



Township of Belleville *New Jersey*

Media Contact:
Chuck O'Donnell
908-789-0700
Chuck@jaffecom.com

Mayor Melham Enlists State Officials to Mitigate Third River Flooding in Belleville Neighborhoods

BELLEVILLE, NJ – December 6, 2021 – Mayor Michael Melham led a contingent of officials that included State Sen. Teresa Ruiz and members of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on a tour of Belleville neighborhoods that routinely flood from the Third River.

The group, which also included Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo Jr., Assemblywoman Shanique Speight, Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin, Belleville Deputy Mayor Naomy DePeña and Councilmember Thomas Graziano, navigated dirt paths, pushed back branches and surveyed streams to get a better understanding of the chronic issue.

The tour was convened last week, after Melham reached out to Ruiz for help.

Melham said the goal is to mitigate future flooding issues for residents of Fairway Avenue, Suzanne Court, Carolyn Road, Dorothea Terrace and the Bridgebrook condo development.

On the ground in the immediate aftermath of the Ida flooding, this was Melham's fourth time visiting these neighborhoods. A few weeks back, Melham invited and welcomed representatives of the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, who committed to assisting with debris cleanup on the river.

This time, the lawmakers and DEP representatives spoke with residents about the recurring flooding, as well as possible solutions.

"Our leaders on the county and state level responded to our call to focus on this critical issue," Melham said. "While we can make a list of the problems related to Third River flooding, the first-hand accounts of residents provide a much better understanding of what happens when the floodwaters rise here."

The Third River originates in the Great Notch Reservoir in Woodland Park and snakes through many municipalities. It runs through the heart of Belleville, and its banks spill over during severe weather events, such as when the remnants of Hurricane Ida crashed on September 1.

DEP representatives said they would review flood maps and surveys of the area through the lens of new information gleaned during the walking tour.

“The DEP intends to come back to Belleville with recommendations and suggestions as to where they may be able to help,” Melham said. “We look forward to their expert analysis and suggested remedies. Our residents need help; and Belleville is committed to working with all agencies who can deliver assistance to our residents.”

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