

Town of Fayston, Vermont
Planning Commission Minutes
Monday, October 28, 2019

PC Members present: Pete Ludlow, Doug Day, Don Simonini, Carol Chamberlin

Others present: Ned Swanberg, DEC Floodplain Manager; Pam DeAndrea, CVRPC; Shane Mullen, DRB

Ned provided an overview of River Corridors and Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA), explaining that they should always be looked at in conjunction with one another. He explained some of the methods used for determining flood levels, taking into consideration topography, hydrology, and other factors. The lidar mapping which has been completed around the state has provided the ability for more detail to be included in these determinations.

Ned explained that a River Corridor is the channel needed by a river or stream as it creates erosion, leaves deposits, and changes position over time. The goal of River Corridor protection is to provide the space to accommodate the power of the water and allow it to use the least erosive path possible.

The height-above-basic-flood-elevation requirements for structures in the SFHA is recommended by the state to be two feet; some towns have required three- or four- foot heights.

There are reports available on the DEC web site regarding studies which have been done for Mad River tributary corridors.

The standards for allowing development in the SFHA include 'no adverse impact,' 'no net fill,' and structures placed two feet above the base flood elevation.

The standard for providing River Corridor protection is to not allow any development closer to the river than any existing development.
no adverse impact

Ned explained the impact of a town's inclusion of floodplain protection in its Regulations on Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund payment rates, noting that Fayston currently benefits from contributing the lowest percentage allowable when emergency repairs are undertaken. This is due to Land Use Regulations that do not allow any building or fill in the SFHA. This is considered an 'interim' adoption of River Corridor Protection.

Ned and Pam spoke about the studies completed by Dubois and King on several Mad River tributaries, including the Mill Brook. Ned showed in some detail how the FEMA map, the D&K map, and the River Corridor map of the Mill Brook relate to each other.

The D&K maps have not been reviewed or officially digitized by FEMA, but might potentially provide background information for a landowner seeking a Letter of Map Amendment from FEMA, which could place a property outside of the SFHA. The D&K maps could also be used as a starting point for the engineering studies which would be needed if the Town were to request a re-evaluation of the Mill Brook SFHA. FEMA has been working in several areas of the State to complete new mapping, but there is no proposed timeline of when all watersheds will be updated. Either type of application to FEMA would require more detailed engineering information.

There was some discussion of the area at the lower end of the Fayston portion of Mill Brook's being in the SFHA on both sides of Route 17, and some questions arose related to whether the water might breach the road or if the D&K mapping indicated that the stream has incised enough that it is now contained in a tighter corridor. Further information would be required to make any determination.