

TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD
REVIEW OF STORMWATER GROUP ACTIVITIES
AS OF OCTOBER 14, 2007

BY ED DESANCTIS, MEMBER

In the spring of 2007 the residents of the Town of New Hartford approved a Stormwater Bond to address some of the long-standing flooding issues throughout the Town. A working committee of eleven people was formed that includes private citizens, town staff and elected officials. Various other professionals including members from the Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District were also invited to assist us in evaluating improvement proposals, and provide the group with their expertise and guidance. We are a diverse group of people with varied and valuable perspectives and a common goal of solving storm water problems throughout the town.

Since July, the stormwater group has been meeting on a monthly basis. At this point, we have had several meetings in which to clarify for ourselves what our mission is, how we can ensure your bond money is spent appropriately and begin discussing how to tackle the many tasks ahead of us.

We are evaluating the stormwater problems throughout the town and developing guidelines and criteria for spending the bond monies. We recognize that \$2 million is not enough to address all of the Town's stormwater issues, so we are in the process of developing a prioritization methodology that will help us determine which projects to focus on. Locations that have the capability of disrupting emergency services during severe storm events were thought to be high on the prioritization list. Once the projects are prioritized, we will attempt to establish a timeline and budget for each prioritized project.

We are pledged to making certain your tax dollars are spent effectively. The expert members added to our group are intended to ensure that the solutions determined are both cost-effective and scientifically sound engineered answers to the Town's stormwater problems. Before any project is begun or monies are spent on project work, the group intends to present a comprehensive proposal to the public for review, questions, and comment. Additionally, written comments from all citizens during this working process are always welcome.

Thus far, the group has been working on educating itself with the various storm water issues. The complexity and magnitude of the storm water problems are not easily understood at first glance, especially for private citizens such as myself. Some of the most educational sessions we have had to date have been tours of a few of the problem areas. On two different occasions we have performed site visits to some of the problem areas, and have spoken to residents surrounding these areas. Visiting these sites has certainly been an eye opener for the group since the magnitude of the problem becomes very clear while walking and surveying some of the areas in question. The topography and inaccessibility of some of the terrain increases the difficulty and likely the cost of

potential solutions. There are a multitude of areas in the Town where stormwater creates problems for emergency vehicles, and damages homes, businesses, roads and infrastructure. The Committee has started to brainstorm how additional funding might be obtained so that it can continue to solve issues beyond what the \$2 million dollar bond will cover.

The only incidental bond monies the Committee has preliminarily requested from the Town Board are those to pay for studies and outside experts to help us identify and understand the magnitude of problem areas and possible engineered solutions for those areas. The group will continue to meet on a monthly basis, working to solve storm water problems that have plagued the town for many years.