

Edgewater considers grade raise at Veterans Field

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EDGEWATER VIEW

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EDGEWATER — The borough will consider a proposal in the coming weeks to raise the grade elevation of Veterans Field to new, federally suggested heights, a procedure experts say would buffer the park from major storms while adding \$300,000 to \$400,000 to the cost of remediating its contaminated soil.

Neglia Engineering, the firm responsible for the field's remediation plans and designs, based its recommendation on newly issued advisory base flood elevation maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which will replace pre-Hurricane Sandy mapping in one to two years.

The maps set new elevation standards for residents and businesses looking to build or rebuild in flood hazard areas, particularly those hit hard by the hurricane, but offer no specific requirements for an open parcel of land like Veterans Field.

David Juzmeski, a representative from Neglia, said applying the new standards to the park would guarantee protection in a "100-year-old" storm and prevent floodwaters from inundating the field in more common weather events as well.

FEMA estimates that future storms could bring waves a foot and a half to three feet high, according to Juzmeski, with over three feet in additional storm surge in certain parts of the field. Veterans Field saw a storm surge of more than 12 feet during Hurricane Sandy.

If the borough agrees to build the one- to two-foot cushion for the park, estimated to require 30,000 cubic yards of extra fill, it will need to increase the perimeter of the retaining walls and reset some completed drainage work as well, said Juzmeski.

The additional work would add up to \$400,000 to the \$9.7 million price tag of remediation and could delay a late fall opening until even later in the year.

The mayor and council said they would weigh the pros and cons before taking a definitive stance on the recommendation, but borough attorney Philip Boggia immediately expressed his support on March 18.

"It wouldn't make much sense for the borough to spend as much money as it's spending to improve the field without protecting itself against another storm," he said. "It seems like a prudent thing to do."

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