



## **Operations Committee - Board of Representatives**

Virgil de la Cruz, Chair

Sean Boeger, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Monday, December 20, 2021  
**Time:** 6:30pm  
**Place:** This meeting was held remotely

The Operations Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair de la Cruz, Vice Chair Boeger, and Committee Member Reps. Baxter, Coleman, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, Tomas, and Watkins. Also present were Reps. Campbell, Cottrell, Goldberg, Grunberger, and Morson; Lou Casolo, Engineering Dept.; Lauren Meyer, Mayor's Office; Tyler Theder, Stormwater Management Dept.; Emily Gordon, Land Use Bureau; and three members of the public.

Chair de la Cruz called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
11. O31.001	REVIEW; Administration plans to Develop Short and Long Term Plan to Mitigate the Impact of Severe Storm and Rain Events as expressed in <a href="#">Resolution 4113</a> . 12/08/21 – Submitted by Rep. de la Cruz	<b>HELD 9-0-0</b>

Chair de la Cruz gave background on this Item. Over the years Stamford has faced many challenges with flooding and rainstorms. These storm events continue to get stronger, such as with the storms Elsa and Ida. Resolution No. 4113 was an attempt to work on this problem. He brought this issue back to the Committee 1) so that Mr. Casolo could give an update and 2) to get a sense of how the new Administration and the 31<sup>st</sup> Board will proceed.

Mr. Casolo gave an update:

- Many people were impacted in recent storm events, especially those living near living near flood plain areas and near rivers.
- Many of the problems in Stamford are recurring problem areas.
- Recent storm events exceeded the design standards used in regulating development in Stamford.
- He requested \$500K funding through ARP funds to do a city-wide drainage study, but the funding was not approved at the BOF level, which may have had to do with the new Administration coming in. He has requested the funding again through the Capital Budget program.

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<sup>1</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:02:00

- In the short term, many City employees were sent out to respond to flooding requests and debris removal. The City cleared drainage structures that were owned by the City and underground drainage that the City maintains.
- Much debris collects on private property, and the City does not go on that property.
- Significant damage and hazards were immediately assessed. Construction was done right away, either temporarily or permanently.
- In the long term, a planning study should be done that would prioritize areas, estimate costs, and formulate budgets.
- This resolution involves many different City departments: Engineering, WPCA, Stormwater Management, and the Land Use Bureau.
- The Land Use Bureau is working on funding for a resiliency study through outside funding.
- Storm surge needs to be addressed, which is not in this resolution.
- The resiliency study in this resolution is meant to address sea-level rise and any coastal impacts. A city-wide drainage study would assess the capacity of current drainage systems.

There was Committee discussion which included:

- The WPCA is working on an infiltration study.
- Wetlands and their role in flood mitigation needs to be considered.
- Stamford should try to reduce the number of trees that are cut down, especially large ones. Trees are important part in flood mitigation.
- Mr. Casolo pointed out that roots from large trees can also damage underground systems, and play a large part in mitigation erosion.
- Stamford needs to have a much broader scope than the Greenwich study, which was only based on sea-level rise.
- The new Administration has formed a committee to address infrastructure and resiliency.

Chair de la Cruz stated he would invite the Land Use Bureau and Highways Department to the next Operations Committee Meeting.

A motion to hold Item #1 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 9-0-0 (Reps. de la Cruz, Boeger, Baxter, Coleman, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, Tomas, and Watkins in favor).

- <sup>22</sup>. [O31.002](#) RESOLUTION: Sense of the Board Regarding Replacement of West Main Street Bridge.(Previously [O30.102](#)) **Approved as Amended 8-0-1**  
12/08/21 – Submitted by Reps. de la Cruz and Nabel

Chair de la Cruz explained he put this item on the Agenda to find out exactly what direction this bridge project is taking, as it has been in the works for many years.

Rep. Sherwood explained her proposed amendments. She has eliminated “in the Mill River Park” in the first Whereas clause as it is not factual, since the bridge is not in the

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<sup>2</sup> Video Time Stamp: 00:50:18

park. Further, she eliminated the “Be It Further Resolved” clauses and condensed most of the information into one clause. She feels the Board should send a message to the new Administration that is concise and clear. The proposed amended resolution differs from the previous draft in that it asks the Administration to allow regular vehicular traffic on the bridge.

Chair de la Cruz indicated that in previous meetings Mr. Casolo has stated that anything can be rehabilitated if there is enough money to spend.

Mr. Casolo gave an update on Item #2:

- The current project is for a prefabricated truss pedestrian bridge with emergency vehicle access.
- The project is awaiting permitting and then will be put out to bid.
- He referenced the detailed [information](#) discussed in previous Operations Committee Meetings.
- Mayor Simmons expressed to Mr. Casolo that she would prefer this item is held to give her Administration time to pursue fact-finding on the project.
- Any big storm could destroy the bridge.
- The prior Administration tried to come up with a cost effective and time accelerated pedestrian bridge.
- The original bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- This current project is a safe new structure that can be built while decisions are being made on the old bridge.

There was Committee discussion which included:

- This issue has been going on for 20 years and something needs to be done now.
- Residents deserve to have a fully functional bridge to connect the West Side with downtown area.
- Some Representatives expressed concern that it is very important to have regular vehicular traffic on the bridge.
- There are two aspects of public safety with this item: 1) the bridge is falling apart and 2) the dead end at the street is attracting loitering and a criminal element since there is not enough traffic to deter this.
- How safe will a vehicular bridge be for park-goers?
- There should not be two bridges if we cannot decide what can be done with the original bridge.

Rep. Ley made a friendly amendment to add “[and designed to be climate resilient and to avoid impact to the flood plain as practicable](#)” to the Now Therefore be it Resolved clause.

Rep. Watkins stated he will abstain on a vote to approve because he wants to hear how a bridge will be structured so that it is a safe environment for park-goers. Until he finds out this information he cannot vote to approve.

A motion to approve Rep. Sherwood’s amendments, along with Rep. Ley’s friendly amendment, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-1 (Reps. de la Cruz, Boeger, Baxter, Coleman, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, and Tomas in favor; Rep. Watkins abstaining).

A motion to approve Item #2, as amended, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-1 (Reps. de la Cruz, Boeger, Baxter, Coleman, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, and Tomas in favor; Rep. Watkins abstaining).

Chair de la Cruz adjourned the meeting at 8:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Virgil de la Cruz, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).