

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Disaster Recovery Commission Work Session Meeting

Thursday, October 14, 2010

Members Present: Thomas C. Barnwell, Ray C. Faust, Thad M. Gregory, Meredith I. Harlacher, Russell M. Hildebrand, Ward N. Kirby

Members Absent: Donna Lowman

Council Members Present: No council members present.

Town Staff Present: Scott Liggett, Jeff Buckalew, Jennifer Lyle, Paul Rasch, Jill Foster, Paul Rasch, Michelle Harrigan, Tom Fultz, Lavarn Lucas

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1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Kirby called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.
 2. **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.
 3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Chairman Kirby asked if anyone had any questions, changes or corrections regarding the minutes from the July 29, 2010 Annual Meeting. There being no discussion, Chairman Kirby asked for approval of the minutes as presented. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Merry Harlacher and seconded Ray Faust. The motion passed unanimously.
 4. **APPEARANCE BY CITIZENS** – none
 5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
 - A. **Debris Management Plan** – This is a continued discussion from 2010 Annual Meeting. Mr. Scott Liggett, Director Public Projects & Facilities began by stating that his main objective for this meeting was to solicit comments regarding the presentation to be reviewed. Scott invited everyone to freely submit comments and questions, though he cautioned that all questions raised may not be answered at this meeting.

Jennifer Lyle, Assistant Town Engineer, introduced herself and stated that she had been working on the Debris Management Plan with the Emergency Management staff and in conjunction with the Community Development staff. The main points of the plan will be reviewed and some of the comments and questions submitted at the Annual Meeting and also by email will be addressed. The main objective of the Debris plan was to write it under the guidelines of FEMA's 325 Debris Management Guide published in July, 2007. The Emergency Management personnel helped to coordinate this with the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and it was additionally coordinated with the Town's Recovery Plan.

A few of the updates included writing in a clause to have the Town's Engineering Division review and update the plan every 2 years, and to keep it in line with any current Emergency Operations Plan and/or Recovery Plan. Also, the Debris Monitoring firm, BDR, is to come in once a year pre-season to hold a hurricane debris training meeting with staff. This year (2010) it was held early in June with representatives from both BDR and Crowder Gulf.

Jennifer briefly summarized the time spent at FEMA's headquarters in Emmetsburg with other members of the Town's staff. This included a hurricane simulation using hurricane Todd, a CAT-3 hurricane and the scenario had it making a direct hit in Beaufort County on Hilton Head Island. Jennifer turned to Michele Harrigan to present information for the Response portion.

Michele Harrigan, Emergency Management Planner, gave an overview of the Emergency Response Operations going into a hurricane. The Debris Management Plan breaks this up into two parts; Response Operations and Recovery Operations. When it is determined that a hurricane will land on or close to the Island, Fire & Rescue will first proceed to activate certain sections of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Leadership teams will be put in place to discuss and implement needed actions to be prepared for public evacuation. This would include preparing logistical movements and resources needed. At the stage called "Operating Condition 3" everyone involved in emergency response operations would report to the EOC and begin the task of making the public aware of what the Town's actions will be, give them instructions on preparing their homes, families and pets; they would also receive information on what to do if they don't have transportation. The Town has a program to cover issues of evacuating related to citizens needing transportation. In conjunction with these EOC activities, the Personnel Base Camp would also be activated. For CAT 1-3 hurricanes, the base camp is located at USCB in Bluffton. There will be an advance team that will set-up and ready the camp. Once the public is evacuated off the Island, the remaining personnel assigned to the base camp will leave the Island and report to the base camp. Under conditions where the storm surge would not be so high as to threaten the lives of emergency personnel if they stayed on the Island, then they would not be evacuated. These personnel will be located at Stations 4, 5 and 7. For CAT 4-5 hurricanes, the camp will be set-up at Barnwell High School, approximately 100 miles inland.

Jennifer mentioned that once the storm clears, the first 70 hours will be devoted to emergency push operations in accordance with FEMA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements. The Debris crew from Crowder Gulf will also be housed at Stations 4, 5 and 7 under non-threatening conditions from storm surge to facilitate a quick start to the initial debris push and the search and rescue efforts. This will also facilitate opening the ingress and egress paths for Fire & Rescue and police, and the "windshield" survey of the Island's critical facilities.

Scott jumped in at this point to emphasize the importance of having the debris crews housed on Island with the Fire & Rescue personnel. After the Town's discussions with Crowder Gulf, it was established that even if communications from base camp to the stations were lost, everyone would proceed with the push operations as planned.

Questions were raised by the Commissioners as to where the storm surge information comes from, how its rating is determined and the timeline for getting storm surge information. Michelle responded that the National Hurricane Center provides this. The Saffir-Simpson Wind Scale is currently used to determine storm surge rather than it being tied to a Category storm as it was in the past. Additionally the National Weather Service also provides data on flooding levels of the Island's inlets. Paul Rasch, Emergency Management Coordinator, and Michelle will monitor that information to make determinations on whether it would be appropriate to have personnel stay on the Island. The designated stations for occupancy are rated to endure the wind levels up through a Category 3 storm. Regarding the timeline, Michelle stated that personnel and resources start prepositioning 120 hours before expected landfall. Information is monitored and updated constantly. The evacuation completion timeline is estimated at 24 hours. Beaufort County's goal is to have the County evacuated 12 hours before landfall. With regard to evacuation, Michelle further stated that there is a software program in place that bases evacuation time on population, and this would also be used in determining projected evacuation completion time.

Jennifer stated that the Debris contractor has the option to "opt-out" if they feel hesitant about staying on the Island. They have arrangements in their plan to locate personnel and equipment in Jasper County so that they would still have close access to the Island. Both the Town and Crowder Gulf will be working

with SC DOT to monitor the condition of the bridge and utilize back-up plans in the event transportation to the Island would need to be by barge. The question then arose as to who would make the call on the safety of the bridge. Jennifer said it would be the DOT inspectors and at a meeting with the DOT in Charleston, they stated it is their intent to have inspectors stationed as close to the area of landfall as possible to expedite any necessary surveys. Fire & Rescue crews stationed in Bluffton have been instructed to stop at the bridge to get DOT clearance before proceeding. The debris contractor will take their direction from Fire & Rescue. This directive to get clearance before proceeding over the bridge applies to any category of storm as a safety precaution.

During the 70-hour period, as much work will be done as possible to clear roadways and reach critical facilities. Once the 70-hour time period is finished, the operations will then be considered “recovery”. The push to critical facilities will continue after this period until all are reached. The 1st priority facilities are still the fire stations, water pump stations, the hospital, government offices, etc. After the initial push, debris collection will begin as quickly as possible as part of the recovery operations.

As discussed in previous meetings, debris will be moved to the side of the roadways and divided into vegetative, construction/demolition, white goods, hazardous waste and recyclables. Jennifer showed a short FEMA video clip on the debris collection and management process. She stated that the Town’s plan provides for the debris management site (DMS) to be set-up according to FEMA guidelines with one ingress and one egress. Jennifer briefly summarized the Honey Horn and Chaplin Park site set-ups. She also reviewed the difference between chipping and grinding vs. incineration; i.e. chipping and grinding reduces debris by 75% and reduces air and water contamination compared to incineration and is recommended by FEMA. The Debris Management contractor is tasked with the duty to restore as closely as possible the DMS to its pre-existing condition. Jennifer also reviewed debris eligibility, noting that there are strict guidelines for this with regard to reimbursement for debris reduction and removal. The issue of removing debris from private property was broached and it was stated that the Town could not legally go onto any personal property to remove debris. FEMA has guidelines on this stating the applicant must show legal authority to enter personal property and it must be established by law, ordinance or code at the time of a disaster and must be relevant to post-disaster conditions. Jennifer stated it was decided to keep the Town’s original policy regarding personal property for the 2010 hurricane season, but that efforts are being made to update right-of-entry forms.

A discussion ensued regarding the term “eligible” debris, who picks up what and contracts with the State and County. Scott stated that the State and County contracts are still pending. The Commission members stated that if the contracts could not be finalized before the start of the 2011 hurricane season that it would be prudent on the part of the Town to at least have a document in place stating the Town’s position as it relates to the State and County if an event occurs. Scott stated that the intent is to have the Town do as much as it can and get the maximum amount reimbursed. The members concurred that this is the best intent, but the most difficult. The key regarding reimbursement is to have all the correct forms filled out and pertinent information documented so that the Town is in the best position possible for the maximum reimbursement. There is a systematic process between the Debris Management contractor, the Debris Monitoring contractor and the Town to document, review, approve and submit for reimbursement. This is vitally important also for Federal auditing purposes.

Jennifer moved on to the subject of Public Information. The Town has pre-scripted information that will go out in a press release 48 to 72 hours prior to the event and then 0 to 72 hours after the event to include evacuation and re-entry information. Additionally, 72 hours prior to the final pass for debris removal, information will be put out so that everyone is aware of that last chance for removal. Between those key time periods, the Town will continually put out information for the public. Included in that information will be details of how citizens should separate their debris, including the difference between household trash and disaster debris and where the Town-owned drop off centers are. At this time, there are no designated drop-off centers within the PUDs. Various scenarios were discussed regarding debris collection and removal within the PUDs, but without a definitive conclusion. Public information

regarding all aspects of recovery will be through the Town's website, local newspapers, call centers and other sources as available.

The Commission members had many questions regarding the debris removal "passes"; when do they begin, is there a designated time between passes, how long will the contractor continue to make passes, what if the contractor has concluded the removal efforts, closed the debris management sites and citizens still have debris from the rebuilding process? Where can it be taken? Who can take it there? Is there any responsibility on the part of the Town to assist? Is there any documentation outlining these types of scenarios and their solution? The Commission members did concede that the primary objective of debris removal was to remove debris *caused by the storm* vs. reconstruction debris. However, they continue to stress that there should be more clarification for the general public so they have a better idea of what to expect.

Jennifer reviewed the questions that had previously been submitted:

- 1) Investigate the Ulmer tract as a DMS: The Town has purchased development rights on the Ulmer tract. To use as a DMS would require a new agreement with the property owners. The Town will continue to look into this.
- 2) Use of Jenkins Island: Concerns include traffic control, heavy vegetation, wetlands and restriction for use of the power line easements. The Town will continue to look into this.
- 3) Moving from chipping & grinding to incineration: The Plan states that the Town prefers chipping & grinding, but has left incineration as an option. Associated contractor costs for incineration have already been determined. It is not pre-determined when or if the Town would move from one reduction process to the other. The consensus is that the factors would be evaluated as the removal/reduction progresses. However, Crowder Gulf has stated that they will have one of their debris reduction specialist visit the Island during the winter months to make an assessment of what might work best, either one or the other or a combination of both methods. Once that information comes back, the Commission will be updated.
- 4) Restoration of the DMS properties: Per the Plan "The contractor is responsible for the reclamation and remediation of the DMS to its original condition or better. The restoration will take place within 30 days after the conclusion of the contractor's activities." The Town and debris monitors will make sure that the debris removal contractor has everything off the DMS and has restored it within the stipulated 30 days.
- 5) Responsibility for "Final" disposal: Jennifer confirmed with Crowder Gulf that it is the contractor's responsibility to get the debris to the final disposal site once the debris leaves the Island. However, it is the Town's responsibility to determine and approve the final disposal site. The Town is currently investigating options.
- 6) Are the Ordinances referred to and/or contained in the Plan proposed or adopted? Jennifer confirmed that all of these Ordinances have been adopted and are current.
- 7) Status of Memorandums of Agreement and Rights of Entry in the Plan: Scott Liggett confirmed that most if not all need to be updated and brought current with the Debris Management Plan. There are a number of factors in doing so, one of which is the private road clearance policy that is pending. However, they do remain in full force in their current state.
- 8) Eligibility of PUDs for services: The Commission members asked for clarification for the PUDs regarding what services they may be eligible for under the Plan and the factors determining eligibility so they are better able to make plans within their communities. Scott stated that if the Commission would like the staff to flush out the options for the PUDs to avail themselves of the Town's sites, what has to be put into place for that to happen, whether it is or isn't related to reimbursement or would simply be a service of the Town, that they would be happy to do that. He did state that it

would take some time and he would try to have something for the Commission by the 2011 Annual Meeting.

- 9) **Town Drop-off Centers:** Questions were asked regarding who can drop off debris, how it is monitored, what is the allowable size of a (private) load and are there stipulations for a private individual hiring someone to haul their personal debris. Jennifer stated that the primary factor will be address verification. The Monitoring contractor will have personnel at the sites to record this information and to monitor the type of debris being brought in. A red flag could go up if the address is for a single family resident but they are bringing in volumes of commercial debris and a determination by the inspector would be made as to whether it would be accepted. The Commission members voiced concern over the citizens having a reasonable idea of whether their debris would be accepted before they (or their representative) hauled it to the DMS. Additionally, they need to know if the center will be open after Crowder Gulf concludes their pick-up process. As the Plan is written, does it mean that when the 72 hour notification goes out about the final pass, the Center gates will close at the end of that time period? The members again stressed the need for clarification of these types of things in the Public Information that goes out. They also suggested additional dialogue with the contractor on these issues.
- 10) **Restoration of the Beaches:** Scott told the members that in part of the contract with Crowder Gulf there are mechanisms by which an attempt would be made to reclaim beach quality sand pushed into public rights of way. This would include cleaning the sand and depositing it back on the beaches. One caveat is that the Town does not have the ability to go onto any private property to reclaim the sand. Scott stated that right of entry contracts for this had been looked at but did not seem feasible. Additional, it could be cost prohibitive. A discussion continued on this issue regarding options and plans implemented in other areas after a disaster.

Jennifer and Scott confirmed that staff would continue to look into all of these issues to bring as much clarification as possible.

Chairmen Kirby thanked Scott and Jennifer and supporting staff for the presentation and updates. Chairman Kirby concluded by saying that the next time the Commission met, they would like to spend more time discussing reimbursement.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Annual Meeting Date for 2011:** It was decided by the Commission members to hold the meeting on Thursday, April 14, 2011 at 9:00am in the Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers at Town Hall. This date will be posted on the Town's website and appropriate notices will be distributed closer to the date.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS – No announcements

8. ADJOURNMENT – Chairman Kirby adjourned the meeting at 3:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Judith D. Boroski

Approved: June 23, 2011