

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Disaster Recovery Commission Quarterly Meeting
Thursday, January 8, 2009

Members Present: Meredith Harlacher, Ward Kirby, Thad Gregory, Ray Faust, Thomas Barnwell, Russell Hildebrand, Donna Lowman

Members Absent: N/A

Council Members Present: No council members present.

Town Staff Present: Charles Cousins, Lavarn Lucas, Paul Rasch, Trudie Johnson, Jayme Lopko, Jill Foster, Michelle Harrigan, Jeff Buckalew, Nancy Gasen, Bonnie Evans, Shawn Colin, Randy Nicholson, Tom Fultz

Media Present: N/A

Public Present: John Geisler – Port Royal
Anna Cauthen – Hilton Head Chamber of Commerce

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kirby called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

II. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT COMPLIANCE

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Kirby asked if anyone had any questions, changes or corrections regarding the minutes from October 9, 2008. There being no discussion, Chairman Kirby asked for approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Harlacher moved for approval and Ms. Lowman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPEARANCE BY CITIZENS

N/A

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Plans for 2009.

- a. Public Education Program – Paul Rasch stated that Emergency Management staff has meet with the Community Development staff regarding the Public Education piece. He distributed a memo outlining the progress on this endeavor (memo is attached to minutes). After a thorough review, it was decided that the piece should be produced in-house rather than hiring an outside consultant. The program has been approached as an “all hazards” information piece rather than just focusing on hurricane preparedness. Information covering pre-approval of home plans, damage assessment and other questions that are primarily Community Development issues are also included. It is anticipated that a handout program will go to print in March and be ready sometime in early April. For distribution, Paul reviewed the media outlets available, as well as

having the staff actively solicit opportunities to present the piece (public presentations to groups, Island festivals and events, etc.). Trudie Johnson told the Commission that the Town's website would be revamped to reflect the same information as well as providing links for specific issues to other government websites such as FEMA. The website update is proposed to happen sometime in June.

- 2. IT Preparations for Disaster.** Tom Fultz addressed the issue of protecting, preserving and redeploying our IT capabilities if we evacuate the Island. Tom stated he is the Town's liaison for the Beaufort EOC and he has a 5-member team from the Town's IT staff that is responsible for the support of our Island EOC and the USCB campus. The local equipment will be taken off-line and physically moved in a specialized trailer to USCB if we evacuate. Assets needed for continuity of services both at the temporary location and during the recovery phase have been identified and are being assembled. At this time, only the necessary programs would be re-established – this would include internet capabilities, email capabilities, the financial programs, etc. Tom also mentioned that our website is hosted in Atlanta, so in the event of evacuation, the website would still be available online and updates would continue as long as there was internet connectivity. The "800" numbers that are listed on the website are also hosted remotely, so they too would be operational. Fiber-line connections with the County are also being worked on in connection with the USCB location. Additionally, Tom told the Commission that the IT department is coordinating with companies such as Hargray and Time-Warner regarding their backup plans as an assurance of the Town's capabilities. A discussion ensued regarding the importance of communications and the different options that need to be incorporated into the Town's plan for connectivity and dissemination of up-to-date information to the public.

Tom told the Commissioners that on a non-emergency daily basis, a 10-hour backup each night is completed of all the Town's programs and software. That backup is removed from the IT department as a further precaution in case of fire or disaster that would affect Town Hall.

The Commissioners raised the question of capability if the Town needed to move to Barnwell rather than USCB. Tom stated that at this time the Barnwell location is not as refined as USCB, but there would be connectivity. Chief Lucas stated that it is not feasible to be set-up at both USCB and Barnwell with the same level of connectivity at the same time. The severity of the disaster would determine whether going to Barnwell would be necessary and if so, whether USCB would be a stop-off point during both evacuation and re-entry.

3. Updates:

- a. Debris Management Update.** Jeff Buckalew stated that the draft for a comprehensive debris management plan would be reviewed by the Town next week and will then be forwarded to FEMA for approval. This plan provides post event guidance and direction for staff and contractors and allows for additional reimbursement if the plan is approved by FEMA. Staff is in the process of securing a contract for debris monitoring. Bids have been submitted, interviews have been completed and staff will be submitting their recommendation to the Town manager with the anticipation of having a contract by the end of January. For the debris removal portion, it is expected to have a contract for that by the end of February. At the request of the Commission, Jeff elaborated on the components of the comprehensive plan and the various pre-approvals that have been

completed. In response to a specific question regarding land usage for debris collection and reduction, Jeff stated that there are a number of areas both within the Plantations and Town-owned that will be used. Even though Honey Horn is the preferred site as the primary collection area, Charles Cousins clarified that Council does not want to use Honey Horn due to the development on that site. He stated further that they are now looking at Jenkins Island as the primary site, but that the site will have to be studied and evaluated before a final decision is made.

- b. Damage Assessment.** Trudie Johnson began by stating that she and the Town's Building Official, Bob Klein, have reviewed in detail the procedures and organizational structure of the assessment process. A concern that surfaced during their review was the function of the support staff for the assessors in the field, which led to a concept of operations being developed for support staff. As stated in the October meeting all of the damage assessment materials, supplies, placards and tools have been cataloged and stored. The "go" boxes have been stocked, inventoried and stored, vehicle assignments have been finalized, etc. Trudie stated that the Disaster Assessment Plan has been mirrored in the COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan). She also confirmed that this is a living document and will be updated or revised as necessary.

The Residential Substantial Damage Cost Estimator program has been integrated into a GIS database and is currently being installed on all the laptops for the damage assessors. These are the laptops used by the inspectors on a daily basis. The installation is expected to be completed this week. All other programs have been reviewed, streamlined and are fully operational. The damage assessors' in-house training will be held on January 21st and 28th. Chris Caird, in the GIS department, has developed a training manual and will conduct the training sessions. Field training will be held once a month during February, March and April. Additional training will be conducted as necessary and review sessions will be held as refreshers for the assessors.

Meetings were held with Beaufort County EOC personnel to coordinate efforts and evaluate compatibility of programs for the assessment process. They have not progressed as far as the Town with their assessment program, so they were happy to work on integrating the Town's program into the County's. This will allow the County to see the assessment information for Hilton Head in "real time".

The question regarding an in-house user for the HAZUS plan was raised. Trudie reviewed the information from the October meeting and stated that the Town now has both a primary user and a backup user.

The question of using volunteers was again addressed. The issue of approval and training comes into play and Trudie stated that at this time it was not the Town's intention to use volunteers in the assessment process. A discussion ensued and Chairman Kirby suggested that staff look at establishing a policy to address this issue with the public.

- 4. 2009 Meeting Schedule.** It had been previously questioned as to whether the DRC should incorporate work sessions into the calendar schedule or stay with a schedule of quarterly meetings only. At this point, there does not seem to be a need for the work sessions, but they may still be scheduled on an individual basis when needed.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Recovery and Redevelopment Planning. Chairman Kirby directed the group's attention to his memo that was included in the meeting packet. The memo was regarding Item # 1 of the Disaster Recovery Task Force: "Recovery & Redevelopment (The Vision)". There were six policies and six primary tasks identified in that section (Section II of the CEMP IV – Recovery). A key task was to review the current Town Comprehensive Plan and develop, as appropriate, strategies to: reduce risks from future disasters; eliminate non-conforming uses; modifying land use; correcting plan and zoning inconsistencies; Realigning, extending or improving roads; improving housing conditions or affordability; enhancing local economy; upgrading inadequate commercial, industrial or public facilities; improving urban design; providing open space; and preserving historic buildings or other cultural resources. Since 2003, Town Council has addressed some of these as well as staff working on various assignments with regard to these.

Charles Cousins stated that there will be trade-offs in addressing these issues. If a disaster strikes, we will certainly have the opportunity to make the Community better. This would include roads, buildings, parks, etc. However, with trying to get "up and running" as soon as possible after a disaster, there needs to be flexibility in some areas such as permitting. Charles introduced Randy Nicholson, Comprehensive Planning Mgr., and Shawn Colin, staff liaison to the Comp Plan Committee. Randy gave a brief overview of the items currently being reviewed by the Planning Commission, in particular the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Shawn stated the Planning Commission and Comp Plan sub-committee has been working on the Comp Plan for a little over a year. Suggestions for redevelopment strategies and direction were submitted to Town Council as the result of a series of interviews and a community assessment survey. Shawn passed out pertinent portions of the community survey and reviewed the results with the group. One of the goals of the Comp Plan is to make sure there is consistency between the Planning Commission strategies and policies and those of the DRC. The Comp Plan has to be reviewed every five years and updated every 10 years. 2009 is the tenth year since the last re-write. Randy stated that the members are welcome to attend any of the neighborhood meetings and also encouraged them to review the Comp Plan on the Town's website. It was suggested that a work session be scheduled to meet jointly with the Planning Commission and Comp Plan Committee to review redevelopment strategies and the permitting process in particular. Chairman Kirby asked Shawn to coordinate with the DRC secretary to set a meeting date.

2. Council Retreat Update. Chief Lucas passed out a list of the results from the Town Council Workshop. He stated there was only one target that was directly related to the DRC and that was the High Priority item "All Hazards Disaster Plan". Chief Lucas told the Commission that in the past there were many plans that would show up on the Council's priority list as needing to be updated (such as the CEMP and COOP) and this year those have all been rolled into this one line item. The CEMP will be renamed to Comprehensive Emergency Management Program Overview as a more appropriate title. That plan has been updated and is currently being reviewed by Fire & Rescue. The plan is substantially "slimmer" as it was determined that many items belonged in the Emergency Operations plan and those items were moved appropriately. The Emergency Operations Plan is being updated but will not be ready for several months. The COOP plan is ready in draft form and is targeted to be printed in late January. In the future, each of these plans may be

reported on separately, but they still are included in hazard planning. To comply with FEMA regulations, disaster plans need to be “all hazard” and not specific to just one type of disaster. This has required a great deal of updating. Though most of the information is general in nature, there will annexes that will be specific to a particular disaster as necessary, in particular hurricanes.

There were a number of pertinent items discussed pre-workshop that did not make the 2008 Council’s workshop agenda. One of those was the concern & desire for a self-contained facility to which the Town could evacuate. That item and others may be addressed in the future.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Disaster Recovery Commission Quarterly meeting will be held on Thursday, April 9, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

Members of both the Disaster Recovery Commission and the Planning Commission will be advised of proposed dates for a joint work session.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Kirby thanked all those in attendance and adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Judith D. Boroski