



CITY OF PEEKSKILL
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa
Mayor



Peekskill Central Avenue Project Easily Withstands Nature's Wrath.

New Infrastructure Contains Tumultuous McGregor's Brook, Turns Trouble Spot into Showpiece With Stunning Waterfall.

Once Vulnerable Street Stays Sound and Unflooded; New Park Untouched By Storm.

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, April 18, 2006

**Contact: Mayor John Testa
914-734-4105**

PEEKSKILL, NY— Shrugging off nature's fury, one of Peekskill's largest, most complex and most creative public works projects in decades proved itself in spectacular fashion during the recent Noreaster.

“Creative design and effective implementation have turned what was once one of Peekskill's biggest trouble spots into a civic and recreational resource,” says Mayor John Testa. “This kind of approach is what our city's Revitalization Plan is all about,” he says.

Peekskill's Central Avenue runs from the core of its downtown to the city's waterfront. Underneath it flows McGregor's Brook, a body of water that burst from its confinement during Hurricane Floyd, ripping out hundreds of feet of roadway at the street's lower end. Wear and erosion of a key culvert threatened to cause even more damage at the street's upper end a few years later.

Repairing Central Avenue proved a significant challenge—one of the city’s Department of Public Works met with enthusiasm and creativity. A special rectangular culvert was used at the street’s lower end to avoid costly disturbance of utilities.

An even more innovative approach was followed at the street’s upper end, where, instead of just replacing a galvanized pipe that had outlived its useful life, director of city services, department of public works David Greener took advantage of the situation to enlarge one parking lot, create another, unearth a once-buried McGregor’s Brook for more than 200 feet, fashion a new home for the city’s Garden Club, develop the site for the new Patriot’s Park, and create a spectacular new 30 foot waterfall.

Best of all, most of the \$2 million-plus project’s cost was paid for by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) because much of the damage was done by the extraordinarily heavy rains that took place in April, 2005 and because significant flood control improvement was achieved by the effort.

When a fire company was located at Central Avenue’s base, its members were known as the Dock Rats, in part because of the frequency with which they were flooded out. Even with the extreme rains of the past few days, there was no significant flooding at Central Avenue’s base. And despite a near explosive flow of water the re-opened segment of McGregor’s Brook and the new waterfall withstood the torrent without incurring any damage at all.

FEMA normally only pays for projects that directly replicate what already existed. But Greener was able to persuade the agency that relocating the brook added to the community’s safety and to the durability of the reconstruction itself. Top-quality high-pressure concrete conduits close to a foot thick were used to hold the brook—a huge

change from the thin-walled galvanized pipe that was used in the 1970s and which wore out in almost exactly its designed lifespan of 30 years.

Now Peekskill has a conduit that will contain its brook for decades if not centuries, and a dramatic new landscaping feature as well—and the entire system has proven itself against some of the worst nature can hand out. More than 60 new much needed parking spaces were also created as part of the project.

“Peekskill has some superlative employees. It’s wonderful to see what they can do when you give them the opportunity. This project has produced a multitude of benefits for the city, and it now shows it can withstand some of the most severe tests the elements can hand out,” Testa says. “That’s great news for Peekskill and its residents.”

For more information, call Mayor John Testa at 914-734-4105.

-END-