

**City of West Orange
Monday, June 22, 2020
Special Workshop Session**

**West Orange Community Center
2700 Western Avenue (rear entrance)
West Orange, Texas
1:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Roy McDonald Dale Dardeau Randy Branch
Shirley Bonnin

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Alex Parker Theresa Van Meter Rex Peveto
Mike Stelly

OTHERS PRESENT:

Billy Frederick Matt Struwe

Call to Order

Mayor McDonald called the workshop to order at 1:00 p.m. Council Member Branch gave the invocation.

Regular Session

The mayor explained that the purpose of this workshop was to discuss the requirements for communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program, as well as the Community Rating System Program, which provides insurance discounts for communities that adopt higher regulatory flood standards.

Mr. Parker then introduced Ms. Yi Chan, a Texas Water Development Board staff member, who joined the meeting via video conferencing. She stated that she was going to speak on the National Flood Insurance Program in general and on floodplain management requirements. The City of West Orange does participate in the Program, which is run by FEMA.

In order to participate, a city or community must agree to adopt a floodplain ordinance and adopt certain regulations that they will practice, and in return the Federal Government will make flood insurance available to that city or community. She explained that there are several different "players" in this process. First, FEMA sets the national minimum standards for floodplain management regulations. (These standards are addressed in the City's ordinance.) They also continue to research best floodplain construction practices. They provide the flood maps which help determine where you can or cannot build, as well as the insurance side of things. They make the insurance available, and they make staff and assistance available.

In the middle is the state coordinating agency, in this case the Texas Water Development Board. They are a non-regulatory agency. Their main goal is to provide education and technical guidance. They have several different grant programs available for homes that are repetitively flooded – to elevate homes or to turn them into open space. They also have community outreach programs.

Finally are the cities and communities. Their first role is to adopt and implement a floodplain management ordinance that meets or exceeds the national flood insurance program standards. Part of this will include approval or denial of floodplain development permits. Any new development occurring within a floodplain must be permitted. These must also be inspected to make sure they are complying with the local ordinance, and records of this floodplain development must be maintained.

At the current time, Ms. Chan reported that the City of West Orange has 504 flood insurance policies covering \$104,000,000 in structures and contents. Historically, there have been over 400 paid losses exceeding \$18,000,000. She has on record that the City of West Orange has been participating in this program since 1983.

Mayor McDonald asked Ms. Chan if she has reviewed the current ordinance to see if everything is in it that should be. She replied that she has not yet, but certainly can. Chief Stelly asked her that since this ordinance was updated in January, 2008, would she expect there to be significant

changes since that date. She replied that, other than the new maps, "probably not." Once the new maps are finalized, she stated that the ordinance should be amended to reflect adoption of a "specific" map.

Ms. Chan then went on to explain "Community Assistance Visits" which are done on a routine basis every five to ten years or so. They will visit the community – drive the floodplain, walk through the City's permitting process, ask to review the past five years' permits for developments within the floodplain, and make sure all of the documentation has been done and the City's ordinance is being followed. Non-compliance with the ordinance and the permitting and inspection processes could result in FEMA dropping West Orange from the program and then citizens would no longer be eligible to buy flood insurance.

One of the issues Mr. Parker foresees as being a problem for some residents is that any renovations done within a floodplain with a cost exceeding 50% of the market value of the home must first be brought into compliance before a permit for the renovations can be issued. This includes elevation...which is very expensive to do. Ms. Chan stated that there is up to \$30,000 built into flood insurance policies toward the cost of elevating homes. She added that there are also grants available for "Flood Mitigation Assistance" through FEMA and TDEM.

Mr. Parker also reported that any new construction done will also have to meet all elevation requirements.

There were no further questions for Ms. Chan. She excused herself from the meeting. After some general discussion over what had been discussed the meeting adjourned.

Announcements

Mayor McDonald then announced that the next Council meeting was scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, the mayor adjourned the meeting at 1:58 p.m.



Roy McDonald, Mayor

ATTEST:



Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

