

Flood problems or flood solutions where are we now?

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney

Wednesday, 22 February 2012 10:58



As promised, the Forward Times is following up with its readers about the flooding issues that plagued many of our residents on January 9th.

In the article, “Rebuild Our Communities Now! Flooding in Houston Still a Major Problem,” we discussed the many residents, particularly the elderly and low-income of Southeast Houston, were the unfortunate recipients of unexpected flooding in their homes and apartments.

We also discussed the major need to address the infrastructure challenges in Houston and the voter-passed referendum that many now know as Rebuild Houston. More information concerning Rebuild Houston and how it affects Houstonians will be covered at a later date, but we wanted to know what things are being done to immediately assist impacted residents of the January 9th flood.

Councilwoman Wanda Adams has since held a town hall meeting on January 17th to discuss the flooding issue and to share what was being done to remedy the situation.

Councilwoman Adams indicated that information was sent to the State of Texas to declare the area a federal disaster and flooded-out residents would receive assistance once the governor declared it and signed off on the paperwork.

We are awaiting documentation to find out the status of the federal disaster area request, but in

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the interim, the Forward Times has been bombarded with calls from people who had no flood insurance and wanted to know where to go and what to do. Others simply wanted answers for what they believed to be a disaster that only affected those in Southeast Houston, as a result of construction in the area and other contributing factors.

At-Large City Councilman Stephen Costello visited with the Forward Times to talk about Rebuild Houston and what is being done about addressing the infrastructure issues, particularly in the affected areas.

“There is never going to be a guarantee of no flooding,” said Costello. “The City of Houston will do everything it can to keep water out of your house. We encourage everyone to buy flood insurance, because it’s the cheapest kind of insurance you can buy.”

For many elderly and low-income residents, however, even the cheapest of flood insurance can be expensive when you are on a fixed income or unemployed in this tough economy.

Costello stated that the city of Houston has flood-prone communities that it needs to work in first and it will be important that public works comes up with a plan that addresses those communities first.

Every black resident of Houston should attend the combined public meetings that the City of Houston will conduct concerning the City’s FY2012 Annual Operating Budget Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and 2012 Annual Consolidated Plan.

Since 1984, the City has held public meetings to obtain citizen input before preparing the operating budget and capital improvement plan. This is your opportunity to be proactive and not reactive, by allowing your voice and your recommendations to be heard and reviewed.

“I strongly encourage residents in the affected areas to attend the CIP meetings that are coming up,” said Costello. “If you can’t attend the CIP meeting, reach out to your district council member to have them understand the needs of your community.”

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Here's the schedule of CIP meetings. The first one is February 13 and they run through March 22.

The link for the schedule is www.houstontx.gov/cao/2012cip.html but the Forward Times has taken the liberty of listing the respective important dates concerning the council member representing your district.

The City of Houston will provide reasonable accommodations to citizens with disabilities/special needs upon request. Citizens are encouraged to call the Citizens' Assistance Office at 832.393.0955 for arrangements.

As they say, the squeaky wheel gets the grease. If you ever wanted to have your voice heard and be a part of sharing your needs, comments and suggestions to the city about needed services and improvements that should be included in the budget, you must attend the meeting in your respective district. {comments on}