

Community Advisory Group Notes

Thursday, November 3, 2016 from 4:00 pm to 5:45 pm

Community Advisory Group Members

Present

Kevin Bloom
Frank Durantaye
Andy Hall
Lori Lilly
Gary Maule
Ken McNaughton
Ron Peters
Bruno Reich
Debbie Slack Katz
Angela Tersiguel
Beth Woodruff

Not Present

Senator James N. Robey
Tammy Beideman
Simon Cortes
Mark Hemmis
Timothy Kendzierski
Reverend Joan King
Don Reuwer

County Staff

Kate Bolinger
Jeff Bronow
Lisa Crow
Mark DeLuca
Joseph Herr
Jessie Keller
Phil Nichols
Karitsa Norman
Kristin O'Connor

Discussion Topics

Welcome – Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- Quick introductions from guest speakers from Maryland Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, the CAG members, County staff, and members of the Ellicott City Long-Term Recovery Committee.
 - MEMA representatives included Director Russ Strickland, Chas Eby, and Jessica Nusbaum.
 - FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer for Howard County, Tim Manner.
 - Ellicott City Long-Term Recovery Committee Chair Adam Feldman.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- Addition of Frank Durantaye as “Present” to the meeting minutes for both 10/20 and 10/27.
- Approved minutes for both 10/20 and 10/27 with those changes.

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Presidential Disaster Declaration Presentation – Maryland Emergency Management Agency, Chas Eby (FEMA present to answer questions)

MEMA

- Goal of today's presentation is to address what a Presidential Declaration means for Howard County.
- Also to discuss other ways the state can facilitate recovery efforts.
- Encourage the CAG to ask questions.
- An overview of the timeline was provided to demonstrate the events that occurred from the July 30th (flooding) to when the Presidential Declaration for Public Assistance was granted on Friday, September 16th.
 - Right after the event MEMA activated their State Emergency Operations Center and got involved in immediate response efforts with Howard County OEM.
 - On Aug. 12th Governor requests Presidential Disaster Declaration.
 - Questions from the CAG members on the timing.
 - Once you send in the request, MEMA and County want to ensure the most solid information can be collected and provided from residents, local and state agencies.
 - Sept. 2nd received enough information to strengthen additional information to the President and include Baltimore County in the request.
 - Sept. 16th declaration for Public Assistance was approved.
- Baltimore County was not approved for the declaration.
- An overview of the Assessment and Declaration Process was provided:
 - Disaster Event/Incident;
 - Rapids Needs Assessment;
 - Initial Damage Assessment;
 - Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA); and
 - Declaration Request.
- The Rapids Needs Assessment is where Howard County OEM (local agency to coordinate the process with MEMA) gathers all of the information on things like damages, overtime costs, public safety response efforts and sends to MEMA.
- Joint PDA was conducted with local government (Howard County), MEMA, Small Business Administration and FEMA to assess damages and go through associated costs together.
- CAG members had several questions regarding the timeline and process of the PDA.
 - PDA was conducted the Thursday after the flood.
 - For PDA, everything identified is not excluded but we don't go back and redo any assessments.
 - The real reason PDA is conducted is to demonstrate a strong enough case for meeting the threshold and submitting a request for a declaration.
 - Important to understand there is a threshold that has to be met.

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- One thing you have to remember, there are still a lot of unstable buildings you couldn't go through those structures to conduct the assessments.
- Point to address is Howard County did get awarded Public Assistance which is bit of a misnomer as the program is strictly for eligible work under utility and publically owned infrastructure, not for the public.
- During the recovery process it is important to note that the declaration is only one piece of the recovery pie.
- Howard County had a Disaster Assistance Center established where individuals could access local and state agencies for resources.
 - SBA was part of the preliminary damage assessment and granted a declaration where their loans were made available.
 - DHCD had a loan program available.
 - State resources included 90 day housing vouchers.
- Federal agencies were engaged, like US Army Corps of Engineers work was done early on absent of the declaration.
- Sept. 16th MD Declaration is approved for Public Assistance:
 - Hazard Mitigation
 - Individual Assistance is not approved and were notified on September 20th
 - Baltimore County is not approved, even though there were significant damages.
 - They didn't meet the thresholds.
 - Both at FEMA and recommendation to the White House.
- Presidential declaration is done by County.
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is where the state of Maryland will receive hazard mitigation funds for this Disaster declaration that can be applied to funds to reduce the loss of life and property from future disasters.
 - MEMA has declared that these funds will all go to Howard County.
 - Usually it's dispersed at the state level.
- CAG members had several questions on the process for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.
 - Basically there has to be a defined project that is submitted through the County to the state.
- Can we lump funds together?
 - There are certain criteria for mitigation funds.
 - You can use multiple grants as a force multiplier.
 - FEMA is not allowed to duplicate the same item.
 - As long as it's not duplication of efforts.
- Questions regarding the process and opportunities for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funds and the HUD Community Development Block Grant –Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds.
 - The NRCS funds the County is using for the flood retaining walls is different than the HUD CBDG.
 - Congress passed \$500 million for HUD CDBG-DR.
 - HUD makes the determination on where that money goes.

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- There is no application process for this program.
- The County is continuing to push for more funding to add Maryland as part of that supplemental funding.
- For public assistance, there is a cost share of 75% to 25% between County and FEMA.
- Question regarding the wall project in the West End.
 - West End didn't qualify for NRCS.
 - Have until April 30th to complete projects for NRCS.
 - The wall in West End is on a different schedule as there isn't a requirement to get that done on a specific timeline.
 - Trying to use FEMA for 24 months. Will be surveying that shortly.
 - Surveying the channel for the wall and culvert.
 - County has to front all the work and cost then FEMA will provide the reimbursement.
 - When will the work on the West End be completed?
 - DPW thinks it will happen within 12-15 months.
- FEMA's program is not the entire solution, just one piece of the puzzle.
- FEMA can't provide projects on private property, its part of the Stafford Act program.
- What they want to do is to get the declaration.
- Now that we have the declaration, work with the local and state agencies to identify what's eligible.
- Hazard Mitigation money looks at the bigger picture.
- For Public Assistance, there is no max.
- Hazard Mitigation is based on the amount of PA received.
- Reminder that these programs take time as an example, not all of funding for Sandy has been distributed.
- FEMA doesn't come in with a credit card and pay for stuff.
- They do reimburse eligible projects.
- Eligible projects and eligible costs aren't pigeon hole and have specific regulations.
- Everything is a cost share.
- Mitigation is part of the building back into the resilience of the community.
- FEMA can assist with the long-term strategies, but it can't make a community with repetitive loss not ever flood again.
- There are other mitigation funding sources that counties can apply for and bring other funding sources together.
- Point is FEMA is not the answer, they are just a piece of the puzzle to provide cost share.
- State has separate programs that have been opened up as well.
- MEMA doesn't have the same funding availability as some of the other state agencies.
- 25% of the cost will be fronted by the County.
- It was noted that CAG members are getting into the details of eligible work for Public Assistance.
- The application process for PA entails conducting spot checks on the information to ensure it's accurate.
 - Volunteer hours fall into a category with specific requirements.
 - Big key element of tracking and documentation.

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- Kick off meetings for PA have been completed.
- Individual Assistance (IA) provides supplemental assistance to individuals impacted by a disaster.
- The State did apply for Howard County, but did not receive it for this disaster.
- IA is given for very widespread damages with homes that are completely destroyed.
- Some areas that IA looks at include:
 - There isn't a dollar amount tied into this program like PA.
 - Some factors for IA include key elements from insurance, concentration of the damage, trauma of the community representing significant injuries and deaths, ability of volunteer agencies to pick up the piece, and many others.
 - This data is compiled and put together in a package.
 - Another baseline is to look at if the community and State have used up their resources and it's beyond their capacity to rebuild.
 - Definitely not a formula for determining IA.
 - IA is very difficult and designed on those factors.
 - IA application looks at the entire jurisdiction as a whole. So Ellicott City would be looked at compared to the impacts on all of Howard County.
- CAG members discussed with MEMA and FEMA questions surrounding the IA program in order to determine why the request was not granted.
 - Flood Insurance of individuals is taken into account as part of the request for IA.
 - It was noted that only a group of people had insurance.
 - There is always a gap with insurance.
 - Damage assessments gone around the area. Preliminary damage assessment is not intended to find everything, it's simply to assess the damages and to submit an application.
 - IA usually looks at ~10,000 people impacted or 200 homes totally destroyed.
 - Adding 15 more homes for Historic Ellicott City wouldn't make much of a difference for an argument toward IA.
 - The County is looked at as whole, since Ellicott City is not incorporated; it's by the entire county.
 - An example, declaration of VA, they had towns that could apply for IA on their own.
 - Ellicott City makes it hard to look at while some of the larger communities in the County like Columbia were not impacted.
 - The smaller the jurisdiction, the impact is greater.
 - Other states have individual incorporated cities that get counted in County's application.
- CAG members had questions regarding eligible work for public assistance.
 - If its county owned property, it would be considered for public assistance.
 - The program goes to ownership so if it's public property, than it's easier to get work done under PA.
 - Projects eligible for PA should be send to the County OEM.
 - MEMA's goal is to get as much assistance as possible for the community.
 - Looking for ways to get assistance for things that are eligible.

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- If more things are owned by the County, then would be easier based on the current calculation to get work done?
 - The rules and regulations since Katrina have changed significantly.
 - These programs will continue to change and evolve with each disaster as new approaches are taken.
 - Should pursue other efforts and not rely on the current programs to stay the same.
- Comparing IA with PA, if the stream channel flooded FEMA funds would provide to fix them.
 - If the first floor of the building was taken out, then it wouldn't have made a difference to that individual since we didn't receive IA.
- Easement ideas discussed for the stream channel in order to keep the water in the stream. This is the goal,
- OEM, State and FEMA are all looking at ways to get assistance for things that are eligible.
- We need to hear them so we can go through the proper process to try and resolve those issues.
- Concerns about hazard mitigation timeline as it will take 6 months to know how much money you will know that we are locked into.
- The timeline is 60 days for kick off meetings, but this process doesn't include the need for completed projects.
- These kickoff meetings are simply to identify the costs.
- Mitigation is the long-term resilience piece.
- Look at mitigation for the entire process in 406 code.
- FEMA's mitigation experts are constantly looking at ways to make the community more resilient during the PA process.
- Funding from 404 is the long-term mitigation these are usually those really big projects where you have to do studies and surveys to design into your projects.
- Reality check, in every local disaster there is no amount of money that is going to put that water somewhere else.
- However, federal, state and local agencies pull together.
- CAG members expressed there are serious implications for the community.
- It's a frustrating topic as there are individuals that don't meet the HoCo threshold that will never recover from this disaster.
- Point to make is very lucky to have the non-profit groups that really provide services that government can't legally provide.
- CAG members noted efforts here are really in trying to save the town.
- If we can at least identify what we can do project wise, then find all of the money as there are solutions.
- County Executive is standing by his word to do everything possible to rebuild into a model resilient town.
- Flood Working Group has been working on resolving these issues for the past 18 months.
- Want to know what we can do right now, tomorrow we can have another flood.
- Has been flooding since, every flood takes something out of the town and the realities along with it.
- Bottom line is everything always comes down to money.

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- CAG member commented that we are stepping too lightly and no one is willing to take the big step.
- How you cross over from a monetary issue to an ethical issue.
- Again working with HoCo OEM and FEMA to coordinate additional resources as these are just part of the puzzle pieces.
- Process should entail identifying problems, state and local agencies work on finding resources.
- The Ellicott City Long-term Recovery Committee works to fill in that gap.
- Purpose of the Community Advisory Group is to identify those problems and communicate them so MEMA knows what problems to solve.
- A lot of different state agencies working together to try to solve the problems.
- Good question for the Comptroller's Office on the State level, MEMA will follow-up.
- FEMA's national trend on the last 10 years will change.
- Disaster Relief Fund under Stafford Act has been used so much in the last couple of years, current ways it's being administered to the State through DHS' internal auditor have all said something different has to be done.
- We are spending way too much money on disasters in this country.
- State is looking at 8 million threshold to get into the game of PA.
- In the future, would be looking at a 24 million deductible.
- Amount of disasters has increased, we have to look at this.
- More mitigation solutions have to be implemented now.
- This is a challenge as a nation.
- Do we need to look at legislation?
- Important to realize we live in MD and the standards here might not be the same as Florida with different building codes and hazard risks.
- Comment that as individuals, we need to be empowered to understand hazards in our community.
- Flood survey was conducted several years ago by the County.
- CAG member commented on purchasing a house back in 2014 without understanding the flood survey that was conducted.
- Settlements should have shared that information but there was nothing in paperwork.
 - Mortgage Company or Title Company should've shared that information.
- This discussion points to the need for an educational component.
- Need to demonstrate why Historic Ellicott City is significant and sell to the rest of the County.
- The town is more than just historically significant.
- Ellicott City is part of something bigger it's significant to Oella, Catonsville, big Milltown Event.
- CAG discussion on pressuring the state to use less fossil fuels.
- Three countries in the world that don't use any fossil fuels.
- Need to look at fixing the problem from something larger.
- There is a lot going on associated with climate change.
 - Flood plain has changed.
 - Flood use to come from the Patapsco up.
 - There was a lot of rain in Agnes.

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- 2011 was a 50 year flood.
- There are a variety of storm types that can't be predicted or to guess where the water's going to concentrate.
- In the past, Hurricane problems as seen with Isabel where bands come through and the water can't get out into the Patapsco and it just floods.
- It's a combination of a number of factors which is why the NWS base it over 24 hours. 6 inches in 2 hours.
- Slosh takes into account the tides, winds, rains, and if it turns into winds coming over the Bay, the area will have significant more flooding.
- Discussion on there was a significant rain event a week and a half prior to the flood.
- The first rain saturated the ground and it could have been during the second rain, water had nowhere to go.
- Won't be able to predict all the different varieties.
- Rob Vogel had a good idea, need to conduct dynamic modeling.
- Talked to an engineer that takes all the weather data and puts them into spreadsheets and graphs.
- Can go through a series of scenarios, time, insurance that are part of that discussion.
- M & T is conducting this type of scenario modelling in the H & H study.
- Did we not apply from Community Block Grant? Did we work to get the congressional funding?
 - HUD makes the decision on appropriating the funding and MD was not included.
 - It's not an application process.
 - The County did provide information on potential projects we could use the funding for but again, it's not an application.

Follow-up Items – Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- The 250 project ideas submitted were put into more publically digestible themes.
- Wanted to bring it up at last week's CAG meeting, but didn't have the opportunity to address it.
- One major reoccurring theme is the parking issue.
- Recovery Manager want to take the pulse again from the CAG on addressing it in the short-term.
- The County put up signs and enforcement is starting to occur.
- Want to make sure you are aware and communicate this out to the rest of the community.
- Want people to have access to construction vehicles.
- CAG members gave insight that people are probably not seeing the "No Parking" signs.
- County should add VMS signs.
- Add flags to the top to draw attention to them.
- Get rid of the lines.
- Comment back on the themes, goal is to make them public to people at the next EC Community Meeting on November 10th at 7PM where the theme is rebuilding and the environment.

Future Meeting Schedule – Recovery Manager, Joe Herr

- Next week, schedule Jeff Bronow from DPZ to discuss redefined lines in the watershed maps.
- Need to get back to your brainstorming on time from now-February.

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- Should add defined time on the agenda.
- CAG members also will request written information so they don't always need a presentation.
- List of 250 ideas can be emailed to the group along with the DPZ maps.
- CAG can work on separating out the ideas from the entire list.
- Army Corps Engineers kickoff meeting is on November 7th in coordination with DPW.
- Request that one of the maps have a topography and color variation for the iso themes.
 - Add green/blue at the bottom to understand the shapes of the land.
 - Question for Jeff.
- Request to have a summary provided on the County's emergency preparedness program over a presentation.
- Request to have a summary of information provided on the alert and warning system.
- For next week, request to have the City of Annapolis Preservation Office discuss their Army Corps. Study.
- Given the timing, M & T would have to come in December.