

January 26, 2011

## Walton Flood Commission Eying Chances to Alleviate Flooding

By Glenn Graves

WALTON — The Walton Flood Commission, comprised of local and county officials working in partnership with the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), has identified some projects that may lessen the threat of flooding or, at least, lessen the impact of some flooding in the village. Meeting last Wednesday, the commission discussed a few flood mitigation projects that may be eligible for state or federal grant funding and took a look at the flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had recently released.

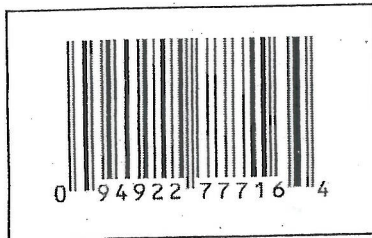
One area where work is already planned; the vacant lot between Mead Street and Delaware Street, behind the County Store, will have

13 acres of fill removed, which is expected to recreate the flood plain that was there before the fill was added to make it more attractive for commercial development. A grant has already been approved to purchase the property.

Another area where some of the floodplain may be restored is between Water Street and the west branch of the Delaware River. The village and the SWCD have applied for a grant to conduct a study that would determine how much of the fill can be removed and still allow the possibility of some economic development along Water Street.

Graydon Dutcher, the stream management program coordinator at the SWCD, also explained that there is a section along West Brook, outside the village, where the district would like to stabilize the bank and reestablish the floodplain. He said two of the affected homeowners have agreed to the project, but the third homeowner has not responded to any requests to allow the project. Dutcher said the eroding slope is depositing excessive sediment into the brook, which is being carried downstream

Please See **Walton**, page 4



## Walton... Continued from front page

and deposited where the brook meets the west branch. Since there is no floodplain for West Brook in the village, the plan is to create one outside the village to catch woody debris and sediment before it enters the narrow channel that has been walled inside the village. Rick Weidenbach, executive director of the SWCD, explained, "It would put the flood way back into something more manageable."

The commission also looked at the possibility of lessening the impact that the Stockton Avenue side of the Bridge Street bridge has on flood waters. The approach has been built up and defects water back toward the Delaware Street area. The commission decided to look at the practicality of installing flood tubes, similar to those used to channel water away from the bridge near state Route 10 in DeLancey.

The commission also took a look at the proposed flood maps that have been released by FEMA. Properties located within the flood plains and flood ways will require flood insurance. Mike Jastremski, an environmental planner with the Delaware County Planning Department, explained, "As we get closer to these becoming the law of the land, we ought to be familiar with them." He said there is no date set for when the maps will be considered officially adopted. "We're waiting for the appeals and protests to be decided."

Jastremski said the Delaware

County Department of Public Works (DPW) is appealing the placing of over 50 county bridges under the 100-year flood elevations. Five of six of those bridges are in Walton, he said, and that during flooding events, the bridge decks were not under water, according to DPW Commissioner Wayne Reynolds. He said it is unclear whether other properties on the map would be affected if the flood elevations were altered, due to the county's appeal.

Weidenbach pointed out to the commission that every area identified as a flood plain, should be thought of as part of the stream that dissipates its energy during flooding events. He pointed to the area of West Brook where the channel has been narrowed and contained by stacked stone and said that, "Old timers will tell you that Griswold Street was once a swamp, without all these structures. The fallacy is that gravel is causing flooding. The truth is we have built in part of the stream, the flood plain."

The next meeting of the commission is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 9:30 a.m., when the request for proposal to implement the Third Brook study grant will be reviewed, before going to publication. The bridge at West Street and Delaware Street, in front of the Kraft plant, is also to be discussed further at February's meeting.