

Mentor Council addresses flooding concerns

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The flooding issues that wreaked havoc on parts of Mentor at the end of February were a hot topic Tuesday at the city council meeting.

Resident Sharon Easter lives at one of the estimated 270 properties that suf-

fered flooding damage because of heavy rainfall that soaked the city on Feb. 28. On Tuesday, she took her story to council.

"The word is out," Easter said. "It's not better in Mentor, it's just wetter."

Easter said on the 28th she smelled smoke coming from her basement. Upon opening the basement door, she

found water coming all the way up to the top step, she said.

She said the flooding did permanent damage to her appliances and personal belongings. Making matters worse, she was forced to shut off her heater and went without heat for the next four days.

"I've been awake every night, losing

sleep," Easter said. "Every time I hear rain or thunder I worry I may flood again."

Her basement flooded previously in 2006 and Easter approached council hoping the city could do something to curb flooding issues throughout the city.

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City Manager Ken Filipiak said since the flooding, city workers have been doing just that.

He said city officials have spoken directly to residents of about 200 of the 270 flooded properties. While he said each situation was unique, there were a few commonalities between the properties that suffered flooding.

The factor the homes have in common, Filipiak said, is little elevation between the sanitary sewer and homes' basement floors.

While the city might not be able to do much in terms of large-scale public fixes, it can work to help homeowners prepare for the next time flooding issues come around, he said.

"It's important for certain residents in certain areas of the community to understand they're going to be more susceptible to this than others," Filipiak said.

He also explained that Lake County Department of Utilities officials have expressed interest in helping the city conduct dye testing for affected areas and perhaps begin a

program to allow for installation of back flow prevention devices on sanitary service laterals within the city.

Filipek said talks will continue with the utilities department, as well as with the city's engineering advisers at CT Consultants, in an effort to determine whether anything can be done.

Also at Tuesday's meeting, council approved economic development grants for a pair of city businesses.

The first will help finance a change of location for Affiliated Podiatrists Inc. from 7537 Mentor Ave. to 7230 Mentor Ave. The grant is not to exceed \$2,000.

The other grant will pay Lighting International of North America, Inc., \$1 for every \$5 the company spends.

Filipek said it will essentially provide the company with about \$150,000 over a five-year period to help it expand its research and development department.

With the exception of Carolyn P. Bucey who was absent, all council members voted in favor of the grants. Councilman Ronald L. Micchia gave Lighting International an additional vote of confidence, calling it a "bright spot" for the city.