

Friends of Klein Fen

Summary of the Friends of Klein Fen Water Summit Meeting October 28th 2008

Attendees:

- Mike Fortner, State Representative, House District 95
- Randy Ramey, State Representative, House District 55
- Roger Kotecki, Forest Preserve Member, District 6
- Jim Zay, County Board Member, District 6, and Chairman of the Storm Water Committee
- Dirk Enger, Candidate for County Board, District 6
- Bob Larson, Candidate for County Board, District 6
- Ken Spitz, Wayne Township Highway Commissioner
- Christopher Stull, President, DuPage River Coalition
- Clayton Heffter, Stormwater Permitting Manager, DuPage County, Department of Economic Development and Planning
- Citizens from several surrounding communities who are concerned with Storm Water Issues, including citizens from Meadow Wood Subdivision, Promontory Oaks, St Andrews Estates, Lakewood, Branigar's Lakewood, St. Andrews Trace, and Smyth Settlement.

Special Thanks:

Special thanks to the Association of Wayne Center, who allowed us to join them at the end of their annual meeting

Purpose:

The Storm Water Summit was designed to bring local citizens, elected officials, key decision makers, and environmental experts together in one venue, with the following goals:

- Learning about and discussing frequent local flooding issues.
- Examining the environmental impact of storm water run-off, which is destructive not only to homes and property, but also to the fragile ecosystem that surrounds DuPage County
- Listening to the needs and concerns of local citizens who are impacted by storm water issues.
- Exploring the impact of the potential development of the St. Andrews Golf & Country Club property into a dense residential and commercial area.

Increased storm water run-off and the environmental on already fragile ecosystems are the primary areas of concern.

Background and Description:

Friends of Klein Fen was the primary sponsor of the summit. The group initially formed to help protect a very rare environmental area that has since come to be known as the Klein Fen. Klein Fen lies within the West Branch of the DuPage River area, and is reliant upon clean storm water run-off. The fen, the DuPage river, and the local wildlife in the area all depend upon and are exquisitely sensitive to local rain water, and to hazardous bi-products carried within the run-off. As Friends of Klein Fen has grown and evolved, the group has also turned its attention to the growing frequency of local flooding, its economic impact on local communities, and its detrimental effect on the overall quality of life for the citizens of those communities.

Local homeowners were invited to the summit to share their stories and concerns regarding these issues, and to see firsthand the hydrological maps and surveys of the storm water flow patterns in their specific areas.

These homeowners then had an opportunity to ask specific questions of the current storm water Chairman, Jim Zay. Homeowners asked questions such as the following:

- Why have flooding problems been increasing in frequency and severity?
- What measures is the county taking to help solve flooding issues?
- What are some of the best methods of simultaneously reducing flooding risks and protecting rare and valuable local ecosystems?
- How might any development of the St. Andrews property exacerbate current issues?
- Could any major development of the St. Andrews property occur without detailed impact analysis?

The Storm water summit was the perfect platform for key local and state officials to see and hear firsthand the concerns of their constituents, and to gather new ideas about how storm water and environmental issues would best be handled moving forward by slowing down the pace of future development to allow for detailed site work, including thorough impact analysis that rises well above merely satisfying the minimum requirements.

Ideas that were very well received included 1) establishing large buffer zones surrounding established communities, 2) developing new storm water detention areas, 3) planting and maintaining significant stands of water absorbing trees and shrubs that would help slow down existing and future storm water run-off, and 4) creating new walking and biking pathways that could link to existing trails. All of these approaches would not only help strike an effective balance between future development needs and watershed concerns, but would also palpably enhance the quality of life for all the

citizens of DuPage County. Additionally, such measures would contribute to the preservation of the habitats on which our local flora and fauna depend.

Summary:

The storm water summit was a first step in what we hope will be many steps to come. Bringing citizens and government together to share ideas, discuss concerns, and develop cooperative solutions leads to a new and more proactive way of thinking about local development and its impact on flooding, the environment, and the overall quality of life in our communities. Open and honest dialogue clears the way toward a better quality of life for all citizens of DuPage County. We have a responsibility to work together in the present to be the best possible stewards of our corner of the world. We recognize that our good stewardship is also the most valuable legacy we can leave for future generations .

