



For Immediate Release

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Paw Paw to Hold Special Meeting to Discuss Mitigation Options for Dam

Paw Paw, Michigan, October 26, 2017 –The Village of Paw Paw will hold a special meeting on Monday, Oct. 30 to discuss mitigation options for damage to the Briggs Mill Dam south of Maple Lake.

Residents and the media are encouraged to attend the meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday at Paw Paw Township Hall, 114 N. Gremps St. Village officials will give an update on steps taken to date to stabilize Maple Lake after a portion of the dam on its south end failed Sunday, Oct. 15 after one of the largest rain events in the decades. More than 8.5 inches of water fell over that weekend, causing massive flooding in the entire Kalamazoo area.

During the special meeting, the Village will consider various options to mitigate damage of the dam, which was more than a century old. Village officials will also receive results of the soil borings completed this week that will allow its engineering firm, Wightman & Associates, to better evaluate options.

“As a Village, we have been working as quickly as we can to engage relevant experts, evaluate our options and develop a plan to mitigate the damage that has been done,” said Village Manager Sarah Moyer-Cale. “This is a top priority, as is stabilizing the water levels in both Maple Lake and Briggs Pond.

“We also want to make sure that, as a Village, we are making sound financial and environmental decisions while we work to preserve the aquatic species in the lake. We do not believe that people or pets face any health threats by coming into casual contact with water or soil in Maple Lake and Briggs Pond.”

Moyer-Cale said the council will hear detailed evaluations of several options that are currently being considered, including stabilizing the breached area with large rocks and limestone that would slow the current as it travels to the dam. Another option is to install large metal sheeting across the breach with a notch cut in it that would act as a spillway, giving it greater capacity than the previous dam.

The Village had completed an MDEQ-permitted draw-down of Maple Lake earlier in the month. Had that not occurred, Moyer-Cale said that water levels in Maple Lake would have been much higher, potentially causing significant damage.

“It’s important to remember that no one was injured and no property was damaged in this incident,” Moyer-Cale explained.

The Village continues to check on the dam on the north end of Maple Lake, which continues to perform well. No structural problems have been detected in this dam.

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