

# Feds hold MV to July 1 deadline

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**MOUNT VERNON** — Following a meeting with federal officials Wednesday, the city of Mount Vernon still faces a July 1 deadline with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The two-hour meeting reinforced the pending July deadline, which marks the date when Mount Vernon must comply with FEMA regulations or be suspended from the federal flood insurance program.

The session was attended by FEMA representatives Carl Cook and Herb McElvaine along with officials from Mount Vernon. They included Mayor Ruth Gidlund, City Engineer John Wiseman, Building Official Ron Maynock, City Attorney Larry Moller Clerk-Treasurer Mike Woodmansee and members of the city council. Representatives from Rep. Al Swift and Sen. Slade Gorton offices also attended.

As a result of the meeting, Maynock



Ron Maynock

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said the "general consensus" of city officials is to have Moller draft a letter to FEMA outlining legal and practical reasons why the city needs more time.

The chances of such an extension, though, are bleak, Maynock said.

"They have just placed a noose around our neck and the trap door is yet to be sprung," he said. "Their hand is on the lever."

While awaiting a response to their request, city officials will begin working on an ordinance to meet the regulations enforced by FEMA, Maynock said.

"We either adopt an ordinance to their liking, or we are suspended from the flood insurance program," he said. "This meeting was an exercise in futility."

Prior to any adoption proceedings with regard to such an ordinance, which Maynock called a "Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance," he has suggested a minimum of two public meetings be conducted to give resi-

dents of the area a chance to become familiar with the regulations and make possible suggestions.

Maynock said he would be in favor of asking representatives of architectural firms, insurance companies, lending institutions, property owners and real estate agencies to attend the meetings on how such an ordinance would impact the community.

Maynock also said he favored preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address what he called the "tremendous social implications" of the proposed regulations.

FEMA officials said earlier that Mount Vernon had been "on notice" for more than five years to adopt such an ordinance. Elevation regulations were revised by FEMA in 1976.

Recently, FEMA officials investigated the building practices being used in Mount Vernon, establishing that regulations with regard to floodplain construction have not been followed.

The July 1 deadline for compliance

was the result of those findings.

Should that deadline not be met, the city would be removed from the federal flood insurance program, making residents ineligible for federal disaster aid.