

**Mitigation Planning Team
July 31, 2018
MINUTES**

A meeting of the **Lewes Mitigation Planning Team** was held on **Tuesday July 31, 2018 commencing at 11:00am in the Council Chambers at City Hall**, with the following members present: Ted Becker, Mayor, Chairperson; Cpl. Chatham Marsch, Lewes PD; Darrin Gordon, BPW; Danielle Swallow, University of Delaware, and Charlie O'Donnell, GMB. **Also present were:** City Manager Ann Marie Townshend & City Planner Tom West, Council Ex-Officio Dennis Reardon. **Absent:** Cheryl Hopple, Tom Spell, Joe Stormer, Wally Evans

1. **Call to Order:** *Mayor Becker* called the meeting to order at **11:00am**
2. **Presentation & consideration of the minutes from the June 5, 2018 meeting.**

ACTION: *Mr. Marsch made a motion to approve the June 5, 2018 minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Gordon, all voting in favor, motion carried.*

3. **Discussion of Sussex County All Hazards Mitigation Plan and recommendation to city council regarding adoption by the city of Lewes**

Mr. West explained there has been discussion about an application for a FEMA mitigation grant and one of the prerequisites is to have a certified hazard mitigation plan (HMP). Lewes has an HMP but it hasn't been certified by the state. In order to have something in place to apply for this grant, Lewes needs to adopt the county's HMP, which was certified by the state in 2016. He distributed an excerpt from the plan that relates to Lewes. If the city does adopt the county's plan, they would be looking at these guidelines for part of what the city might be doing as it moves forward implementing the plan. The possible adoption of the county's plan will be on the August city council agenda for their consideration.

Ms. Swallow stated the county's plan has been recognized by DEMA and FEMA. *Mr. O'Donnell* questioned if there has been any cross-referencing of the county's plan to the city's plan to determine the differences and/or similarities. *Mr. Gordon* requested consideration be postponed until the committee is able to review the county's plan. He doesn't think there would be any problems, but he does not want to make a decision without reviewing the county's HMP. *Ms. Swallow* explained that by adopting the county's plan, the city would become eligible for grant funds. *Mr. Marsch* wants to review and cross-reference the county's plan to the city's plan to make sure it is correct. *Mr. Becker* agreed, there may be updates to the city's plan needed to make it consistent with the county.

Mr. Reardon questioned if there is a timeframe.

Damaris Slawik, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, explained the application period for the grant is from October to January. The HMP will have to be adopted by the time the application is submitted. She explained if the city wanted to certify their own plan it would be a 2-3-year process and they would not be eligible for grant funding until the plan is adopted.

There was discussion about comparing the county's plan to the city's plan. Team members will review the county plan and consider a recommendation to city council at the next Mitigation Team meeting in September to be on the October council meeting agenda. *Mr. West* stated they may need to coordination with the county prior to the next meeting.

4. **Discussion regarding the planning of the September 21 workshop**

Ms. Swallow explained the workshop will address emergency planning for the elderly and people with disabilities. It will be held on September 21st at the Lewes Library. Registration will begin at 9:30am and the workshop will begin at 10:00am.

There are three main goals:

1. Assess individual vulnerabilities, with a focus related to flood and storm hazards,
2. Complete an emergency card with contact and health related information,
3. Connect individuals with resources and expand their network, such as helping to register for online portals.

They have a team assembled and will be partnering with DEMA, University of Delaware/IPA, Greater Lewes Community Village, Sea Grant, city of Lewes, Citizen Core, Beebe Healthcare, and the Board of Public Works.

They need to discuss getting the word out to the community about the workshop.

5. Discussion regarding participation in Delaware Resilient Communities Partnership grant related to lot coverage in flood prone areas

Ms. Townshend explained the Delaware Resilient Communities Partnership will be soliciting proposals and a combination of DNREC and consulting firms working under DNREC's direction will be doing the work. The city of Rehoboth submitted a proposal for a study of the impact of impervious coverage in areas that are flood prone. All the beach communities from Lewes to Fenwick Island are experiencing the demolition of small beach cottages and replacing them with much larger structures, thus increasing impervious cover. Also, where zoning allows, people are subdividing lots. This proposal will look at the impact as it relates to flooding, developing best practices, educational mechanisms and ordinances to help communities deal with these issues. The coastal communities do not have many drainage systems to help with flooding from rain and tides and are trying to determine how it all plays together to impact development.

Mr. Becker stated the city of Rehoboth already has a floor area ratio, but Lewes certainly doesn't.

Ms. Townshend stated most of the coastal communities have fairly high lot coverage allowances and more so now than before people are building to these limits. What are the things we can do to make sure we are not making things worse?

Mr. West stated the real goal is to stop run-off and lot coverage may be part but there are other solutions that can also help. He hopes this is part of the scope; to mitigate the impacts.

Ms. Swallow stated DNREC wants to take a systematic look at the whole coastal region and are inviting all the towns to be involved.

Ms. Townshend stated when Rehoboth submitted the proposal, Lewes, Dewey and Fenwick signed on. When they were successful with the grant, DNREC request they reach out to Bethany, and S. Bethany and then Henlopen Acres, who have voiced interest.

Ms. Swallow explained DNREC is not only looking at the lot coverage issue but whether there could be mitigation factors, such as porous surface driveways instead of traditional nonporous materials. *Ms. Townshend* stated a lot of the areas do not have stormwater systems and therefore, vulnerability increases due to lot coverage.

Mr. Becker stated this grant was looked at by the Association of Coastal Towns, but it was determined they were not in a position to make the application; therefore, Rehoboth took the lead. It is a great opportunity for all the coastal communities. The work by the Lewes Planning Commission needs to look at it in light of what will come out of this study.

6. Discussion with DEMA representatives regarding emergency operations planning & resiliency

Damaris Slawik & Paige Fitzgerald of DEMA, Hazard Mitigation, gave a presentation on Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA). FMA is run by DNREC, is very similar to PDM, but just focuses on flooding issues and funding is competitive throughout the country.

The focus of PDM is to aid applicants in implementing cost affect measures to reduce the risk of flooding and other natural hazards to individuals and property. Each year the state is allocated funds from FEMA. It is 75% federal and 25% nonfederal cost share. The 25% can be cash or in-kind services.

The applicant must have a certified hazard mitigation plan, which could be the county's plan, to meet that criteria. The projects must be consistent with mitigation actions listed in the mitigation plan. Individuals and business are not eligible.

Mr. West questioned if some of the actions in the plan that are incomplete would be considered projects? *Ms. Slawik* stated it can't be a project that has already started, it would have to be a new project.

Ms. Slawik reviewed some possible mitigation projects that would be eligible for this grant. Project types that would not be eligible include vehicles, project already in process or have received other federal funds and response communication systems. All projects have to be proven cost effective, as per FEMA cost analysis tools, scoring at least a 1.

They are expecting the notice of funding opportunity in August and will be holding a briefing on August 15th. The application period opens in October. They will work with the city to make sure the application is eligible and help to obtain all the necessary documentation. The application period will close in January 2019. They are tentatively expecting FEMA Region 3 to review the applications in spring 2019, sent to FEMA headquarters in summer 2019 and awarded in fall 2019. Applications must be completed on FEMA's eGrant system by the end of December.

They would like a pre-application completed prior to October 1st which they will review for eligibility. If the pre-applications received exceed funding, they have a policy group that will rank the projects. They will submit all the projects; the process will just determine project priority. All construction activities will have to go through an engineering review as a part of the environmental requirements to determine if the activity will solve the problem or if there are other solutions that would be a better fit. Any studies or designs must have an engineer's stamp.

Lewes would be responsible for the pre-application and submitting the application into the eGrants system. Lewes would be responsible for the EHP letter, cost analysis data and elevation certificates. The city would be responsible for ensuring that all the FEMA and DEMA guidelines are met. FEMA requires quarterly reports and is a reimbursement-based program. Site visits must be completed quarterly.

Ms. Swallow asked if the criteria take into consideration the geographical representation of the state. *Ms. Slawik* stated she doesn't believe there are any criteria for where the projects are located. If there are projects from an area that is prone to flooding, they will probably be higher on the priority list. There is a list of criteria that they would go through.

Mr. West questioned if there is a time requirement for implementation or is it taken project by project? *Ms. Slawik* stated it is done project by project. She believes the projects are 24 months but there is also the opportunity for a period of performance extension.

Mr. Becker questioned if there was a cap on the size of a grant? *Ms. Slawik* stated for an individual project there is a cap. She didn't know the amount, but it is fairly high.

Mr. West reported they met with DEMA in June and part of the discussion was the grant program and potential projects. Given the grant parameters and discussion it came down to specific projects. One project is the Cedar Street/California Avenue tidal flood abatement. Another was structures and elevations, such as the Net House basement. These are not the projects being advocated but they are at the preliminary stage of discussion. If they go for the grant, the main issue is coming up with ideas for a project.

Mr. O'Donnell stated from the vulnerability study there were three main areas:

- Cedar Street/Californian Avenue tidal flooding from the canal: *This has the most potential*
- Savanah Road beachside flooding
- New Road Canary Creek area/bridge: *This is on De/IDOT and they will be replacing the bridge.*

Ms. Swallow stated no matter what project is chosen, it will take time to prepare the application and time is of the essence. The city is going to want to line up partners, look at the cost benefits and engineering aspects. We can also be conferring with DEMA and they can be giving us valuable input along the way.

Mr. Becker stated they may want to look at what is going on in the Army Corp lands along the canal behind the properties along Cedar Street.

Mr. O'Donnell questioned if the city has been staying on top of the phragmites issue. *Mr. Marsch* stated there was spraying last year. Frank Buck from DNREC used to take of this.

Ms. Swallow stated Dewey Beach is looking at a stormwater mitigation project involving bio-retention ponds in a very small area. They have determined while it will not address all the vulnerability, it will address some. There many be some way to look into this kind of option off Cedar Street.

Mr. Reardon pointed out there is a lot of flooding along Cape Henlopen Drive also and they may want to consider this area for some kind of mitigation. *Ms. Swallow* stated when they did the evacuation study Cape Henlopen Drive was identified as a secondary evacuation route. This could be tied to a previous study's recommendation.

Mr. O'Donnell explained the situation regarding the flooding on Cedar Street/California Avenue. They tried to address it over 20 years ago but fell into a new situation because of new wetlands were created as a result of the flooding issue. Whatever structure they came up with would have to be able to retain the new wetlands and keep the flooding out. DNREC has the responsibility of designing it and they had a tide check valve mechanical structure up at Kitts Hummock they were going to use as a template, but the project was never completed. *Ms. Swallow* stated she could set up a meeting with that division to discuss ideas to see what has evolved.

Mr. West stated they need to get direction from this committee, get feedback from city staff and then return with more details and discuss the pros and cons to make a decision.

Mr. O'Donnell stated addressing the water issue in the Net House basement could be a safe project if the others don't come through.

Ms. Swallow will reach out to get a meeting with DNREC and explore some of these ideas.

7. Discussion regarding impact of sea level rise on historic properties

Mr. Becker distributed and reviewed information on the issue of sea-level rise, flooding and historic properties. The city has one block of houses on E. Market Street between Cedar and Bay Avenue, that is in the city's Historic District and is prone to flooding.

8. Member Updates

Mayor Becker read an updated from Cheryl Hopple, Beebe Healthcare. They will be having an active shooter exercise in October which will start in the emergency room. They are working with the state of Delaware and the Lewes Police Department. The county will be participating in Oceanview. Beebe received 10 new mass casualty stretchers they will be training with during this exercise.

Officer Marsch announced the Lewes Fire Department is doing an ICS 300 class September 8 & 9. He will be getting a list together of everyone that needs this training and has reserved 12 seats for Lewes.

9. Schedule next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled on **August 28 at 11:00am**

10. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at **12:17pm**

Minutes submitted by

Alice Erickson
Recording Secretary