



## Online Delegation Form

**YOUR WORSHIP, MAYOR TAYLOR, AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL, I/WE ARE HERE THIS EVENING ON BEHALF OF:**

Grand Forks Homeowners Slated for Buy Outs as Part of Flood Mitigation Project

**TO REQUEST THAT YOU CONSIDER:**

Reviewing/Reassessing the Flood Mitigation Project & Offering Pre-flood values to homeowners

**THE REASONS THAT I/WE ARE REQUESTING THIS ACTION ARE:**

Reviewing/Reassessing the Flood Mitigation Project - the project decisions were made in haste and we do not have confidence that they serve the best interests of Grand Forks or the neighborhoods that were affected. The project requires that over 80 homes be demolished and this will have not only an enormous negative financial impact on the homeowners but also negative impact the economy and tax base of Grand Forks. Many of the North Ruckle homeowners feel like they were pressured into a 'vote' without being fully informed of the implications of the decisions. The people of Grand Forks have not had access to details of the plans. Without more information, we cannot support the plans that will likely result in poverty for many homeowners and may have a detrimental effect on the town without providing the best flood protection.

Offering pre-flood values to homeowners - None of the people slated for buy outs 'profited' from flood insurance or DFA. For many of us, insurance was not available. For others, insurance has either delayed or refused to pay out when the talk about buy outs started. DFA was used to make our homes livable after the flood and it was often used for wiring, hot water tanks, and flooring. DFA did not cover the full cost of repairs. Over half of the post-flood values being offered are less than \$100,000. No one can afford to purchase land and a home for that. Many people on the buy out list are seniors on fixed incomes. The City wants our land to protect the rest of the city. We are not asking for handouts - we are asking for fair market value for our homes. Please consider that forcing approximately 80 homeowners out of their homes in a small town will have a negative impact on the local economy and the local tax base. Many will have no choice but to leave town and/or the Province.

The petition that has been circulating for 5 days already has over 600 signatures in support of pre-flood values.

The 'in-kind' options being proposed by the City of Grand Forks have little to no value or benefit for most of us as they include: 1) leasing property from the City which we would have to pay to improve and put a home on 2) purchasing a lot from the City at full market value for which we would also have to pay to install services, put a home on, and landscape. Both options would serve to put most of us into debt. So for example, if a homeowner receives \$71,000 in the buy out and chooses the 'in-kind' offer from the City it will cost approximately \$60,000 for the lot, \$15,000 to install services, \$150,000 for a modest manufactured home, and \$10,000 for landscaping, which totals \$235,000. This puts the person \$164,000 in debt. Many buy-out people are retired and on fixed incomes and that kind of loan will not be available to them.

**I/WE BELIEVE THAT IN APPROVING OUR REQUEST THE COMMUNITY WILL BENEFIT BY:**

- Having fuller knowledge of and increased confidence in the planned flood mitigation project.
- Generating community support to the City staff and Councilors for the planned flood mitigation project. (Right now, trust and confidence are low amongst residents.)

- Possibly generating a different flood mitigation plan that serves to increase City revenues, economic growth, and attract new business.
- Creating a flood mitigation project that will not only protect city homes and businesses from future floods but also maintain a more stable and intact socio-economic structure and tax base than the current plan, ie. create less problematic mental health reactions (alcoholism and drug use, crumbling relationships, diminishing health due to stress), avoid putting people in debt, making them homeless, and/or driving them to move out of town.
- Avoiding contributing to the growing homelessness problem by ensuring that people who have homes don't become homeless due to the financial strain.
- Protect already financially impacted flood victims from further financial hardship.
- Saving money in the long-run through maintaining tax paying citizens, business owners, and workers.
- Possibly saving money on the flood mitigation project.
- Avoiding potential legal action.

**I/WE BELIEVE THAT BY NOT APPROVING OUR REQUEST THE RESULT WILL BE:**

- Lack of community support for the planned flood mitigation project.
- Erosion of trust and confidence.
- Diminishing tax revenues and less attractiveness to new businesses.
- The creation of adverse and serious mental health problems including alcohol and drug use, crumbling relationships, diminishing health due to stress.
- Increasing debt and financial hardship for people already struggling due to the flood.
- Increasing homelessness and/or residents moving out of town.
- Uncertainty about the number of people who are willing to accept the in-kind offers.
- The possibility of legal action.

**IN CONCLUSION, I/WE REQUEST THAT COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF GRAND FORKS ADOPT A RESOLUTION STATING:**

That City Council will review/reassess the DMAF project to determine if its possible to reduce the number of properties being bought out, give homeowners a choice to be bought out or not, determine options that are less devastating to homeowners and the tax base, determine less expensive options, explore alternative solutions that do not include the razing of so many homes and possibly cost less.

That City Council undertake measures to find the funding to offer pre-flood value (or post-flood whichever is higher) to homeowners being bought out (if the buy outs are determined as the only option for flood mitigation); including but not limited to increasing taxes, applying for other funding, pressing the Provincial government for the additional \$6.6 million.

**NAME**

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**ORGANIZATION**

A coalition of homeowners on the buy out list

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