

**REPORT OF “SPECIAL CALLED” FLOOD CONTROL AND DRAINAGE  
COMMITTEE MEETING 06/12/07**

*(To be aired June 18, 2007 on cable channel 16)*

We would like to thank all of you who were able to attend the “special called” Flood Control and Drainage Committee meeting. The meeting was held at 10:00 am during the middle of the work week which we know is not convenient for most of you. The 60+ concerned property owners able to attend created a strong presence. It is obvious that the word is spreading to more and more people in varying neighborhoods. Property owners from Yale-Victoria, Timbergrove, Kingwood, Inwood, White Oak / Shady Acres and Braeswood all stood up and made their voices heard. Please ensure that your civic association is representing your community.

Councilwoman Ada Edwards invited representatives from FEMA to discuss the principles behind the floodway mapping and address the concerns of those in attendance. Though the meeting was supposed to only cover the floodway mapping, in the end the revisions to Ordinance Ch. 19 received equal attention.

During an opening statement from Councilwoman Ada Edwards, she stated they were under specific directive from Mayor Bill White to fix the City of Houston’s flooding problems. Councilwoman Edwards then announced that the format for the meeting would consist of first a dialog between FEMA and the City Council members and City of Houston officials in attendance. This would be followed by a question and answer session with the public, where each citizen was allowed 3 minutes to address their concerns with the floodway mapping and the devastating effects of the revisions to Ordinance Ch. 19.

Some of the highlights from the meeting are outlined below.

- Council member Ada Edwards stated equivocally that there is NO buy out program planned from the City of Houston.
- Per FEMA, 65% of insurance claims following Tropical Storm Allison in 2001 were from properties outside the floodplain!
- **Question:** Does FEMA allow new development in a floodway?  
**Answer:** Yes, with the provision of a “No Rise” certificate and a building permit.
- **Question:** Does FEMA allow re-development in a floodway?  
**Answer:** Yes, with the provision of a “No Rise” certificate and a building permit.
- **Question:** Is there any distinction between commercial or residential properties regarding the restrictions outlined by Ordinance Ch. 19?  
**Answer:** No, all properties in the floodway are treated the same.

- **Question:** Did FEMA give any specific directives or requirements for how Ordinance Ch. 19 was to be structured?

**Answer:** No, it is up to the “community” to determine the restrictions, above the FEMA minimum, placed on the development with in the floodway.
- **Question:** Can FEMA provide examples of restrictions placed on other communities’ concerning development with in a floodway and floodplain?

**Answer:** There is wide a range of the restrictions placed on other communities; some more restrictive, some less restrictive.
- **Question:** What was the process for including the public in the Flood Control and Drainage Stake Holder Advisory Committee Meetings?

**Answer:** “Every attempt was made to include the community in the Stake Holders Advisory Committee meetings.” Each council member nominated 2 residents, known to be active in their respective communities, to represent their entire district.

This is only a summary of the highlights. **To see how the entire meeting transpired, please tune in to cable channel 16, June 18, 2007 to see the meeting in its entirety.**

For most of those who attended the meeting, several things were clear.

1. Minimal effort was made to include the public in the planning and drafting of Ordinance Ch. 19. nor was any effort made to inform the public that their property rights had been stripped away from them. The City of Houston claims they do not have the resources, yet FCOH was able to inform thousands of property owners the affect of Ordinance Ch. 19 had on their land in one weekend.
2. It was clear that city engineers were not directed in any way by FEMA or Harris County Food Control on how to structure the building codes contained with in Ordinance Ch. 19. The city engineers decided, of their own free will, that the livelihood of property owners in the floodway could be sacrificed.
3. At this time the City of Houston has no plans to compensate affected property owners. FEMA does provide a “buy out program” only for people who have flooded twice with in a ten year period. However, for many of the people now included in the floodway, this is of no relief because they have NEVER flooded.
4. To our knowledge, the only option to correct the damage created by the revisions to Ordinance Ch. 19 is to amend the ordinance to allow responsible building within the floodway or the **land owners will be forced to sue the City of Houston**. Rest assured that come the November elections the public will let those elected city officials know what they think of they job they have done.