

Mount Vernon favors restricting density in floodplain

By KARI RANTEN
Staff Writer

MOUNT VERNON — The city council here unanimously approved a recommendation from the Skagit River Flood Control Committee Wednesday in favor of using a "restricted density floodplain" method of controlling potential flood waters.

The density floodplain proposal is based on setting a maximum level of development density allowable in the floodplain area of the lower delta of the Skagit River, downriver from Sedro-Woolley. Proponents of the restricted density method claim the concept causes the least adverse impact and would require "unified support of all public officials."

Further recommendations by the committee include building a dam on the Sauk River and raising dikes in the delta area to a uniform level to handle a 50-year flood level.

The presentation was made by Mount Vernon representative on the flood con-

trol committee Gwynne D. "Denny" Le-Gro and Building Official Ron Maynock.

"This is a temporary solution to a permanent problem," Maynock said. "What I am afraid of is that if this density restricted floodway is approved, people will think we have solved our problem. We have to provide enough impetus to get a dam on that (Sauk) river."

In other action the council:

— Turned down a proposal by proponents of Little Mountain Estates Mobile Home Park until further investigation is completed.

The park is planned for construction on the south side of Section and east of LaVenture in Mount Vernon. The 25-acre site is proposed to house 115 units on 5,000 square foot lots. The site will include a 30-foot buffer zone surrounding the development and will feature "open spaces," according to proponent Allan Aramaki of Seattle.

The Mount Vernon Planning Commission had previously reviewed the proposal, voicing concerns over drainage of the

area into Maddox Creek.

Acting City Engineer Rod Garrett voiced similar concerns about drainage and also pointed out the additional impact such a development would have on the waste water treatment plant. The plant has reached capacity and beyond on a number of occasions in the last month, Garrett said.

The mobile home park would result in an additional 56 pounds of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) on the Mount Vernon system which has a total capacity of 5,000 pounds.

An additional concern mentioned by City Attorney Larry Moller is that according to new subdivision laws, a "binding site plan" is required for a development like the mobile home park being proposed. Such a binding plan would provide a developer's assurance that the plan turned over to the city would be strictly followed.

Due to the number of concerns among city officials and council members, the decision was made to work with the

proponents to settle problems and return to the council at a later date.

— Heard a presentation on the need for establishing designated parking spaces for the handicapped in the downtown area. Ted Gray, who is confined to a wheelchair himself, said he has met with a number of other handicapped individuals who desire such a service.

"What we would like to see from the city of Mount Vernon is an ordinance that would cover the fining and towing away of vehicles that are parked in spots that are reserved for the handicapped," Gray said.

According to Gray, no other localities have provided handicapped parking in downtown areas.

"The other cities are waiting on Mount Vernon to take the first step. If we do our homework and do everything right the first time, the other cities can follow suit," he said.

Councilman Robert Van Burkleo said he is concerned about the possibility of

tying up a "valuable" parking place downtown.

Moller said that the city Traffic Safety Committee is currently working on the problem and is planning on meeting with members of the Downtown Merchants Association to come to a conclusion on where handicapped parking places might be located and how many spaces would be provided.

"We are going to do it and we're going to do it as fast as we can," Moller said.

— Stated the city's intention to continue their participation in the Skagit County District and Municipal Court Probation program for 1982.

While intending to participate next year, the council recognized the future need for Mount Vernon to establish their own probation program, due to the number of cases generated by the city.

In a presentation by Richard Ward, chief probation officer, he said that Mount Vernon makes up the largest portion of the amount of service given to the cities

of Skagit County. The services have been, in the past, based on a fixed payment with unlimited service given, which has resulted in as much as a 33 percent discount to the city.

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners decided that in 1982, however, the cities would be required to pay by the "service unit" which amounts to approximately \$40, Ward said.

In 1981, Mount Vernon paid \$7,000 for some 200 cases. For 1982, the city would be required to pay some \$12,000 for only 83 cases and would cost up to \$21,000 for the same 200 cases served, according to statistics compiled by Ward.

"This is quite a shock, I know. By using the service unit cost system you are paying more for less. If you wanted to run it yourself, you could probably do it cheaper," Ward said.

The council agreed that starting a city probation program would not be practical this year but that such a program should be looked into for implementation in 1982.

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