

February 10, 2020

Mayor Marius Jackson  
City Hall  
5800 Bond Avenue  
Centreville, IL 62207

Re: Flooding and Sewage Overflows in Centreville

Dear Mayor Jackson,

As you know, the heavy rains on January 11, 2020 had devastating impacts on the residents of our City of Centreville. Our homes and yards filled with water and sewage. Several people were stranded in their homes. Of course, this is not an unusual situation. Centreville often floods during normal rainy days, and these floods spread the sewage leaking from a failing sewage system.

When the water subsides, life does not return to normal. We now are faced with the devastating impacts of floodwaters and sewage on our homes—including collapsed walls, unstable foundations, and ruined home appliances. We do not have the money to make these repairs. Even worse, even if we repaired our homes, as we have sometimes managed to do in the past, we know it will happen again because the unfixed problem is a City and County level problem.

We know that Centreville's sewage and flood management systems have been inadequate for decades. Sadly, as more white people moved out, and more black people moved in, it seemed the investment in infrastructure decreased notably. Instead of investing in infrastructure, the City has resorted to makeshift solutions that involve sending workers out to pump out water manually or to dig haphazard ditches on the side of the road or install inadequately sized pipes that cannot withstand the amount and force of water that moves through these ditches and canals.

As your constituents, we have many questions and urgent needs. We would like to set up a meeting with you as soon as possible—**and no later than February 28th**—to discuss these concerns:

1. What long-term and short-term steps will you take to improve the management of flooding and sewage? Will you seek state or federal government assistance? Please provide a timeline for this action.
2. How and when will you communicate your infrastructure improvement plan to the residents of Centreville? Will you hold public meetings?
3. In your letter regarding the possible merger of Centreville and Alorton, you cite better sewers as one of the benefits: Please provide examples of how our sewer and stormwater infrastructure will improve due to this merger. For instance, are there specific grants or loans that will become available to Alorton and Centreville because of the proposed merger for sewer/stormwater infrastructure improvement, and if so, what are they? **If the merger is approved, what is the proposed timeline for (a) applying for grants/loans, and (b) implementation of improved infrastructure?**
4. **What entities/companies would be responsible for the implementation of these improvements?**
5. What resources can be made available to residents—through grants or other support—to facilitate the repairs we are forced to make in our homes as a result of the failing infrastructure?

6. What current grants that Centreville writes for and receives monies can be used to help us now? Can the engineer/engineering firm that Centreville has access to per its other grant requirements be utilized to assist your office with interim solutions for the stormwater and sewer system? If not, can Centreville contract the services of an engineer to assist and troubleshoot these issues?
7. Can you work with the US Army Corp, Metro East Sanitary District and/or local State Representatives that you know, such as Rep. Chris Belt, to request the installation of emergency pump stations in our areas? Currently, a number of pump stations are inoperable and Commonfields' employees are manually pumping stations and sewers because the sewer system is full.
8. Centreville Resident Yvette Lyles poses the following question regarding the state of her home and those around her: **Can you please state how my home was damaged so badly [from the stormwater and sewage] that my family had to live in a hotel for nine (9) months with a HVAC system that was also affected?**

Mayor Jackson, it is not lost on us that we live on separate sides of Centreville from you. **To** you and many of your alderman, our issues are worlds apart from what you encounter daily and thus, not urgent **to** many of you. However, these issues have taken over our lives, stripped us of our livelihoods, devastated our finances and, for many of us, created disastrous consequences for our health.

As you have asked that we listen to what you have to say regarding the merger, we ask that you listen to what we have to say in response to this merger and to our concerns about the conditions of our every day life for which Centreville is accountable.

Please respond with your availability to meet with our committee. You can reach our committee co-president, **Walter Byrd at 618-772-3523** to relay the time and date(s) of availability.

Thank you,  
Centreville Citizens for Change