

**Mitigation Planning Team  
August 28, 2018  
Minutes**

The quarterly meeting of the **Lewes Mitigation Planning Team** was held on **Tuesday August 28, 2018 commencing at 11:00am in the Council Chambers at City Hall**, with the following members present: Ted Becker, Mayor, Chairperson; Chatham Marsch, LPD; Darrin Gordon, BPW; Danielle Swallow, University of Delaware; Charlie O'Donnell, GMB; Joe Stormer, Resident. **Also present were:** City Manager Ann Marie Townshend & City Planner Tom West. **Absent:** Cheryl Hopple, Dennis Reardon, Wally Evans, Lewes Fire Department

**1. Call to Order:** *Mayor Becker* called the meeting to order at **11:00am**

**2. Discussion of comments to the Sussex County Mitigation Plan**

*Tom West* explained the city needs to adopt the Sussex County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to have a certified plan on file and be able to apply for a mitigation grant. The question was how it compares to the city's ongoing planning efforts. A group from the mitigation team met to review the Sussex County plan as it relates to the city of Lewes. All of the action items listed in the section regarding Lewes are in sync with the city's plan. The group also addressed the capacity ratings and agreed with the way it was cited in the county's plan. It was determined to come back to the mitigation team for further discussion regarding a recommendation to city council that the city could move forward with the adoption of the county's plan. For the city to adopt the county's plan there is a one-page resolution that would go to city council for consideration. The meeting with DEMA would be on October 15<sup>th</sup> regarding the grant's pre-application discussion about project ideas.

*Mr. West* stated the group felt there were no changes need to the city's plan.

*Mayor Becker* stated they are anticipating have this issue on the September council agenda.

**ACTION:** *Mr. Gordon made a motion to recommend to Mayor & City Council the adoption of the Sussex County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Mr. Marsch, all voting in favor, motion carried.*

**3. Discussion regarding the Sept 21<sup>st</sup> Emergency Preparedness workshop.**

*Dannielle Swallows* distributed a copy of the flyer for the workshop. The workshop will be held on September 21, 2018, 9:30am-12:30pm at the Lewes Library. There are a several exhibits lined up, including the BPW, Greater Lewes Community Village, DEMA, Beebe Healthcare and Citizen Core. The maximum number of registrations is 50 due to space limitations.

There will be two interactive components: filling out a communications card with vital information about health, emergency contacts and insurance information and there will be registration stations for Code Red and Smart 911.

*Mr. Becker* stated this committee has been offering different types of annual workshops and this year they are focusing on the aging and disabled population. The event will be posted on the city's website and an email blast will go out. He is hoping the Cape Gazette will be able to do an article on the event.

**4. Update from Beebe:** None

**5. Discussion re: initiatives to reduce hazardous environmental waste**

*Mr. Becker* explained the city has endorsed a reusable bag project lead by Dr. Danielle Dickson, of University of Delaware and funded by Sea Grant. *Ms. Swallow* stated Dr. Dickson has been approached by other towns to replicate this project.

*Mr. Becker* stated the city has informally asked local restaurants to stop or reduce their use of plastic straws and stirrers. Some have started using eco-friendly containers for takeout. There is currently nothing in the State Code that would require these changes. The committee could send a recommendation to city council requesting their support moving forward to implement these changes. Another issue is reducing plastic bags.

*Ms. Swallow* suggested having some kind of outreach along the beach regarding litter and fishing tackle, which is a big liability in the water ways. There needs to be an educational campaign about this issue to include possible signage. DNREC has a sustainability program now and the city could get in touch with them regarding education, promotion and possible grant opportunities.

There was discussion about how to approach the business community about reducing their use of plastic.

*Mayor Becker* stated the city could send out a letter to the local business encouraging their voluntary participation. *Ms. Swallow* stated a lot of people don't understand the recycling rules and there needs to be more education efforts in the community. It is also important to communicate with the bait and tackle shops about the littering of fishing lines.

**ACTION:** *Mr. Stormer* made a motion to forward a recommendation to Mayor & City Council requesting a letter be sent to local businesses requesting voluntary compliance in the reduction of the use of plastics, encouraging the use of alternative products, seconded by *Mr. O'Donnell*, all voting in favor, motion carried.

## **6. Discussion of potential projects for potential state funding**

*Mr. West* explained at the last mitigation team meeting the direction was for staff to meet and discuss potential projects in more detail. There was a very helpful meeting held with Jim Sullivan from DNREC about the overall projects and applications to get a sense of the direction the city should go in. *Mr. West* reported he attended a meeting at Sussex County EOC about an overview of the DEMA grant discussed at the last mitigation meeting and a flood mitigation assistance program that will have very similar criteria and objectives. Both grants open in October and are due at the end of the year. The government has concluded there is not enough funds in the FEMA program to cover all flooding losses, therefore, the emphasis is on reducing significant repetitive loss. With all this in mind, they narrowed it down to three projects:

- W. Cedar Avenue tidal flooding improvements
- Cedar Avenue cul-de-sac flood improvements (Houston, Delmar, Rehoboth, Milton, Lewes)
- Beachside wildfire mitigation

*Mr. Stormer* would like the area by the Reserves at Pilottown included in the beachside wildfire mitigation. The built up of dead phragmites in this area is a fire hazard. *Mr. Marsch* agreed. He did some research and the last time anything was done was in 2008. He will talk with DNREC to determine how to move forward and will include this area.

*Mr. O'Donnell* reported he has spoken with Jim Sullivan about the canal berm repair at the west end of Cedar Street and Mr. Sullivan has contacted Brooks Cahall from DNREC drainage section. *Mr. O'Donnell* reach out to Mr. Cahall but doesn't have any feedback yet. There had been discussion about Mr. Cahall's drainage section taking the lead on this project which could affect the city pursuing funds for this project.

*Ms. Swallow* stated she would like the city to still consider this project. If DNREC is involved, they may not have funds available, and it is a very good project that could be eligible the DEMA/FEMA funding. The berms are protecting not only private residences but also the Children's Beach House, which represents a vulnerable population. DNREC would be a good partner that could bring CRS points in the city's favor. The other potential projects are more on a maintenance level, but this project has a larger scope and would be an excellent candidate.

*Ms. Townshend* agreed maintenance projects are not typically looked at because they usually last for a limited time before they are needed again.

*Mr. O'Donnell* explained the history of the problem. There was a metal pipe that allowed tides to flow in and out at whatever capacity the pipe was sized. The pipe deteriorated and then the berm deteriorated so there is approximately a 50-foot section that is missing. They have been working on this issue for about 20 years. The project would probably include rebuilding the berm to allow the tide to enter the wetlands in a way that the newly created wetlands are preserved but would not allow extreme high tides into the area that would flood Cedar Street and the residential

areas, including the Children's Beach House. He questioned if DNREC were to take the lead on this project that DEMA funds would be available for this project.

*Ms. Swallow* thought it would be. They are always looking for the city to have partners and technical assistance and DNREC would supply that. Also, they would help with the necessary permitting.

**Judy Rolfe, 31 Henlopen Gardens.** *Ms. Rolfe* questioned the type of liquid sprayed on the phragmite and would it affect the marshes and sea life. *Mr. Marsch* stated he will have more information after he meets with DNREC.

*Mr. Becker* stated the Cedar Street project seems to have the most potential for the city. *Ms. Swallow* agreed anything that involves maintenance would be too limited in scope and not the most viable choice. There are probably other resources relating phragmite control that could be pursued. The Cedar Street project has DEMA and DNREC interest and would be more viable.

**ACTION:** *Mr. Stormer* made a motion to move forward with the FEMA/DEMA grant application for the West Cedar Street Tidal Flooding Improvements project, seconded by *Ms. Swallow*, all voting in favor, motion carried.

*Ms. Townshend* reported the city of Rehoboth applied for a grant through the Resilient Communities Partnership and Lewes, Dewey and Fenwick have also signed on. Once the grant was awarded to the city of Rehoboth, the balance of the coastal communities joined in. The project will have DNREC look at all coastal municipalities regarding impervious cover and how flooding is linked. They will develop model ordinances and model practices to help mitigate the issue. One of the challenges coastal communities are facing is that a lot of the development is not large enough to require review by the State Sediment and Stormwater Regulations. What is happening is that typically structures are being demolished and houses are being build on a large footprint. This increase in impervious surface may be exacerbating flooding issues. DNREC will meet with Rehoboth as the lead applicant and then there will be monthly meetings inviting all the partners.

*Mr. Becker* stated one of the potential outcomes would be a reduction in lot coverage. While Rehoboth is leading the project, each town will have to adopt a recommendation from their planning commissions, so the process could take a couple years to implement.

*Ms. Townshend* stated the Lewes Planning Commission is actively looking at these kinds of issues already. The LPC wants to be more proactive.

*Mr. Becker* stated Slaughter Beach, Prime Hook and Bowers Beach have express an interest in becoming members as they have the same lot coverage issues as other coastal communities.

## **7. Update on status of FEMA review of CRS rating.**

*Ms. Townshend* reviewed the status of the FEMA review of the city's CRS rating. There is path forward with getting outstanding issues resolved and there is optimism in having the city's rating increased. The city currently has a rating of 9, which is a 5% discount and a rating of 8 would be a 10% discount. Systems have been put in place, so the issues should not happen in the future.

## **8. Scheduling of next meeting.** The next meeting was scheduled on **October 9, 2018 at 11:00am**

## **9. Adjourn:** There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at **12:11pm**

Minutes submitted by,  
Alice Erickson  
Recording Secretary