



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
MEMORIAL CIVIC CENTER
7725 WEST NORTH AVENUE
WAUWATOSA, WI 53213
Telephone: (414) 479-8917
Fax: (414) 479-8989

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, June 10, 2008 – 6:00 p.m. – Council Chambers

PRESENT: Alds. Birschel, Donegan, Ewerdt (via speaker phone), Hanson, Herzog, Jay, Maher, McBride, Meaux, Nikceovich, Organ, Purins, Stepaniak, Walsh

EXCUSED: Alds. Krol, Treis

ALSO Mayor J. Didier; J. Archambo, City Admin.; A. Kesner, City Atty.; B. Aldana, Asst. City Atty./HR Dir.; Police Chief B. Weber; Fire Chief D. Redman; Asst. Fire Chief M. Anton; Asst. Fire Chief J. Hevey; W. Kappel, Public Works Dir.; W. Wehrley, City Engineer; N. Welch, Comm. Devel. Dir.; Dr. N. Kreuser, Health Officer; J. Wojcehowicz, Water Supt.; T. Otzelberger, Info. Sys. Mgr.

Ald. Maher in the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

Update regarding activation of the Emergency Operations Center following the storms of June 7-8, 2008, ongoing city response and potential for additional storm related activity

Mr. Archambo reported that the city is still in continuing operations. They are monitoring the weather continuously because any added amount of rain at this point will create more damage. On Saturday, June 7th there was a severe thunderstorm. By Sunday, June 8th, 6.47 inches of rain had fallen by the city's estimate. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) measured about 7.25 inches of rainfall during that time. Because of this there has been a dramatic spike in river levels and the sewer system is over capacity.

Mr. Archambo reported that these events have prompted Governor Doyle to declare a State of Emergency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will determine if there will be a federal level declaration. He went on to say that initial activities on the part of city staff and crews included blocking off streets, diverting sanitary sewers and dumping excess water into streams. On Sunday they called in emergency personnel including department heads. The emergency personnel on the street continued with handling the sewer backups and city personnel took over giving out emergency information. The health department initiated the Information & Referral line which can be reached at 479-8939. The Public Works Facility is open and will continue to be open until 8:00 p.m. for the remainder of the week for emergency drop offs. They have had numerous reports of property damage so far totaling approximately \$4.2 million in damage. Individuals can contact the Information & Referral line or the building department for damage inspections.

Mr. Archambo stressed that they are striving to have all damaged materials off the street as soon as possible. If anyone has damaged property they can call the Information & Referral line and public works at their number 471-8422. Although the damage is extensive, he didn't believe it will be as bad as during the flood 15 years ago.

Mr. Archambo noted that the city currently has projects designed to address problems on Ruby Avenue and Meinecke Avenue as well as the County Grounds with detention ponds on Swan Blvd. and Underwood Creek.

The following people appeared to voice their concerns regarding their neighborhood encompassing W. Ruby Avenue, N. 107th and W. Congress Street.

Greg Stano, 4430 N. 108th Street
Robin Grover, 10233 W. Ruby Avenue
Jill and Joe Petryczkiewicz, 4411 N. 107th Street
Paul and Heather Daly, 4464 N. 107th Street
Joshua Brady, 10403 W. Ruby Avenue

They had the following concerns:

- Safety issues regarding gas lines
- Flooding conditions on N. 107th and W. Congress Streets
- Flooding in individual homes either through the sewer or basement windows
- Requests that the water be diverted from their homes
- Requests that flood damaged property be picked up by the city sooner
- Complaints that the city did not respond to their calls
- Overwhelming sewage backup into basements
- Frustration at the perception that the city has never really addressed the problems in their area
- Frustration that a Flood Plan was never implemented
- Demands that the city to be held accountable
- Demands that the city do something for them

Mr. Archambo began to address the concerns by saying that if there are any problems with electrical service WE Energies should be contacted at 800-662-4797. If there are any problems with gas lines the gas company should be contacted at 800-261-5325. The building department can be contacted if there are any structural issues at 479-8907.

Ald. Ewerdt reported that he encountered a sink hole that was being worked on by the police and emergency crews on Beverly Place and Menomonee River Parkway. He wanted to know if there was any way the city could do a citywide sweep of every city street to see if there are other conditions like that out there. Mr. Archambo explained that there were 2 sink holes on county roads. One has been fixed and the other is being worked on at present. Mr. Kappel added that as things are reported they respond immediately for repairs. His department contacted the county about these particular hazards and that is why the repairs are being made.

Mr. Wehrley addressed the project for Ruby Avenue. He said the time frame is for the construction to begin in October. He stressed that his department will be happy to come out and inspect each property where the resident makes a request. He explained that widespread flooding is different from the occasional sewer backup. Some people may have water coming in their basement windows. Some people may have sewers backing up into their basements. Some residents may have sump pumps that burn out. Overwhelming flooding is the cause of all of these different types of problems. There are different solutions for different problems. A plug in the floor drain is not a good solution because there is the potential that the floor will buckle from the pressure causing major structural damage.

Ms. Welch addressed the residents' concerns about the cost of repairs and cleanup. She explained that the city is currently collecting damage reports from homeowners which will be submitted to the county and from there the state. Hopefully these damage reports will meet the threshold for federal assistance. The federal government will ultimately determine the manner of payment and the distribution. She cautioned that with the magnitude of the disaster unfolding in so many states, there will only be a certain amount of

money to go around. It will remain to be seen how much money will be allotted to Wauwatosa for the cost of recovery.

Mr. Archanbo concluded with assurances that the city will continue to deal with the aftermath of the current and any future storms. He reiterated that residents can call to get a damage assessment and the city will continue to monitor the water levels and the sewers

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk

svh