



Freeport Pecatonica Flooding

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Freeport and its History

- Located at the Bottom of the Pecatonica Watershed
 - 115 Miles West of Chicago
 - 20 Miles South of Wisconsin
- Redline Community
 - Historically Black Neighborhood East of the Pec
 - 260 Homes 80% African-American
 - HUD Section 8 Housing in area
 - Low-income neighborhood
 - Community within a Community
 - Lack of Trust in Government
- Long History of Flooding



Flooding East of the Pecatonica

- Record clear back to 1916
- 100 year flood on Yellow Creek and Pecatonica



Historic Crests

- (1) 19.76 ft on 03/16/1929
- (2) 19.40 ft on 03/28/1916
- (3) 18.82 ft on 02/25/1922
- (4) 18.45 ft on 09/16/1914
- (5) 18.36 ft on 04/06/1923
- (6) 17.60 ft on 03/16/1919
- (7) 17.41 ft on 04/03/1933
- (8) 17.27 ft on 02/27/1915
- (9) 17.26 ft on 03/18/2019 (P)
- (10) 17.16 ft on 07/03/1969

Recent Crest

- (1) 15.78 ft on 09/15/2019
- (2) 17.26 ft on 03/18/2019 (P)
- (3) 13.03 ft on 02/27/2019 (P)
- (4) 16.12 ft on 02/24/2018
- (5) 15.81 ft on 10/03/2018
- (6) 15.39 ft on 07/26/2017
- (7) 15.84 ft on 07/24/2017

History of Flood Relief

- 1994 Army Corps of Engineers Study indicating two options
 - Buy out (residents not interested)
 - Recommended large 12ft Berm (\$5.5 million)
- 2012 Attempted Buyout
 - Residents not interested
 - Low Political will
- City not enforcing regulations
 - Flood regulation on books but city turning blind eye to Poverty Stricken area
 - Not red tagging buildings after flood
 - Allow Tax Trustee to sell properties

Floods since June of 2017

- Two Floods of over 15 ft in 2017
- 16.12 ft flood in February 2018
- 212 days Pecatonica was out of its banks
- 17.26ft Flood March of 2019
- 182 Days Pecatonica was out of its banks



Summer 2018 Continued Flooding

- Manhole lid popped off and let river flow into wastewater plant



Post 2018 Flood

- After Feb 2018 Flood City Leaders Changed Direction
 - Change in form of Government in May 2017
- Conducted Several Town Hall Meetings to build trust
 - Worked with Community Leaders
 - Built Trust with African-American Churches
 - Took Residents to Army Corp to Show Flood Brief
- Froze the sale of all Tax Trustee properties
- Enforced Codes
- Submitted in 2019 for Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant
 - 66 properties signed up
 - Grant denied

Steps Working with the Community

- Established East side Ad Hoc Committee to Gain Support/Buy-In and Provide Recommendations
- Held Town Hall Meetings
- Enforced Red Tagging and Rebuilding Rules
- Quitclaimed Deeds for 5 Properties
- HUD Moving and Demolishing Properties
- Elementary School Relocating
- 2 Churches Relocating
- First 17 properties already Demo' d



Taylor Park

**Freeport
Housing
Authority**

**2 Churches
Relocating**

**Taylor Park
Elementary
School**

Challenges

- Residents devoted to generational housing and history of neighborhood
- Community activists losing power
- Older residents uncomfortable with change
- Availability of housing

Current Actions

- \$300,000 from DCEO
 - Acquisition and demolition of 24 abandoned, vacant, and condemned properties
- Almost \$1 Million from IDNR
 - Bought 76 Tax Trustee properties
 - Bought major business
 - Going to continue applying as businesses show interest
- Submitted \$4 Million for Pre-Disaster Grant FY20
 - City match \$1 Million
 - 139 homes signed up
- Submitted \$2 Million in HMGP Grant Pre-Application
 - Remaining floodway properties

Long Range Plans

- Park expansion
- Bike trail expansion
- Pollinator meadows
- Housing options through Northern Illinois Land Bank



Questions