



CITY OF PEEKSKILL

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa
Mayor

Storm Water Project Passes Key Milestone As Nelson Avenue Intersection is Opened.

*McGregory's Brook, Which has Caused Much Damage in Recent
Years, Now Runs Through Pressure-Tight Concrete Culvert.*

Redirection of Brook Makes Streets Safer, Reduces Storm Water Threat, Dramatically Increases Parking,
Creates New Scenic Landmark at Minimal Cost to City.

For Immediate Release

Monday, Nov. 28, 2005

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PEEKSKILL, NY—This city is both safer and more beautiful as a key repair and restoration project moves into its final phases.

In early November, McGregor's Brook was redirected out of the crumbling, collapsing galvanized steel culvert that had held it into a new, concrete culvert that can withstand intense pressure and should last indefinitely. Later in the month, work on rerouting the many utilities that lay under the street was completed and the road was paved over.

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This means that a number of streets that were blocked as a result of construction are now open, most importantly the intersection of Park Street and Nelson Avenue. Plans are to have Central Avenue open in the next few weeks.

McGregory's Brook runs virtually the East/West length of Peekskill. It has played a crucial role in Peekskill. Its energy powered the mills that put the city on the road to the industrial revolution, and also made it a target for three brutal British attacks during the revolutionary war.

For much of its length, McGregor's Brook runs under Peekskill's Park Street and Central Avenue. In the 1970s, the Brook was channeled through an eight-foot diameter galvanized steel culvert with a design life of 30 years. In late 2004, the steel culvert began showing serious signs of decay and collapse, with roadways and sidewalks shifting and large sinkholes forming.

Director of City Services David Greener responded quickly with a highly creative plan that rerouted the Brook to run alongside Central Avenue instead of underneath it. This dramatically cut the project's cost and also reduced the amount of time needed to accomplish the work.

Because the project also reduced the threat of floods in an area that had experienced repeated inundations, Greener was also able to secure vital funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the effort.

Because the project involved both digging and blasting through layers of rock, the key intersection of Nelson and Central Avenues has been closed for several weeks. Once the brook was redirected, the street was filled in and the new asphalt laid.

Redirecting the water has also demonstrated the true potential of Greener's vision. Instead of running hidden underneath the street, McGregory's Brook now flows exposed for 300 feet and then tumbles down a lovely cascade into a beautiful and thickly wooded ravine. In coming months, the Brook's banks will become the new home of the Peekskill Garden Club, and an attractive bridge will reach across its sides.

"Creativity is a valuable commodity in City Officials, and it's wonderful to see what Dave Greener has done with McGregory's Brook. He's given us a spectacular new water feature and created important new parking facilities for the Police Department as well," says Peekskill Mayor John Testa. "This is an example of local government at its best."

Formerly, the Peekskill Police parking area was on top of an embankment surrounded by sloping stone walls. These walls had to be torn down when the new culvert was installed. By replacing the sloping walls with vertical ones, Greener dramatically increased the number of parking space. The walls will be faced with stone to ensure they fit in with Peekskill's 19th century streetscape.

While the final landscaping and touchup of the Central Avenue site may take some time, its impact should last for the foreseeable future, with barren, empty lots replaced by new resources for citizens and visitors alike. The project is one of the largest undertaken by the Department of Public Works in the last several decades.

"Nature's been throwing us a lot of curveballs lately, but this new facility should be able to withstand virtually everything she dishes out. And since we're showing her off instead of covering her up, hopefully she'll give us a break," says Greener.

“Signs are that the local wildlife is already making use of the channel, and we’re very pleased with that,” Greener says.

“At the same time, we’ve created so much new parking it’s as if we’ve added a new floor to the Nelson Avenue garage. This should make life easier for everyone, especially the police department and the seniors who make such intensive use of the Field Library and the Neighborhood Center.”

City officials understand the difficulties the project caused residents and local businesses, and are extremely grateful for the patience they have show. Highly detailed photographs of the project and of the interior of the damaged culvert are available upon request.

For more information contact David Greener at 914-734-4135.

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