

Group seeks city's help in solving flooding problems

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TILLAMOOK — “We’re looking for guidance,” local businessman and flood control activist Doug Rosenberg told the City Council Monday night. “Either we need the city, county and state to work with us or we’re way over our heads.”

In the wake of November’s flooding in Tillamook, Rosenberg led a contingent of supporters of the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District. He called upon the City Council to take a more active role in solving the city’s flooding problems.

“We’re at the point where we need to know where we stand,” Rosenberg told the council. “A lot of people think we (businesses) should not be out on the flood plain. We need to know the city’s position. Do you want us to all move out or do you want us to find a solution?”

Councilor Doug Henson responded. “This flood was mainly on the north end,” he said. “To me, FEMA buyouts are not a

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— KEITH LAWHORN

Subway

solution. I hate to see us concede defeat and have FEMA take over our town.”

He was referring to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which will buy out property owners in areas prone to flooding so they can relocate to higher ground.

Henson said he would like to see the council work more closely with the improvement district to find a solution.

“I hate to see us lose a big chunk of (business) development on the north end of town. We need to be more involved. Pretending like it’s not happening

will not fix the problem.”

Former Mayor Don Hurd followed Rosenberg up to address the council.

He asserted that flooding in Tillamook has worsened markedly over the past 50 years due to silt and debris that has accumulated near the mouths of the rivers. He urged the council to give support to those seeking government permits to clear the channels.

“The mayor and council have a lot of influence,” he said. “If you say this is a high priority, it would hit a tender spot with other government agencies. If you take a more active role, it would be a great benefit.”

Keith Lawhorn, owner of the Subway sandwich shop, argued that the north end of town is the natural place for business to develop because of the proximity to U.S. 101, and that the city should work to stop the flooding to ensure continued economic development and jobs.

“If we are going to survive, something has to be done now,” he said. “We can’t wait.”