

Purpose and Function of the New Alexandria Pump Station and Tide Gate

New Alexandria has two unique stormwater facilities designed to protect the community from tidal flooding: the New Alexandria Stormwater Pumping Station and the New Alexandria tide gate. Should strong northeasterly winds or a tidal surge (associated with a tropical storm or hurricane) cause water levels in the Potomac River to increase above the highest normal tide elevations expected in a typical month, these two facilities were designed to mitigate flooding in this community. Before these facilities were installed, two tidal creeks connected the New Alexandria community directly to the Potomac River. Most of the neighborhood still lies in the Potomac's 100-year floodplain, but protection is now provided for the less extreme tidal flooding events.

The Pump Station: The tidal creek in the western part of the community, which runs along 13th street, now meets a closed gate at the pump station, instead of continuing up into the New Alexandria neighborhood. This creek rises and falls with the tide and cannot move past the pump station, as long as the tide elevation remains below 7.5 ft. Any rain which falls in the 50-acre watershed upstream, is piped underground into a wet well inside the pump station, then pumped out into the 13th street channel

The Tide Gate: Approximately 1/10 mile east, the eastern channel, which still runs under I street into the community between Woodhaven Road and 10th Avenue, has two 4'x8' cast iron sluice gates which close and isolate the upstream side of I street from the tidal creek, and hence, the Potomac. The two sluice gates remain open at all times unless the water surface elevation on the downstream side of the gate structure exceeds 3.5ft, which is several inches higher than the highest expected tide in any given month. Once the sensor on the downstream side of the gate measures an elevation over 3.5ft, the gates close and will not open unless the sensor on the upstream side of the gate detects a level that is 0.7ft (8.5 inches) greater than the downstream level. That difference causes the gates to open long enough for the water surface elevation upstream and downstream to equalize, then the gates close again. Because there are no pumps at the tide gate, should severe rainfall ever occur at the same time an abnormally high tide comes in, the elevations upstream of the gate could approach the same elevation as is being experienced in the Potomac. Fortunately, these two conditions do not often occur simultaneously. The top of the wall at this facility is at elevation 8.0ft, so like the pump station, it can only protect up to that elevation. (Case in point: In 2003, the tidal surge associated with Hurricane Isabel topped this wall by 1.5ft flooding streets and numerous houses.)

The most important thing to know about this community is that the flood event used to create FEMA's floodplain map (with a flood elevation of 11.0ft) was the **1% chance tidal surge which moves up the Potomac**, not the 1% fluvial flow down the Potomac (i.e. from West Virginia down to DC). Simply put, residents need to pay particular attention whenever hurricanes or tropical storms approach the east coast and especially when any tidal surges are being forecast for the Potomac River. Those are the storms to watch.

Sign up for FAIRFAX ALERTS at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts/> and when doing so, make sure you request weather alerts tailored to your area.

DTL- 04/17/15 (Rev 04/29/15 & 5/11/15)