

Flood Recovery Fact-check

We realize many of you have thoughts and questions about the ongoing recovery from the October 6th flood event. These are some of the most common questions and misconceptions that have been communicated to us.

QUESTION: I received a notice from the City that said we can't do any repairs to our flood-damaged home without a permit. Why?

FACT: The City has a comprehensive set of building codes that must be followed on construction projects within the City. The building codes are in place to protect the health, safety and welfare of the building's occupants. The permitting process is designed to allow the City to ensure that the work being done is in compliance with the building codes. It also allows the City to ensure that contractors working in the City are properly licensed.

MISCONCEPTION: The City of Pelham is making money off building permits while I'm struggling to recover from the October 6th flood.

FACT: Building permit fees are issued at no cost to those who received flood damage October 6th. This information was included on the notices delivered to affected homes.

MISCONCEPTION: I am in the recovery process. In order to get a building permit, I had to provide an estimate for repairs to my home. This means the City of Pelham is trying to raise my taxes.

FACT: Not at all. FEMA sets guidelines for local communities to follow when determining a dollar amount for the damage created by a natural disaster. If your home is in the Flood Zone, and the cost of your repair is greater than 50 percent of your home's value, a more stringent set of construction requirements must be followed when you rebuild or repair. That's why we need to know the estimate for repairs to your home. Again, this is a FEMA requirement.

QUESTION: We want to get started on repairs to our home, but we want to do the work ourselves. Do I need a permit?

FACT: Yes, you will need a permit. If the damage is due to the October 6th flood, your permit is free. Homeowners can do their own repairs by acting as the owner/builder, and can hire subcontractors for more involved work, like electrical and plumbing. Those subcontractors will need a business license from the City of Pelham. We encourage homeowners to hire licensed and experienced contractors instead of doing the work individually.

QUESTION: I have a friend in Pelham who is remodeling his home, and he had to pay for his building permit. Why are some people are charged a permit fee and not others.

FACT: Any permits that are obtained for work other than for damage related to the October 6th flood will be charged the normal permit fees.

QUESTION: Where do we stand on individual assistance from the federal government?

FACT: FEMA officials were in Pelham recently conducting assessments. They will send their findings a to Governor Ivey. If Governor Ivey signs off, the request goes to the regional FEMA office in Atlanta, then to the national FEMA office in Washington D.C. When approved, the money is released for those who are eligible. Once a declaration is issued, the Shelby County EMA will be notified, which will then notify city leaders. We will push out information on the City of Pelham website, our social media channels and other media sources to make sure all affected residents know how to start the process of applying for individual assistance. **PLEASE NOTE: These funds DO NOT come from the City of Pelham.**

QUESTION: How much money could I receive from FEMA?

FACT: FEMA considers many variables when reviewing each individual case, so payment amounts vary. The typical grant averages \$8,000 or less.

MISCONCEPTION: The City of Pelham should pay for my expenses related to the flood (hotel, living expenses, repairs, etc.)

FACT: The City does not pay individuals for damages received during the flood. Individuals should file a claim with their insurance company, or apply for FEMA assistance if, and when, a disaster declaration is made.

MISCONCEPTION: The City of Pelham is doing nothing with our local creeks to alleviate future flooding issues.

FACT: The City is working very hard to do address the issues that are under our control. We cannot control the amount of rainfall we receive, but we can be prepared for future events.

City leaders have requested assistance from a federal program called the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP). If approved, the program will make technical and financial assistance available to help us address issues with the creek. The Pelham City Council passed a resolution on Monday November 2nd to authorize the request for help. You can read more about the EWP program by clicking this link:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/landscape/ewpp/>

MISCONCEPTION: Our storm drains are failing due to City negligence.

FACT: There are thousands, yes thousands, of inlets and outlets within our storm drainage network. The City of Pelham has a proactive inspection and maintenance program, which includes routine inspections of storm drainage structures. Over the last several years, the city has been expanding its storm drainage inspection and maintenance program. One example of this is the recent purchase of equipment to clean storm drain inlets and culverts.