

**Cloverdale Flooding
Information Meeting
Held July 11, 2013 at Cloverdale Community Hall**

Attendance: 40 (approximate), Signed-in: 33

City of Edmonton Presenter: Todd Wyman, Director, Drainage Planning.
Councillor Ben Henderson was present at the beginning of the meeting, but gave “regrets” for needing to leave after approximately ½ hour in order to attend another event that he was previously committed to.

Presentation

The following is a brief summary of the presentation made by Mr. Wyman. The actual Power Point show can be viewed at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention (click on “Public Consultations”).

- The meeting was scheduled to:
 - Listen to residents
 - Provide an avenue for exchange of information
 - Discuss what reasonable steps Drainage Services can implement to prevent similar events in the future
- The flooding that occurred on June 25 was caused by a rare combination of two events:
 - High river levels
 - A severe, rapidly developing rainfall event
- Cloverdale is in the North Saskatchewan River floodplain. Because of high river flows at the end of June, sewer gates had been closed according to established protocols, to prevent high water from flowing out of the river and into the sewer system.
- Unfortunately, the closure of the sewer gates coincided with the severe storm that hit Edmonton on June 25. Stormwater couldn’t reach the river because of the closed gates, contributing to back-ups.
- The City is aware of flooding in the parkade of one condominium complex (LaCaille Village on the Park) and several single family residences. If any others in attendance were affected and have NOT reported the particulars to the City, they were asked to do so on the evaluation forms or by contacting the City directly.
- Next steps include:
 - The City will review its operational protocols for things like closing and opening the sewer gates, responding to flooding calls, communications and other procedures. The City will also study possible capital improvements that may reduce the risk of flood events.
 - There will be ongoing communications with all interested residents as the review and assessment of options proceeds.
 - A follow-up information meeting will be scheduled for later this year to present the results of the review, options for action, and recommendations.

Questions and Comments

Several themes emerged in the questions and comments offered by meeting participants following the presentation.

Health, safety and environmental concerns – A number of the residents wanted to know what was in the floodwater (e.g. sewage or stormwater, or both) and whether it was safe to be cleaning up and using basements and parkades that were affected. Mr. Wyman noted he is not qualified in environmental public health but that the city would follow-up with additional information for residents who provide contact information. In the interim though, he suggested that *any* floodwater should be cleaned up as soon as possible according to proper procedures to ensure that affected areas are sanitized and safe to use. Information is available through the City website and other sources.

The nature of the sewer system in Cloverdale – Although Mr. Wyman noted that the sanitary and stormwater sewer systems are combined in Cloverdale, several residents wanted to know if that is true for the entire area, or whether some areas with newer construction were completed with separate systems. Mr. Wyman said graphics will be prepared and shared to show the exact piping in the neighbourhood and confirm where the system is combined. Other residents in attendance wanted to know when Cloverdale can expect upgrades to completely separate the sewer systems to eliminate this issue. Mr. Wyman said the City's Neighbourhood Renewal Program includes a master schedule of renewal initiatives. He did not know where Cloverdale is in the priority list under that program, but would check and provide further information in future communications.

Why the sewer gates were closed and why they were not opened sooner when flooding began or was likely – Several participants wanted to know why the sewer gates in Cloverdale were closed on June 25 and why they were not opened sooner when flooding began (or was likely to begin). Mr. Wyman explained that the gates were closed according to established protocols because the flows in the North Saskatchewan River were well above the safe level specified in the protocols. Operational staff were not at liberty to open the gates when flooding began because the river flows remained above the protocol level. The risk was that – rather than allowing stormwater to escape – river water could have flowed into the sewer system instead, making flood issues much worse.

Response times by City staff – Several residents said they made calls to 311 or to other City numbers, but reported long delays of many hours before City staff were seen in the neighbourhood and eventually opened the sewer gates. Mr. Wyman said the City's review of protocols and procedures will include an examination of response times. But he also pointed out that operational staff were not at liberty to open the sewer gates on their own. That required a management assessment of the situation and a decision to open the gates, even though the river flow was still higher than the protocol level. He said the review now being undertaken will consider whether operational protocols and procedures should change in the future, based on these events.

Impact of recent road and other construction projects on flooding risks – Several long-time Cloverdale residents observed that there were relatively few flooding issues in the neighbourhood (other than some isolated sewer backups, etc.) until 2011, when there also was some flooding associated with a major storm, and now again in 2013. They wondered whether road improvements, infrastructure improvements, and/or private construction projects in Cloverdale in the past couple of years have caused or contributed to these flood events. Mr. Wyman said the City will consider the possible impacts of recent construction in its review.

Impact of stormwater from other areas – Some residents also wondered whether stormwater runoff from other, higher neighbourhoods contributes to flooding in Cloverdale, or whether the water from stormwater systems in those neighbourhoods must funnel through the Cloverdale system, contributing to flood issues. Mr. Wyman said that will be considered in the City's review of this issue.

Lack of communications by the City – Related to the reported delays in response to calls by City staff, a number of the meeting participants complained of poor communications from the City generally to residents of Cloverdale about the flooding, the causes, the responses, health and safety information, clean-up procedures and so on. They suggested the City should have been proactively communicating with residents on all of those issues within a day or two of the flood events. Mr. Wyman indicated that protocols and procedures for communications in future events will be part of his branch's review.

Updates

Information updates will be provided via direct mail or email to those who attended the meeting and provided contact information, as well as to others who are on the stakeholder list.

Information on this issue will also be communicated through the City of Edmonton's website at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention.

Additional comments or questions may be forwarded to Todd Wyman at 780 495-1948 todd.wyman@edmonton.ca