

Specialist tells of changes in floodplain plan

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 19 November 2009 16:15 -



Bottom line: Insurance recommended in proposed map.

More folks may have to buy flood insurance and follow special regulations when building or adding on to existing structures.

Bill Jones, floodplain management specialist of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, gave that message and answered questions during a planning and zoning commission meeting in city council chambers.

Jones also met with landowners affected by a proposed floodplain map before the meeting

Because of a new floodplain map of Dawson County proposed by Federal Emergency Management Agency, officials want to make sure Gothenburg residents know what it involves and what land is affected.

Generally, areas within the proposed floodplain are from Interstate 80 north to First Street on the west side of Highway 47 and to Fifth Street on the east side of Highway 47.

Lake Helen on the north end of Gothenburg is considered within the floodplain as is the tailrace that flows from the lake south to the Cozad canal.

A designated floodplain area has a 1% chance of flooding each year.

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Because the proposed floodplain has increased areawise since the last map in 1990, Jones said property owners whose land will be included in the new floodplain need to be aware that they may need flood insurance.

If they have flood insurance in a zone included in the 1990 floodplain, he said their insurance will be grandfathered in when the new plan is adopted if they don't allow it to lapse.

Landowners in the affected area may also need more fill than before with new construction as Gothenburg's base flood elevations have risen since 1990.

City administrator Bruce Clymer has said the city's BFEs have risen two to three feet.

The proposed map also designates the Platte River, its immediate over bank and the Cozad Canal as regulatory flood ways.

Jones said no new structures would be allowed in regulatory flood ways.

When asked if the new floodplain and regulations would affect mining the Platte River, Jones said they would.

Under new regulations, he explained that storage of materials in the river cannot increase flood height by more than a foot.

John Kreuzer, who attended the meeting, said the regulation would have economic impact.

Jones said a sand pit operator would need a plan showing how the business would operate.

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Gothenburg City Council members must adopt the plan at some point or the community won't have federal flood insurance available.

The city now has a 90-day period to appeal specific issues within the map if the city council chooses to do so.

Jones stressed that the map was preliminary and will take probably 18 months to two years to become effective.

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