

Notes from 6/16/08 meeting at Downtown Library with UPNA, Mayor, City and County Government & State Legislators

*Union Park Neighborhood Association will continue to work with city, county and state government leaders to resolve short-term as well as long-term issues surrounding the flood in our area. Senators Grassley and Harkin also visited Union Park so we will make sure our local leaders are working with them to advocate for our relief and rebuilding.*

*Initially, we are concerned with the safety and health of our neighbors. The Resource center at the shelter in Union Park is an excellent source of information and materials. In addition to that, our neighbors who have been affected by the flood and need assistance are encouraged to contact FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The website is [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov). Their phone number is 1-800-621-3362. If you need assistance, it is best to contact them sooner rather than later so you can get a FEMA case number established.*

*In the near future, UPNA will be working on resolving the longer-term issues. Most importantly, we will advocate for a replacement of the levees to ensure that our neighborhood is as safe from future flooding as it can be. In the meantime, it is still a possibility that we can have some more heavy rains. This means temporary repairs to the levees are important so we can get through the rest of this season with as much flood protection as possible.*

*Many of the people who were most directly affected by the floods may not have Internet access at this time. If you are reading this and know of neighbors who need this information, please print it off for them or somehow get it to them. We have all been doing a great job of helping each other out so far! Let's keep it up and we WILL get through this.*

*Below is some additional information that was given to us in our meeting today:*

The City Hall Action phone number is **(515) 283-4500**; callers can get their questions answered about anything regarding the Flood of 2008. The website to visit is [flood2008@ia.gov](mailto:flood2008@ia.gov)

The park shelter house in the NW corner of Union Park (north of the Carousel) has been established as a Resource Center for flood victims as of 3pm today, 6/16. It will be open from 8am – 6pm through Friday 6/20. The organizations on site are:

- Polk County Health Dept. – providing tetanus shots
- Polk County Community Youth and Families
- Red Cross – providing clean-up kits
- United Way – providing gloves, insect repellent, sunscreen and water
- EPA pamphlets about safety issues during floods
- Broadlawns Hospital – Mental Health Counselor

36 tetanus shots were given Monday afternoon to flood victims.

Affected persons may sign up at the shelter for CHORE program help, Emergency home repairs and special transportation needs as well as welfare relief and temporary housing.

Assessment of the flood and sewage damage began today at 1pm when 5 teams of inspectors began reviewing each property. Each team consists of a city employee from the NBSD (Neighborhood Based Service Delivery) team, a building inspector, and fire inspector in commercial buildings. These teams started at the north end of the flooded area where water has receded. They knocked on 45 doors of residences and businesses to gain entry; of which 36 were actually inspected. They will continue this process each day, hopefully finishing by Thursday evening. They are posting a notice at each home/building once it has been inspected – either a Green, Yellow or Red notice. Green notices mean the building has been inspected and given an OK for the owner to come back into the building and begin clean-up. A Yellow notice means *that the home/building is only safe for limited occupancy and* there are some safety issues the owner and the team should talk about before re-entry. A Red notice means that the owner and the team need to work together regarding major issues such as structural damage, electrical or health concerns. If *the inspection team was unable to gain access to a house or business, they will post a red notice. The property owner should then* go to the park shelter house and arrange to let the team in to inspect the building, *after which the team will post a green, yellow or red notice depending on the actual results of the inspection.* If there are Yellow or Red notices stating concerns, the owner should also come to the Park Shelter. *Please note that a red notice does not mean that your house is condemned or is going to be demolished. It just means there are some more serious issues that need to be worked through.*

Staff will begin knocking on doors in the neighborhood on Tuesday 6/17 to locate building owners and get the word out.

Today the City Council voted to waive all permit fees for work / repairs due to flood and sewage-damaged property, though a permit is still required before work may be completed. This applies to work done between 6-10-08 and 9-15-08. *Even though the fee is waived it is important to get a permit. This is one more way of ensuring that the contractor who does the work is reputable. Please be cautious when contracting for repair/rebuilding work. There are under qualified and disreputable contractors out there as well as outright "scam artists".*

The area is still under a mandatory evacuation order, unless your building has already been inspected and given a Green notice to re-enter. The Department of Health recommends that children under 5 stay out of the area unless a Green notice has been given to their parent's home.

Trash and debris from the flood should be left on the curb at regular trash pick-up times through 6-27. Use care if handling wet sandbags because they have been contaminated by flood water. The EPA pamphlet at the shelter gives instructions on how to handle.