



3RD WARD MEETING MINUTES – ALDERMAN DENISE RODD

March 8, 2017

AGENDA:

- Water Reclamation – Josina Morita
- Vacation Rentals

WELCOME:

Welcome. Focus of our meeting is water, flooding, and storm sewer. Joining us this evening is Commissioner Josina Morita of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Board (MWRD). She can update us on what the MWRD is doing with our tax dollars for storm water management and what policies are in place that affect Des Plaines.

City budgets each year for storm sewer replacement and road improvements to mitigate flooding. What else is being done? Will turn the meeting over to Josina to answer the question.

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT (MWRD): The largest Storm Water Agency in the world.

Josina Morita Background: A Chicago native by way of living a while in the California Bay Area, Josina explains that her Grandmother moved from California at the time of World War II to live in Chicago. Josina has a background in Urban Planning and Flooding. We in Chicago, explains Josina, are very fortunate with water infrastructure and a history of water front planning, which dates back to Daniel Burnham. Drinking water is readily available and cheap compared to other parts of the county. NOTE: Chicago is starting to put Water Meters on homes for revenue purposes and Des Plaines is going through Evanston for water sources to keep costs down.

Water Retention: What effect has it? County ordinance was passed a few years ago for storm water. As communities grow and buildings go up, there is less and less places for water. Rules around storm water for new construction came in place as water retention infrastructure and can tell that new construction that a retention pond or green roof needs to be added.

MWRD is the back up for city sewer and has bought property in flooded areas and turns the property back into water retention or swamp land.

- Where does the MWRD get the money to buy properties? MWRD is not county govern, we are mandated by State and there is a line on Real Estate bill for MWRD. Funding line is County and fixed up to 6% levee.
- What happens with water when there are heavy rains? Water goes into local sewers; then to the MWRD; then to a holding area for excess storm water before being processed at the treatment plant. Water that goes back into the river is .02% away from drinking water.
- When sewers are full because of heavy rains are there rules as to when the locks are opened? WMRD do not control when locks are opened. There are rules and regulations as to when it can be done and WMRD will be behind the switch.
- Where are the locks? There are several areas.
- Does sewer water go into lake? Yes, opening the locks does mix the good and bad water. Once sewer water goes into the lake, it (sewer water) can't be taken out of lake water. When this happens beaches are closed.
- Dams being removed from the river help in lowering the water level? Yes.

There are ways to help with overflowing of water in the sewer during a heavy rain. Conserve water by avoiding unnecessary use of water in your house such as showering, dishes, and laundry during a rain storm. Also, by keeping gutters and street sewer drains around property clear of leaves. All of these will help towards the sewers overflowing.

MWRD is trying to change people's perception of the River and that it is cleaner than it has been and the need to keep it clean. There are groups that are dedicated to River Conservation with volunteers helping to clean up the banks of the river. Stopping the flushing of old pharmaceuticals down toilets. Once these chemicals are in the water they cannot be removed. There is a proper way to dispose of old medicines, both prescription and over the counter. The Kirie plant

located at Oakton and Elmhurst in Des Plaines, has a blue box outside their entrance that residents can deposit of all old medicines. Needles included....all received is incinerated.

- What about paints and oils? Not sure if MWRD accepts.
 - Public Works gets calls on how to dispose of chemicals, medicines.
 - Police Department is re-starting up program to receive old medicines.

Suggestion to put a “Do and Don’t of Water Usage” during a Rain Storm on Channel 17 and City Website. *

MWRD Background: MWRD owns land in Illinois with plants in Fulton County, Peoria; Stickney; and Des Plaines Kirie plant. Metropolitan Water Reclamation employs 2,000 employees that include engineers, pipe fitters and laborers. To become an employee, candidate needs to pass a company provided battery of tests for employment. MWRD took a funding approach and met retirees’ pension, fully funding retiree’s pension. Currently, MWRD has more retirees than employees.

MWRD Provides:

- Open Houses and Plant Tours.
- Rain Barrels are available at a cost of \$40.
- Bio Solids: “Stuff” that is filtered through a set of screens and ends up in a bio sediment solid. Bio solids are USDA approved for certain food growth. There are grades of how bio solids can be used. MWRD Bio Solid is at a Grade A approval. MWRD can set up to have a truck to deliver Bio Solids to the community....watch for “Bring your Bucket” to get the Solids. Ask for the Bio Solid that is safe for kids and pets.

VACATION RENTALS:

This is regarding short term vacation rentals or renting rooms. Room rentals out of single family neighborhoods are cropping up in Des Plaines. Websites are available showing rooms for rent and house rentals in Des Plaines.

3rd Ward Opinions:

- Should City be made aware of a room or house rental so as not to call the police if a neighbor sees a stranger?
- What if there was a license or training for a resident wanting to do a rental.
- Do we know how many are done (rented) in Des Plaines? 67 are listed on the Website. Cities that have prohibited such sites have been sued by the Website
- Do we have the right to prohibit the renting of a room or a house as a Vacation Rental?

CITYWIDE:

- Nothing new on the theatre. Building is shut down.
- Monday’s Council Meeting approved Phase 1 Engineering to make the S Curve safer for pedestrians. Feasibility Study showed that people are using the street under the S Curve, because of this, it is being considered for less cars and more of a green footprint. There are federal grants available if we show a study was done and there is a plan, i.e. Shovel Ready Project. Engineering Group to work with Railroads. One of the bridges will be replaced...RR will do it as long as Des Plaines pays.
 - Why not an overhead bridge? Overhead bridge is more expensive.
- Light at Forrest and Lee...on time...2 year time frame. This is a State Project.
- Beacon Tap is closed for remodeling and have talked to the City for permits.
- Boston Market added a tent. They are still planning to open another restaurant in Wheeling while still keeping the one in Des Plaines.
- New market by Dollar Store opening soon.
- Butera got a property tax break to open in Des Plaines.
- Child care center on Thacker (old 7 Eleven) ready to open, waiting for permits.

NEXT MEETING

April 12, 2017

Prairie Lakes – 7:00 p.m.

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