

nj municipalities

Official Publication of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities

January 2026



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–NJLM President Sean Elwell
Mayor, Elsinboro



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Mayors' Joint Efforts Win Planning Award

Barrier Island Flood Consortium recognized for achievement in planning

*Frank Pannucci, Borough Administrator, Bay Head and
Borough of Point Pleasant*

In 2024, the mayors of 10 municipalities along the Northern Barrier Island in Ocean County formed the Barrier Island Flood Consortium, a strategic alliance that has received an Achievement in Planning award from the New Jersey Planning Officials organization for their efforts.

These mayors had been informally gathering at their Barrier Island Mayors Association meetings. They all recognized that flooding was a regional issue and not just a specific town issue. Mayor Robert A. Sabosik of Point Pleasant Borough and Mayor William Curtis of Bay Head suggested that they should try and create unified solutions with a regional approach. All 10 mayors agreed to officially create the consortium. Each of these towns has historically always flooded, but not as often as they experience today. Each storm is more impactful than in years past and nuisance flooding is a regular event now.

"While devastating weather events like Superstorm Sandy are rare, our area is plagued by back bay flooding caused by tidal cycles and wind patterns," Mayor Sabosik said, adding, "Torrential rainfall, high tides, and winds often disrupt daily life and the problem keeps growing more frequently and severe as time goes on and storms intensify."

Like-Minded Municipalities

The mayors of this group decided that a realistic and regional approach could help in the long term and formed the consortium with Point Pleasant Borough the lead agency of the group. Each participating town put in starting funds that have gone towards an attorney and engineer to start putting the wheels in motion and to go after grant money for research and subsequent construction."



Brick Township Flooding (Image shared by a resident).



Mayors holding the New Jersey Planning Officials Achievement in Planning Award from L-R Mantoloking Mayor Lance White, Seaside Park Mayor John Peterson, Seaside Heights Mayor Tony Vaz, Colliers Engineering's Scott MacFadden, Point Pleasant Borough Mayor Robert Sabosik, Point Pleasant Borough & Bay Head Administrator Frank Pannucci, Bay Head Mayor Bill Curtis, Point Pleasant Beach Administrator Joe Michigan, Brick Township Mayor Lisa Crate, Berkeley Township Mayor John Bacchione.

Point Pleasant Borough Mayor Robert A. Sabosik noted, "This group has been sharing our successes and plights in the hopes that being like-minded municipalities at the Jersey Shore we could learn from each other on a myriad of different issues. Since all our flooding comes from the same sources, we formed a more formal group. Each of the mayors asked their respective town councils to vote via resolution to form the Barrier Island Flood Consortium. The towns are Point Pleasant Borough, Point Pleasant Beach, Bay Head, Mantoloking, Brick Township, Toms River, Lavallette, Seaside Heights, Seaside Park and Berkeley Township.

Flooding is something that is going to happen no matter what due to our geographic area, it cannot realistically be stopped, but by working collaboratively all our towns combined can come up with some regional approaches for effective flood mitigation efforts to help control it and better our quality of life."

Bay Head Mayor and NJLM Executive Board Member Bill Curtis mentioned, "Each one of our municipalities faces the same kind of flooding. We have the Atlantic Ocean, Barnegat Bay, and other bodies of

water and we live on the Barrier Island. While we are not oblivious to the whims of Mother Nature, we

know that by working together, we can come up with worthwhile and effective ways to at least mitigate



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Mayors' Joint Efforts Win Planning Award

flooding in our towns.”

“In Bay Head, the Council and I along with our very active Environmental Commission have been studying this issue and voraciously going after grant money for flood mitigation efforts. Those efforts, along with the Consortium’s, will foster collaboration and will eliminate redundancies. This sharing of information will lead to implementing coordinated remedies,”

Mayor Curtis added.

Seaside Park Mayor John Peterson said he is proud of these beginning efforts. “We all hear from our residents about flooding, and we are all doing our best with mitigation efforts. The problem is when the wind blows the bay and ocean water and the tides are high, the best drainage systems in the world can’t do much if they are already underwater.

“The group is looking at funding on a regional basis that could potentially pay for large-scale, environmentally conscious solutions to stem the flooding at its source,” he added. “Because this regional approach aligns with how both the State and Federal governments are looking for agencies to join and work together, the New Jersey Planning Officials recently recognized our efforts and the unique approach we have endeavored upon as a group by giving the Consortium the 2025 New Jersey Planning Officials Achievements in Planning Award. To my knowledge, there isn’t a group like this in the entire state working collaboratively to solve a regional problem.”

**We have great
Mayors who know
how to think outside
the box and aren’t
shy working together.**

Mantoloking Mayor Lance White said, “Each of these Mayors is committed to the group’s goal and to be recognized by the New Jersey Planning Officials (NJPO), especially at such an early stage of the group, is validation that we are moving in the right direction. These are people that live and breathe municipal planning, and we were honored to receive this award.”

Seaside Heights Mayor Tony Vaz expanded on his colleagues’ thoughts, adding, “We want to be realistic about this. We don’t want ideas that have no chance of coming to fruition. We want real projects with real results. None of us want to do endless studies with nothing concrete to show for it. All our towns are committed to this bipartisan think tank.”

Point Pleasant Beach Mayor Doug Vitale emphasized the importance of this group. “Point Pleasant Beach is

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the top of the inland waterway. We get impacted by the Atlantic Ocean, Manasquan River, Barnegat Bay, and we also have several smaller bodies of water that when the already high water table rises further, we get just as much flooding as every other town," he said, adding, "It's going to take all of us and our combined efforts to come up with some out of the box thinking. All our residents work, play, shop and drive through all our municipalities daily so it's great to have all the mayors and towns working together."

Brick Township Mayor Lisa Crate shared that "Brick Township is proud to stand with our neighboring communities through the Barrier Island Mayors Consortium. By working together, we can better address the serious flooding challenges facing the Barrier Island and the entire bay area. Collaboration is the strongest path forward, and united action gives all our communities the best chance to make real, positive progress for everyone involved. Receiving an

award is an honor, but it's just the beginning of the work we need to continue to do to serve all our residents now and well into the future."


Berkeley Township Mayor John Bacchione expressed that "working together is the only workable solution to address regional flooding problems on both the barrier island side of the Barnegat Bay and our mainland towns. Local watersheds and tidal waters know no municipal boundaries. We are hopeful these current efforts of working together will protect our communities in the future."

Formulating Plans

The group has hired Colliers Engineering as our engineering firm and Jean Cipriani as our attorney. Mayor Robert A. Sabosik continued, "Their first task was to start compiling all the flood data and projects our respective towns have done on our own. Currently, we are applying for various grants to pay for the planning and research and then we'll keep

applying for actual construction."

"Some of our mayors have suggested that potential solutions could be a series of storm pumps that will pump water back out into the bay, higher bulkhead requirements, flood gates and possible dredging of the bay itself. In Point, we have been working with the Barnegat Bay Partnership trying to revitalize our living shoreline along our marshes and upgrading drainage systems. While not on the Barrier Island, what happens there affects us because of the waterways that border us," he said. "That water, mainly from Barnegat Bay, raises our water tables. Some of what we've learned and done will no doubt help spark the creativity of our professionals when combining our work with what other towns have done."

We have great Mayors who know how to think outside the box and aren't shy working together. The Northern Barrier Island towns will be all the better due to their efforts." 

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