

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Special Public Planning Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 30, 2015
3:30p.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

APPROVED

Committee Members Present: Chairman Tom Lennox, Kim Likins and John McCann

Committee Members Absent: None

Town Council Present: Mayor Pro Tem Bill Harkins and Lee Edwards

Town Staff Present: Nicole Dixon, Senior Planner
Jill Foster, Deputy Director of Community Development
Richard Spruce, Plans Examiner
Kathleen Carlin, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

2. Freedom of Information Act Compliance

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

3. New Business

a) Program for Public Information – Request for recommendation to Town Council for approval of the Program for Public Information. As a recommended activity of the Community Rating System (CRS), and in an effort to maintain the reduced flood insurance costs to its residents and to provide flood-related information to property owners through a coordinated outreach program, the Town has developed the Program for Public Information (PPI). Because there are people who are not aware of flood insurance requirements or may not see a need to insure their property, a Flood Insurance Coverage Assessment and Coverage Improvement Plan will also be incorporated into the PPI. When having an outreach program and flood insurance coverage improvement plan, it is recommended by the CRS program to have all of the activities, educational opportunities and materials assembled in a coordinated document. The goal of the PPI is to better inform the public about their flood risks, how to improve their flood hazard preparedness, what they can do to decrease future damage and the benefits of having flood insurance coverage for both the structure and contents. Chairman Lennox introduced the business item and requested that the staff make their presentation.

Ms. Nicole Dixon made the presentation on behalf of staff. The staff recommended that the Public Planning Committee forward the proposed Community Rating System Program for Public Information to Town Council with a recommendation of approval. Ms. Dixon began her presentation with a brief history of the program. The Town takes a very proactive approach to flood awareness and mitigation and pursues a variety of activities, which the Town receives credit for under the CRS program. Some of the activities include: preventive measures such as open space preservation, storm water management, property

protection measures such as building elevation, flood proofing, promotion of flood insurance, and adoption and enforcement of all ICC building codes, natural resources protection, structural protection such as beach nourishment and drainage improvements and emergency management services. The CRS is a voluntary program for the National Flood Insurance Program. Over the years the Town has developed several educational outreach projects to promote flood awareness. The Town's commitment to the CRS program enhances public safety, protects property, preserves the natural functions of floodplains, and reduces flood insurance premiums.

The Town has been actively participating in the CRS program since October 1, 1991. The Town is currently a Class 5 Community. Because of the many activities done by the Town as part of the CRS program, the National Flood Insurance Program awards the Town by giving its residents in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) a 25% discount on their flood insurance premiums. A major component of the CRS program is making the public aware of flood hazards, how to protect themselves and their property, emergency preparedness and the importance of purchasing flood insurance, via various outreach methods.

In an effort to maintain the reduced flood insurance premium costs to its residents and to provide flood-related information to property owners through a more aggressive outreach program, the Town has developed the Program for Public Information (PPI). Through the public information program, people at risk can learn about the hazards they face, prepare for flooding and take steps to reduce their exposure to flood damage.

The Town decided to incorporate a Flood Insurance Coverage Assessment and Coverage Improvement Plan into the PPI because there are people who are not aware of flood insurance requirements or may not see a need to insure their property. By having an outreach program and flood insurance coverage improvement plan, with all of the activities and educational opportunities assembled in a coordinated document, the Town hopes people will have the information they need to protect themselves and their property.

The goal of the PPI is to better inform the public about their flood risks, how to improve their flood hazard preparedness, identify what they can do to decrease future damage and the benefits of having flood insurance coverage for both the structure and contents. All of the public information activities will have the same objective: to get people to protect themselves and their property, whether it is to take flood protection steps, such as buying flood insurance, developing a family emergency plan, retrofitting a building, or complying with a floodplain management regulations.

The Town's PPI Program will be based on specific information. The messages dispersed will educate the public, through outreach materials such as publications and brochures, will provide flood response preparation and disaster recovery information when needed, and will help other organizations on getting the word out about flood awareness. It will also educate contractors, builders, realtors, insurance agencies and mortgage brokers on the importance of flood awareness and promoting flood insurance and assist the stakeholders in their outreach efforts.

The CRS program requires a PPI go through a seven step process, which Ms. Dixon discussed in detail.

Step 1. Establish a PPI Committee

PPI Committee Members

The PPI Committee consists of ten members. Four of the members are Town staff and six are volunteers from the community that together have a wealth of knowledge regarding flood hazards and flood risk. The community members, or stakeholders, represent real estate, flood insurance, mortgage lender, property management and property owners association. Some of the members of the committee are Hilton Head Island floodplain residents.

The members role is to assist in developing the PPI by providing feedback from their perspective on what areas are best to target for outreach, what groups should be targeted, what messages should be delivered, and the best method, by whom and how often, to deliver these messages. Ms. Dixon, the Town's CRS Coordinator, served as the committee's leader. Ms. Dixon facilitated the meetings and drafted the document being reviewed today.

Step 2. Assess the Community's Public Information Needs

A) Existing Flood Problems

The Town of Hilton Head Island is relatively flat with a maximum elevation of 24-ft. in limited places. Most areas of the island are subject to base flood elevations of about 14-ft., although the flood elevations along the shoreline range from 15-ft. to 22-ft. Much of the inland areas on the island are subject to flooding of about 1-3 ft.

B) Target Areas

After assessing the Town's existing flood hazards, the PPI Committee agreed on 10 target audiences that would benefit most from public information outreach. The overall goal of this program is to make information more readily available to the target audiences in a manner that will encourage each target audience to adopt behaviors to improve preparedness and decrease future flood damage or loss.

C) Flood Insurance Policy Coverage Assessment

The PPI Committee agreed that a Flood Insurance Coverage Assessment was needed and should be done in conjunction with the PPI process in order to evaluate the Town for areas that may be lacking flood insurance. In order to determine the level of flood insurance coverage, the most recent flood insurance policy data was obtained from FEMA. Because flood insurance policy data is protected by the Privacy Act and must be kept confidential, general data was generated with the help of Town GIS staff. The current flood insurance policies were plotted on a map so that an assessment could be made and areas lacking flood insurance coverage could be identified.

D) Existing Public Information Efforts

A key part of developing a PPI is identifying what public information activities currently exist within the Town and throughout the community. By seeing what was already done throughout the community, it was easier for the PPI Committee to develop a more comprehensive approach for public outreach.

Step 3. Formulate Messages

After reviewing the Town's needs assessment and the flood insurance policy assessment, the PPI Committee identified ten key topics to be disseminated via messages to the target audiences selected.

Step 4. Identify Outreach Projects to Convey the Messages

After reviewing the existing public information efforts that are done by the Town, the committee decided those efforts should be continued as part of our outreach projects but determined they should be publicized more through the PPI program. Additional outreach projects were also formulated.

Step 5. Examine Other Public Information Initiatives

Aside from outreach projects, the PPI will ensure various other related activities that inform people and motivate them to protect life and property, purchase flood insurance and protect natural flood plain functions are being done.

Step 6. Prepare the PPI Document

The overall strategy of the PPI program is to make information more readily available to the target audiences in a manner that will encourage each audience to adopt behaviors that will improve preparedness, help protect themselves and their property, and decrease future flood damage. Research has shown that well designed public information programs work and people's behavior can change.

Step 7. Implement, Monitor and Evaluate the Program

The PPI Committee will meet annually to monitor the implementation of the outreach projects and to reassess the flood insurance coverage. The committee will assess whether the outcomes desired were achieved and what, if anything, should be changed. An evaluation report will be prepared each year and will be presented to Town Council. It will also be included as part of the annual CRS recertification.

Ms. Dixon stated that the Program for Public Information is scheduled to be presented to Town Council on August 4, 2015.

The committee discussed the Program for Public Information with Ms. Dixon. The committee stated they are very impressed with the staff's work on this important program. As part of the discussion, Mr. Richard Spruce presented additional statements regarding FEMA requirements, flood standards and elevation requirements.

Chairman Lennox requested public comments on the Program for Public Information and none were received.

Following final comments by the committee, Chairman Lennox requested that a motion be made to recommend by Resolution to Town Council adoption of the Program for Public Information as presented.

Mrs. Likins made a **motion** that the committee should forward the Program for Public Information by Resolution to Town Council with a recommendation for its **adoption**. Mr. McCann **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 3-0-0.

4. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

July 23, 2015

Kathleen Carlin
Administrative Assistant

Tom Lennox
Chairman