

Summary Of Long Term Community Recovery Strategy Public Forums July 2013

Frustrations

- Flood recovery progress perceived as being too slow (i.e. buyout program).
- Too many restrictions on flood relief funding for abatement/recovery activities.
 - “Every idea being suggested seems to be shot down”.
- No one is listening to the flooded residents.
 - “More people would come if they felt their ideas (dredge the river) were being used”.
- Perceived simple solutions are not being implemented (e.g. dredging of river).
- A lack of communication between the government agencies and residents.
 - “Town officials do not know how to help people, they do not know what to tell people when they call”.
- Middle income homeowners are the worse off.
 - “Where is our share?”
- Hearing different things from different federal and state agencies.
 - “I call and they say ‘There is nothing we can do for you’”.
 - “We can’t make decisions”.

Questions/Clarifications

- Still quite a bit of confusion of both how the flood occurred and how the various governmental agencies are responding.
- The ReUnion website allows for residents to make suggestions and is simple to sign up for and use.
- Changes to the aquifer from loss of ‘wet’ industries may be an issue in regards to flooding due to a rise in the water table.
- There is a sense of blame that other flood protection measures and other new development have aggravated or increased the flood damage in other areas.
 - “Murphy’s Gravel Pit in Vestal”
 - Lourdes Hospital flood wall
- Residents should contact their state and federal level representatives to change restrictive funding-policies.
- Money already put back into properties reduces “unmet need” and can’t be reimbursed.
 - “These program penalize homeowners for doing the right thing”.
- Buyout neighborhoods will lose much of their character, especially since the Town is unsure about the final number of abandoned properties that are not being bought out.
- The BAE property may take years to be demolished/rebuilt.
- Flood repair applications will be available once buyout is finished, but so far, applicants must meet the HUD income guidelines.
- A multitude of government agencies are involved and written recovery plans are required in order to access funds from various agencies and to coordinate long-term planning with other agencies.

Suggestions

- Replace existing flood damaged and vacant buildings with Senior/Student Housing.
- Utilize old schools for Low Income Housing.
- Drainage impacts from future development must be minimized.
- Home owner tax benefits (i.e. reduced assessment for flood prone properties).
- Government incentives/funding for repairs instead of buyouts.
- Prepare a contact lists for government representatives.
- Endwell Street Infrastructure.
- Build an Adult/Senior Sports Complex at BAE site.
- Build an ice rink.
- Boland Park boat launch.
- Provide portable phone charging stations for flood neighborhoods where power is out.
- Mimic aspects of the Oklahoma Red Dirt Ready Plan.
- Retrofit and re-use IBM Buildings
 - Remove buildings east of McKinley
- Planned community at old BAE site.
- Provide funds to businesses and homeowners that stayed.
- Refit KMART plaza for ice skating rink, town square/drive in theater.
- Outlet mall at BAE site.
- Mobile home park at BAE site.
- Plant trees at riverbank to reduce erosion.
- Construct temporary sewer storage at BAE site where main trunk line is located.
- Separate storm and sanitary sewers where connected.
- Redundant power for pumping stations (water and sewer).
- Dredge the river.
- Allow flooding in less populated areas (i.e. previous buyout properties).
- Pre-plan FEMA trailer sites that are safe and accessible.
- Put caps on drainage pipes to prevent river from backing up into neighborhoods.
- Create walking trails/recreational opportunities on buyout properties.