

**Rocky Ripple Town Council**  
**Flood Control Stance and Activities Summary**  
**26-July-2016**



## **INTRODUCTION**

The current Westfield Boulevard Alignment Floodwall project and riverbank stabilization for Rocky Ripple have continued to be hot topics that continue to drive long discussions during Rocky Ripple Town Council meetings each month. This summary document has been created to get as much information to as many citizens as possible regarding the Rocky Ripple Town Council's views and ongoing activities. Updates to this document will be made regularly and will be published on the town's website ([www.RockyRipple.com](http://www.RockyRipple.com)) and in the Rocky Ripple eNews. Copies will also be available at monthly Town Council meetings.

The current Town Council has all along and continues to oppose the Westfield Blvd. alignment until it is stopped or is on paper as a done deal by the Hogsett administration. At the same time, we cannot stand by and wait for someone else to take care of us.

However, this Town Council has not and will not take a 300 year levee or nothing stance with the city, as was done before. Some of the things that are on the verge of happening with riverbank restoration was put on hold by the city a number of years ago due to a negative tone and attitude from Rocky Ripple. The Town Council has been working to strengthen our relationships with city, state and federal officials.

This is a fluid plan that continues to be refined as more information, money and details are available. At this point, the activity, where it fits into the overall flood control plan, and the month it took place is listed below. Upcoming activities with more specific dates and details will be listed as they become available. The Town Council discusses what has happened each month in relation to these flood control activities and what will be happening in the near future, during regular monthly board meetings. To stay up to date, you can attend the meetings, read the posted minutes or contact a board member.

## **THREE AREAS BEING WORKED ON CONCURRENTLY**

There are three areas of activity with regard to flood control that the Town Council continues to actively work on. They are:

- 1) River bank stabilization/repair on the existing river levee. This needs to happen now, as Activity 3 below may continue to be delayed and Activity 2 is in the feasibility/discussion stages. Rocky

Ripple's most risky issue with regard to the river and flooding is if a breach happens to the current levee.

- 2) Development of a local option for a levee along the river that could take the place of the Westfield Boulevard Alignment floodwall (or be constructed in addition to, if the city continues with the Westfield Boulevard Alignment) and provide protection for all neighborhoods, including Rocky Ripple. This would entail developing a tax levy/structure that pays for the improved levee construction and ongoing maintenance. The increase in taxes could possibly be offset by affected neighborhoods, including Rocky Ripple, no longer having to pay flood insurance.
- 3) Continued opposition to the Westfield Boulevard Alignment floodwall. The preferred path forward for Rocky Ripple is flood protection for Rocky Ripple, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. A letter stating the Town Council's position on this was provided to Mayor Hogsett, his staff, DPW, State and Federal elected officials, as well as neighboring communities in February 2016.

#### **DETAILS - RIVER BANK STABILIZATION/REPAIR ON THE EXISTING RIVER LEVEE**

Residents are encouraged to assist with this plan through physically removing and clearing off the levee in their area. This can be done by the homeowner or hiring assistance. Additionally, for those who do not live on the river but who are also protected by the current levee, assisting during volunteer days, participating on one of the committees, or assisting in financing the work, is welcome and needed.

This prong focuses on the "right now" and physical labor. Groups involved in this are Rocky Ripple's DIRT (volunteer) committee, DPW (Department of Public Works), KIB (Keep Indianapolis Beautiful) volunteers, Friends of the White River, students, church volunteers, and You as a resident.

#### Updates: (as they happened)

- a) During this spring and early summer the DIRT committee has had one work day and cleared off the river easement area at the end of Sunset and Ripple Road. (April)
- b) Town Councilors met with City Administration, DPW, and State legislators who walked the town's portion of the levee with the town board and the DIRT committee to identify trees that are a CURRENT problem and low areas on the levee. (May and June)
- c) DIRT committee removed a broken tree in the windstorm. (June)
- d) Town Councilors met with KIB representatives to obtain volunteers from Eli Lilly to assist with removing honeysuckle in the fall. (June)
- e) Town Councilors met with DPW and DNR (Department of Natural Resources) to walk the area and identify wildlife, water, and vegetation issues and to be updated on legal issues/documentation needed to start doing more work in this area. (July)
- f) Town Councilors worked with DPW to develop a written MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) between the city and Rocky Ripple to get the initial work done with the city's help removing trees. (July)

- g) Town Councilors secured a new (basically pro-bono) attorney to assist the town with legal issues concerning riverbank stabilization and other town issues. She edited the MOA and has started advising the board on things involved with this work. (July)

The next steps in this area are scheduled to take place during August and September. These will include:

- a) Making final edits, agreeing and signing the MOA with the city.
- b) Notifying nearby landowners of the planned tree removal on the levee close to them.
- c) City will remove 10-15 trees in the problem areas.
- d) City and local residents will assist with removing honeysuckle, etc.
- e) Eli Lilly volunteer work-day, along with local residents, and KIB will focus on Honeysuckle removal and re-seeding areas with grasses or other levee maintenance friendly plantings.

#### **DETAILS – LOCAL OPTION FOR RIVER LEVEE**

In order for a local option for a river levee that at least meets the 100 year flood protection requirements to work, two areas must be addressed: funding for the initiative and the actual levee improvement project. Requirements for each are listed below.

##### **Funding for the Local Option River Levee**

This area will need to include resident funding, tax increase, storm water, flood or drainage fees. This area will need to be long-term and will likely include county and state legal assistance to make it happen. DPW staff and state legislators are involved in these discussions and it will be an ongoing conversation until a funding source is created or designated.

##### Updates: (as they happened)

- a) Discussion with City administrative officials, and DPW staff on the steps needed to secure a portion of the storm water money residents are currently paying. (May/June)
- b) Town Councilors met with State Senator Greg Taylor and State Representatives Greg Porter and Ed DeLaney to start looking at a taxing levee similar to what was proposed and adopted by the state in relation to the Calumet River. (June)
- c) Town Councilors discussed proposed taxing levee for Rocky Ripple to start in 2017. (June/July)

The next steps in this area will likely take place during the fall. These will include:

- a) Meeting with city administration officials about the funding needed to maintain riverbank stabilization long-term in Rocky Ripple.
- b) Meeting with state legislators about needed legislation to create a funding levee or taxing unit.

##### **Levee improvement project:**

This could be completed through inclusion of the current ACE (Army Corps of Engineering) project or a local project that could include involvement of Butler University, the city of Indianapolis, local community residents, Rocky Ripple residents and state and or/federal groups. A local project would look at creative funding and design but must also meet Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) regulations.

Updates: (as they happened)

- a) Town Councilors met with city administrative staff, ACE staff, DPW and nearby communities concerning Rocky Ripple's desire to have the flood protection project (Westfield alignment) go along the river and not on the canal. (March)
- b) Town Councilors met with DPW staff to talk about a local project that could have various plans for houses and not a one-size fits-all approach. (April)
- c) Town Councilors discussed with other area community groups, the possibility of a local project and how they might also benefit from it. (May/June)

The next steps in this area will likely take place in August or September. These include:

- a) Completion of feasibility study for river levee being conducted by national Engineering firm. This study was initiated by Mayor Hogsett's administration and is expected to be complete in August.
- b) An announcement by the city noting whether they will stop the Westfield Alignment project or continue with the Ballard administration decision to move forward with it.
- c) An open discussion by the city about the feasibility study, research they are doing concerning prior studies in Rocky Ripple and whether they will be moving the current levee project from the canal to the river; or moving forward with a local project.

**Westfield Blvd. Alignment Update:**

At this time, ACE is continuing to move forward with the levee project along Westfield Blvd. Although the board has not heard from Mayor Joe Hogsett formally or in writing on the decision to continue along the canal with the project, city officials appear to be moving forward with this project because they do not want to lose the federal matching money.

Recently, Rocky Ripple Town Councilors participated in an ACE meeting that focused on historic structure mitigation and looked primarily at the design of the wall, as it would be built along the canal. It was noted during this meeting that DPW will pursue options other than sand-bagging 53<sup>rd</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> street bridges, such as pop-up gates. It was also noted, once again, that by law, a levee can't alter the flow of the river and cause additional flooding to occur in surrounding communities, such as has been rumored in relation to the Westfield project.

A more detailed plan will be listed as more specifics are decided on and agreed on in writing by the various agencies and organizations that are involved in this process. Town Councilors will remain involved whether or not the Westfield Blvd. Alignment is pursued.

## How you can help?

- Get involved physically (clearing brush, being on a committee) financially (collecting funds, writing community grants, participating in fund raisers) letter writing to city, state, federal legislators. Town Councilors are extremely active in this process and you can assist by doing one or more of these activities.
- Contact the Rocky Ripple Town Council:

Carla Gaff-Clark	<a href="mailto:cgaff@indy.rr.com">cgaff@indy.rr.com</a>
Mandy Redmond	<a href="mailto:redmond.mandy@gmail.com">redmond.mandy@gmail.com</a>
Jill Morris	<a href="mailto:jmorris004@Indy.rr.com">jmorris004@Indy.rr.com</a>

- Contact Local City/County Officials and Legislators for Rocky Ripple:

The Honorable Joe Hogsett, Mayor of Indianapolis  
2501 City-County Building  
200 E. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Indianapolis City/County Councilor Joe Simpson  
200 E. Washington Street, Suite T241  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

State Senator Greg Taylor  
200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
[S33@iga.in.gov](mailto:S33@iga.in.gov)

State Representative Gregory Porter  
200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
[H96@iga.in.gov](mailto:H96@iga.in.gov)

We hope you have found this information helpful.

Sincerely,

Carla-Gaff-Clark                      Jill Morris                      Mandy Redmond