



Martin J. Moylan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

City of Des Plaines

1420 Miner Street
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016
Telephone: 847/391-5301
Fax: 847/391-5378

LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM DES PLAINES MAYOR MARTIN J. MOYLAN – September 8, 2009

Dear Residents of Des Plaines:

As your Mayor, I would like to encourage you to take a drive north on River Road through our neighboring communities of Mount Prospect and Wheeling. You cannot help but observe a massive construction project along the west bank of the Des Plaines River.

The approximate \$28 million wall is being constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers as a part of the Levee 37 Project for the purpose of preventing the neighborhoods on the west side of the river from flooding. We, in Des Plaines, know too well the ravages of the river overflowing its banks. We experienced destructive floods including the flood-of-record in 1986 and, more recently, last September. Many Des Plaines residents have experienced permanent flood damage and were forced to throw away memories and mementos of their lives along with flood soaked sandbags and saturated furniture.

My concern about the flood wall project, involves a 500 foot gap in the portion of the wall running through Mt. Prospect. The problem with this "gap" concerns timing. This flood control project, which is part of Phase I of the Des Plaines River Feasibility Study, calls for the establishment of a compensatory storage area in Wheeling's Heritage Park. To date, an agreement designating this area as a compensatory storage area and permitting the construction of a reservoir has not been signed by the necessary parties, which include the MWRD, the Village of Wheeling and the Wheeling Park District. Discussion has centered on the \$24 million development of Wheeling's 250 acre Heritage Park area as the compensatory storage area, but documents remain unexecuted. And it should be noted that Heritage Park is 2.3 miles from the flood wall. In the event of a flood, our neighboring communities may sand bag the gap closed. After all, who would not protect their residents? However, sand bagging the gap closed will force the water south into Des Plaines.

The designation of a compensatory storage area and construction of the reservoir must be made expeditiously and with consideration as to its proximity to the flood wall. Des Plaines will not remain silent on the urgency of this issue. As Mayor, I will be appealing to Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky on behalf of the community. We have no control over the weather or the river's elevation. At any time, Des Plaines could be confronted with a flood situation. Our City engineers have informed us that if the compensatory storage area is not constructed and if our neighboring communities close the "gap"

during a flooding incident, our City could experience increase flood stages. It is estimated that a 1" increase would result during a 100-year flood event.

I urge you to contact your Congressman to stress the urgency of designating a compensatory storage area as soon as possible. There is strength in numbers. Des Plaines has been the leader in the fight for flood protection and prevention and we will continue to fight for all our residents.

Sincerely,

Martin J. Moylan
City of Des Plaines