


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZATION OF SUBMISSION OF LETTER TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REQUESTING FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE JUNE 2006 FLOOD DAMAGES

ISSUE: City Council consideration of authorization of submission of letter to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) requesting federal assistance for the June 2006 flood damages.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the City Manager to submit the attached letter to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to request financial assistance (This letter was submitted in August to meet deadlines with the understanding that staff would request Council to endorse the letter in September); and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents for the recovery effort.

BACKGROUND: The City experienced severe thunderstorms and flooding from June 25 through July 6, 2006. The President declared a major disaster on July 13th for these storms. Most of the damage the City sustained occurred within the water channels: Cameron Run, Holmes Run, and Backlick Run. The storms left an estimated 95,000 cubic yards of debris, sediment, silt, mud, and rocks within these water channels.

By law, federal assistance cannot duplicate the benefits provided by another source. In order to avoid the duplication of benefits, federal agencies have guidelines to outline which agencies handle the various aspects of the damage relief effort. Water channels and permanent structures within the water channels involve numerous federal agencies for reimbursement, so City staff are

actively pursuing federal assistance from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE.)

DISCUSSION: Under the Emergency Watershed Protection program, NRCS may reimburse the City for expenses incurred for removing the sediment, silt, mud, and rocks within the channels. The City sent a formal letter requesting financial support and we are requesting Council to endorse submission of the letter. NRCS will send an interdisciplinary team of an engineer, biologist, and conservationist to review the damage, develop preliminary site drawings, determine whether the project is economically suitable, and review the environmental impact. The team will respond with their findings of eligibility and a plan. If the City is deemed eligible for these funds, NRCS will go to Congress and request an emergency supplemental appropriation for the project.

FISCAL IMPACT: NRCS program covers 75 percent of the program costs and requires a 25 percent City match.

The NRCS program requires staff time from members of the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services, Finance Department, Office of Management and Budget, and the Grants Coordinator.

The necessary paperwork was submitted, in order to meet the 60 day deadline from the date of the Presidential declaration, with the understanding that subsequent City Council approval would be required to accept any funds.

ATTACHMENTS: Letter to NRCS

STAFF:

Laura Pettus, Grants Coordinator, City Manager's Office

Emily Baker, City Engineer

Rich Baier, Director, T&ES

Elisabeth Wheel, Budget Analyst, OMB



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City Manager

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August 21, 2006

M. Denise Doetzer
State Conservationist
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
1606 Santa Rosa Rd.
Richmond, VA 23229-5014

Dear Ms. Doetzer:

The City of Alexandria requests Federal Assistance under provisions of Section 216, Public Law 516, to restore the sustained damages on Cameron Run, Holmes Run, and Backlick Run resulting from the severe thunderstorms and flooding during the time period of June 23 through July 6, 2006. The President declared a major disaster on July 13th for these storms. The City of Alexandria sustained approximately 10 inches of rain, and the storms left an estimated 95,000 cubic yards of debris, sediment, silt, mud, and rocks. Enclosed are some photographs of the storm damage in the water channels to illustrate the magnitude of the damage. The attached marked quad sheet indicates the damaged areas. There are residential and business neighborhoods around the waterways, and this work is necessary to safeguard lives and property from an imminent hazard of floodwater.

The City of Alexandria has landrights to the waterways and regularly maintains these channels by removing large sediment deposits, thinning of vegetation along the banks, and removing sand bars within the floodway. We understand, as sponsors of an Emergency Watershed Protection project, our responsibilities will include acquiring permits needed to construct, and if required, to operate and maintain the proposed measures. We are prepared to provide local cost-share of 25 percent of the cost of the work, in dollars or in-kind services.

Below is the contact information for the administrative and technical persons in our organization:

Grant Administration:

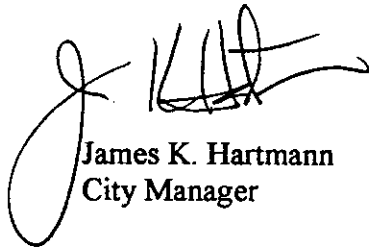
Laura Pettus, Grants Coordinator
301 King St., Room 3400
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-706-3987
laura.pettus@alexandriava.gov

Technical Contact:

Emily Baker, Deputy Director of Engineering
301 King St., Room 4130
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-838-4327
emily.baker@alexandriava.gov

We appreciate your consideration of this matter. Please contact us for any additional information.

Sincerely,



James K. Hartmann
City Manager

Attachments: Photographs
Marked USGS Quad Sheet