

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Disaster Recovery Commission Work Session
Thursday, October 29, 2009

Members Present: Ward Kirby, Ray Faust, Thomas Barnwell, Russell Hildebrand, Donna Lowman

Members Absent: Thad Gregory, Meredith Harlacher

Council Members Present: No council members present.

Town Staff Present: Charles Cousins, Paul Rasch, Jill Foster, Jeff Buckelew, Trudie Johnson, Jayme Lopko, Michelle Harrigan, Nancy Gasen, Bonnie Evans, Darrin Shoemaker, Steve Markiw, Cary Gaffney, Jennifer Hasting, Brian McIlwee, Heather Colin, Jennifer Hastings

Media Present: N/A

Public Present: Ray Deal, Chamber of Commerce; Joe Croley, Hilton Head Area Assoc of Realtors; David L. White (resident); Perry White (resident).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kirby called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

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 the April 23, 2009 quarterly meeting. There being no discussion, Chairman Kirby asked for approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Barnwell moved for approval of the minutes as presented and Ms. Lowman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPEARANCE BY CITIZENS

David White introduced himself as a native of Hilton Head Island. He asked to address some “unmet needs” of the Island infrastructure. He expressed his concerns about the current overhead power lines and sewer lines with regard to the impact they would have on evacuation and recovery in the event of a disaster, sighting specific examples. Mr. White also expressed concern over the unpaved roads remaining on the Island as being obstacles to attracting visitors, as they diminish the “pristine” quality of the Island.

Chairman Kirby thanked Mr. White for his comments. A short discussion ensued regarding who is responsible for overseeing the plans with the public utilities for improvements. Jill Foster, Deputy Community Development Director, stated that the Town has a special projects inspector, Marc Torin, in the Community Development Department that monitors the utility projects and is working closely with Palmetto Electric. There is a map showing the progress of the Palmetto Electric project which is available to the public. It was also pointed out that Hilton Head PSD has a comprehensive sewer plan and Pete Nardi with the PSD could supply

information on the plan's timeline. Additional discussion was had regarding sewer lines, including the fact that the Town has made a concentrated effort to provide sewer lines to all new construction projects and those along the way to the project have the opportunity to tie-in.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Disaster Recovery Team Update. Jill Foster stated that there is a draft plan that staff has been working on for many months to fine tune and Charles Cousins, Community Development Director, is in the process of reviewing. The current plan is mirrored after the County's plan. Jill then reviewed aspects of the plan by means of a PowerPoint presentation. The first 30+ pages cover the introduction, purpose and scope of the plan. There are a number of planning assumptions and considerations such as looking at mild to moderate damage rather than a total catastrophe situation. There are also a series of planning policies provided by Council or the Town Manager, including debris management, dealing with private roads and emergency housing. Concept of Operations and Recovery Strategies outlines how the recovery management team is put together, what has to happen to kick this team into action, how to get additional staff if needed and also how to correctly lift a State of Emergency. The Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities is very detailed, listing each position, the responsibilities, who is assigned to that position and describing the recovery functions. The next to the last section addresses the Town's relationship to the County and State and then finally how the plan is maintained and updated.

Jill then reviewed the 10 items listed on the Agenda (New Business – Item A.)

1. Personnel Assignments & Organization Chart - This is basically the same as presented at the April 23, 2009 Disaster Recovery Commission meeting. One change is that the Public Facilities subsection has been moved up to be a primary section.
2. Call Back Tree – This plan is in place and is designed to get the right personnel back at the right time to optimize recovery with duplication of effort.
3. Vehicle Relocation & Pick-up - This covers the approved locations for personal vehicles of staff assigned to both on-Island and off-Island sites and logistics of getting personnel to their assigned locations during evacuation and back after the event.
4. ROC Lay-out / Trailer Set-up – The Recovery Operations Center will be housed in the new Facilities Management building. The building has already been prepared for additional computer and power requirements that will be needed at that time. The Fire & Rescue Training facility next to the Facilities Management building will be used as a temporary Town Hall site if the main offices are uninhabitable. Trailers will be brought in for offices and this will be where the public will go for permits, etc.
5. Computer Status - Staff is currently working on arrangements to have all temporary locations ready to accommodate computer needs. The Town uses laptops which will further assist in getting up and running as quickly as possible.
6. MOU's for Temporary Housing (hotels) - MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding) have been confirmed with five hotels to-date for use by Town personnel when recalled in the event their own homes are uninhabitable.
7. Operational Support for Equipment - this will be handled by Julian Walls, Facilities Manager. This area covers a multitude of items including computer needs which will be coordinated with John Tuttle, System Administrator. In the event extra staff or mutual aid is needed, the Director of Human Resources, Nancy Gasen, will handle this.

8. Feeding Personnel Needs - Paul Rasch, Emergency Management Coordinator, has secured an MOU with both SC Baptist Convention and the County to provide meals.
9. Extra Personnel Needs – Nancy Gasen, Director of Human Resources will handle the acquisition of additional personnel. Available staff will be utilized first and then if necessary, mutual aid will be requested from outside agencies.
10. Damage Assessment Teams - This has been finalized as to how the assessment will be phased, who will be on the teams, how the teams will be phased-in and how the placard system will work and be administered. The placards are tied to the permitting process so the homeowner can bring in the placard that has been attached to their home to begin the repair/rebuilding process with the permitting department.

There was a brief discussion to review the proposed timeframe for returning to the Island and what on-Island facilities would be considered as a priority for reopening.

B. Emergency Permitting Set-up. Heather Colin stated that she and Jayme Lopko have been working on a brochure that is more detailed than the general Public Education piece. This brochure details the information the home/business owner needs to collect and bring in before the storm to get prepared for emergency permitting after an event. It also has details on items such as the placards, what they mean, where to go, who to call, etc. The brochure is currently in the review stage and is anticipated to be ready before the next Hurricane season. Since the Town first promoted the pre-event planning, there has been a tremendous response and the IT staff developed a program by which electronic information (including pictures) could be brought in for digital approval and then be retained by both the Town and the home/business owners. Additionally, the LMO has been updated to include the adopted temporary housing amendment.

C. Debris Management. Jennifer Hasting stated that within the last year, the Town has entered into contracts with two new firms; one to monitor the debris removal (SAIS- Beck Disaster Recovery) and one to remove the debris (Crowder Gulf). In the event of a 1, 2 or 3 category hurricane, some equipment would be located on-Island, with additional equipment at USCB and Jasper County. The roads prioritization list is being finalized and staff is working with the utility companies to coordinate various aspects of the push to clear the roads and get utilities restored. A major focus is the Right of Entry ordinance that will allow debris removal from private properties. This ordinance is presently being written to allow the contractors to go into the PUD's for debris removal as well as other private roads that are not owned by the Town, County or State. The ordinance is projected to go to Town Council in November. Coordination with the State is in progress to allow the Town's contractors to pick up debris on State owned roads and be reimbursed by FEMA. Regarding burn site locations, Jennifer stated that the primary locations being considered are Honey Horn and Chaplin Park. The method of debris reduction would be chip and grind rather than burning, although burning could be used if necessary to expedite the debris processing.

The board asked if the new contractor has entered into individual contracts with the PUD's and Jennifer stated that the PUD's were given the opportunity to meet with Crowder Gulf and review the Right of Entry ordinance. Jennifer was not aware at this time of any PUD agreements with Crowder Gulf. Jayme Lopko added that because of some changes in regulations FEMA recommends having the Right of Entry ordinance in place and once that is passed, the Town will update their MOU's with the PUD's.

Continuing concerns over the debris sites and removal from the Island were discussed briefly. Jennifer relayed that there would be a separation of types of debris and hauling away of items that could be put in the landfills. This would include areas where the public could drop off white good, etc. Staff has been talking with the County regarding their plans for additional landfill sites that could accommodate the debris. The use of barges has also been considered and could be used in the event of a bridge failure.

D. Infrastructure Repair Coordination. Darren Shoemaker, Traffic and Transportation Engineer, will head up Emergency Infrastructure Repair Unit. Sharing the responsibility for this unit is Brian McIlwee, Assistant Town Engineer and Cary Gaffney, Storm Water Administrator. Darrin explained that the responsibility of the unit will be 3-fold. The first is restoration of the Town's transportation facility; the second is working with utilities relating to water, sewer and drainage; and the third is working with utilities related to power and communications. The first priority is to restore mobility which will include coordination with the SC Dept. of Transportation (SCDOT) and Beaufort County. The road clearing plan will be taken to the utility agencies for comment in the next few weeks and already in place is a list of critical facilities that has been coordinated with the utilities. This first priority also includes the bridges and making sure they have been inspected and given a clean bill of health by SCDOT. Next is the reestablishment of power. The Town is working with Palmetto Electric and Santee Cooper, and coordination with the Island's PSDs and other utilities that provide communication to the Island. The Town is in the process of finalizing MOU's regarding these capabilities that will also include policies and procedures to insure the Town takes advantage of every opportunity to receive FEMA reimbursement.

Brian McIlwee took a moment to confirm that meetings have been on-going with the utilities and that there has been a coordination of information including road lists, critical facilities lists, and emergency operations plans. Cary Gaffney told the Board that the meetings with Palmetto Electric, Hargray and Time-Warner have been very positive and the Town has acquired copies of their recovery plans. Cary reiterated the exchange of information which now includes a data sharing agreement with Santee Cooper and updated easement information. Surge map information is also being shared to coordinate efforts to reestablish pump stations operations and the PSD's and Palmetto Electric are reviewing their plans accordingly to look at alternatives if primary stations are under water. Cary also reviewed critical facilities, the critical facilities road clearing map that will be used to get to those facilities and the plans to provide power.

E. Federal Reimbursement. Steven Markiw addressed this item by first responding to the Board's question regarding private citizens using personal equipment such as trucks and tractors to haul away debris for their neighbors and if they could be paid for doing so. Steven answered that they would need to have a business license if money was involved as required by the Town. During the recovery process, the State will bring in a person to assist the Town with licensing because the State does the certification of some types of professions. There will be a published list at the permitting service center of all the license qualified businesses. If a resident needs to know if someone is licensed, they can contact the service center.

Steve reviewed the two primary functions of the Finance Department. First is Revenue and Collections. This includes making sure all businesses have the proper license and are qualified to do their job. Finance is working with Community Development to set up teams

(3 is proposed) for permitting purposes to insure that a contractor is licensed and if not, to get them licensed as quickly as possible. Having the State representative there will help to expedite the process. The second function is Accounting. This is to insure that there is adequate cash flow for the Town during recovery. This includes working with the Town's bank provider to have a line of credit to make these funds available especially in the event that Federal reimbursement is delayed. Finance is currently working the logistics of staff using purchase cards, the credit limit for the cards and also standing purchase orders to facilitate immediate purchase of necessary supplies. Another aspect of working with the bank will be to continue payment to the Town's employees. Regarding Federal reimbursement, the Finance Department's responsibility is to make sure all the FEMA forms are easily available and in the proper format. The forms will be accessed either on-line or printed from a file downloaded (pre-event) to the Finance computers. Steve also confirmed that the Town will be working directly with a liaison from the State for reimbursement and will not go through the County.

There were a number of concerns that were readdressed by the Board including the use of Honey Horn for debris collection/reduction and what alternatives are available. Another concern is the vulnerability of the bridge as a "weak link" and information on a current assessment. Additionally, the Board referred back to the issue brought up by Mr. White regarding overhead powers lines and safety issues related to a disaster event that could impact the citizens. The Board asked staff to give further consideration to these areas and if there is any follow-up information available that this be presented at a later date.

Chairman Kirby thanked all the staff for their hard work and continuing efforts to put in place these important plans and ordinances.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Disaster Recovery Commission Annual meeting will be held on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. in the Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers at Town Hall.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Kirby thanked all those in attendance and adjourned the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Judith D. Boroski