

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Disaster Recovery Commission Quarterly Meeting
Thursday, April 23, 2009

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

Members Absent: Thad Gregory

Council Members Present: No council members present.

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

Media Present: N/A

Public Present: Joe Croley, Hilton Head Area Assoc of Realtors

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kirby called the meeting to order at 9:04 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 the January 8, 2009 quarterly meeting or the minutes from the March 4, 2009 work session. There being no discussion, Chairman Kirby asked for approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Harlacher moved for approval of the January 8th minutes and Mr. Barnwell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Lowman moved for approval of the March 4th minutes and Mr. Faust seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPEARANCE BY CITIZENS

N/A

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Before beginning with the agenda items, Chairman Kirby announced that Unfinished Business item #2 – Status Report on Disaster Recovery Commission Recommendations – has been incorporated into the New Business section #1 item – Recovery Phase and Position Assignment Memorandum.

1. Update on the Public Education Program

Paul Rasch, Emergency Management Coordinator, began by thanking the Commission for their patience during the extended time it took to complete this project. Paul reviewed the new handout “Citizen’s Guide to Emergency Preparedness” stating that in the past the main focus was on hurricanes both in the printed literature and public speaking engagements.

There are many disasters that had not been addressed and this new Guide fills in those gaps. This piece is an “all hazards” planning guide covering hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes, flooding, tornadoes, fires, wildfires and hazardous materials. It covers vital information for preparedness, evacuation (both in personal vehicles and if using a shuttle service), the process for returning to the Island and re-entry into structures. Emergency phone numbers, websites and radio stations for getting information during and after a disaster are provided as well as essential information for each disaster scenario. There is an “Additional Helpful Information” page addressing shelter “in place”, evacuation supplies and other evacuation tips. The information covering re-entry briefly reviews the Town’s process for evaluating structures and the initial steps for citizens to re-occupy, repair and/or rebuild their homes.

In previous discussions, having a separate handout outlining the pre-disaster steps homeowners should take to expedite the repair or rebuilding of their homes was discussed. The Commission asked if this was also available. Paul stated that the permitting process is still evolving and being modified, so only an overview was given in the Citizen’s Guide. However, once it is ready for publication, there are a number of ways to incorporate it into the existing material, i.e. an additional information sheet, adding it to the website, etc.

Paul stated that the guide would be given out at Town sponsored public information events (speaking engagements, public forums, hurricane conferences, etc.). The guides will also be available to everyone in the lobby at Town Hall, at Fire & Rescue Headquarters and all the Fire Stations, appropriate Municipal buildings, security offices on the Plantations and other locations as becomes apparent. The Town’s website will have this information in PDF format and partner networking is also being explored.

Chairman Kirby commented that the piece was extremely well done and on behalf of the Commission, thanked Paul and his staff, as well as the other Town staff members involved in getting the project completed. The only question the Commission had was if the piece would be published in Spanish. Paul stated that it has been discussed. There are some technical issues involved, but every endeavor is being made to address those and come up with a Spanish information piece.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Recovery Phase and Position Assignment Memorandum.** Lavarn Lucas, Fire Chief, directed everyone’s attention to the January 13th memorandum sent to the Town Manager and subsequently approved. The memo was a result of discussions regarding changes that have been made within the Town in the last year or so and the subsequent temporary functions and assignments still in existence. Because of these temporary assignments, there was no true coordination for tasks that resulted in a lot of people doing a lot of things but often with duplication or things falling through the cracks.

For each of the positions, the duties were evaluated with special attention to what level of authority would be needed to properly oversee and enforce the tasks signed to that position as well as longevity within the organization and familiarization with the various aspects of the Town processes, etc. This is particularly true for the Recovery Manager (Curtis Coltrane) and the Assistant Recovery Manager (Charles Cousins). A Task Group with Jill Foster as leader (4th & 5th bullets) was created to facilitate the coordination spoken of earlier and to formulate a Recovery Strategy. Chief Lucas pointed out a strategy is needed because it goes beyond the tactical components of the Recovery Plan and is also more adaptable.

The memorandum additionally calls for the formation of a Recovery Team (6th bullet) to assist the Recovery Manager.

Chief Lucas went through the memorandum, giving an overview of the different elements and the personnel assignments. Before concluding, he summarized the Four Phases of Emergency Management (last page). The memo is attached to these minutes.

Charles Cousins, Director of Community Development, spoke briefly about what he and Jill Foster have been doing since the approval of the memo. They have had a number of meetings and identified the components and key players. Charles turned the floor over to Jill Foster, Deputy Director of Community Development, to expand on this. Jill stated that the current Recovery Plan is being enhanced to include what needs to be done, how it will be done, what equipment will be needed, who will do what, etc. The Plan will be divided into 2 sections -- the "basic plan" and the "recovery functions". The basic plan will include the policies reviewed by the Disaster Recovery Commission and approved. Currently there are three and as further policies are submitted for review and approved, they will be added. It will also include a Concept of Operations with the recovery management team that Chief Lucas reviewed along with staffing needs. It will have the organization and responsibility of these people; i.e. what does the Town do, what does the County do, what does the State do, etc. A draft organizational chart was passed out (attached). Jill walked the group through the chart, briefly describing the duties of each position and the person assigned to that position. Jill talked particularly about the Community Restoration portion of the chart as the "meat of the matter". These are the recovery functions (each box) that the Commission has been concerned with since the inception of the DRC. Meetings have already been held with each section group to discuss what is expected of them and to evaluate what they already have in place. The Recovery Task Group will meet monthly to discuss what they need and what progress has been made.

There was additional discussion about use of the internal Govern Liaison and outside agencies getting information to the community and also about coordination between the various governmental entities that would coordinate with recovery. Jill also mentioned that a meeting with the Chamber had finally taken place and some areas were identified where the Town could help the Chamber with their Plan in coordination with the Town getting back up and running after a disaster.

- 2. Report on Joint County/Municipalities Disaster Recovery Planning Meeting.** Paul gave a review of the meeting stating that it was a very encouraging meeting. Though there are still a lot of details to be worked out and plans to be expanded, everyone involved will get information regarding a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for damage assessment so that a common procedure can be adopted for the entire County. This will also include the sharing of personnel expertise and will ensure that the method used to collect and report damage assessment data is compliant with FEMA. Paul thanked Chris Caird in particular for his part in developing this procedure. Chris worked the "bugs" out of the County's program and expanded on it and it will be adopted as the County-wide standard. The County/Municipalities meetings will be ongoing and new developments will be passed along to the Commission.

Trudie Johnson also commented on the meeting and told the group that the previous problem of volunteer assessors has been solved. Through the MOU, the Town will be able to draw on other trained building inspectors not only from the County but also from the

State if needed. She also commented on the great relief to everyone that the same process will be followed county-wide and that ---- everyone in the County is taking stock of their equipment so that they will have what is needed to implement the new program.

- 3. Future Direction of the Disaster Recovery Commission.** Chairman Kirby began by reminding those present that when the Commission was chartered, it was their function to make recommendations to Town Council regarding specific disaster recovery functions and the policies that would regulate those functions. This was particularly for the purpose of re-entry and re-instating the Town as a viable community and getting the economic engine back up and running. Through discussions with others, it has come to light that in keeping with the Commission's function, it might be more advantageous to meet only when staff brings forth plans or policies for review. The Commission has charged staff with a number of huge projects that are very time consuming, so a change in schedule might also allow them time to continue working on a particular project. With the inception of the Recovery Task Group and the Recovery Team as discussed today, this will reduce the exhaustive discussions often held by the Commission and move the detail to these groups to work out and then present to the Commission for review and recommendation.

Chairman Kirby suggested that the Commission meet on an "as needed" basis and opened the floor for discussion. The ensuing discussion addressed updates or progress reports and coordination of information with other Town boards. Jill assured the group that there would be updates coming to the Commission that could be done through emails and would not need a meeting to do so. She also touched on the coordination with other committees and boards and told the group this would also be a priority going forward. Additional discussion regarded the publication of meeting dates. At the conclusion, a motion by Mr. Harlacher was presented that the Disaster Recovery Commission amend the Commission's Rules of Procedure to meet on an annual basis, with additional meetings to be called on an "as needed" basis. Mr. Faust seconded. The motion passed unanimously. It was also agreed that Jill Foster will send a meeting notice to the Commissioners for all Recovery Team meetings with an open invitation to any that are interested in attending. Meeting summaries will also be forwarded so that the Commission stays abreast of the information being discussed and the progress being made.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Additional meetings may be called through-out the year. Once a date and time has been confirmed, an announcement with agenda will be sent out to the Board members and all parties involved. Public announcements will be made in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Kirby thanked all those in attendance and adjourned the meeting at 11:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Judith D. Boroski