

Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network 11:00 am EST Friday, February 17, 2017

Resilient Neighbors Network (RNN) is a network of professionals representing communities actively working toward adaptation and resilience from natural hazards.

RNN Mission

To increase resilience in existing and developing communities at the grass roots level by documenting and actively sharing best practices, through education, peer to peer collaboration and mentoring.

RNN Vision

RNN will be a source for a compilation of community driven hazard resilience best practices that can serve as a resource to people & communities before, during and after a disaster. RNN will also actively bring ground truth and grassroots enlightenment to policy makers, researchers, regulators, and journalists.

AGENDA:

1. Roll call
2. Approval of Minutes
3. NHMA Membership & Donations
4. Brief Report from Ed Thomas
5. Status of NHMA CTP [sent previously]
6. **Review of Wightman and Co. concept of content of the daughter of Patchwork Quilt-finding a way through the Maze to Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction. Participation will be enhanced by joining a go-to webinar. Invitation will be forwarded by Wightman or by ET**
7. MitFlg Community Resilience Indicators-comments sent, distributed
8. Discussion of RNN Member Activities
9. Meetings with FEMA and revised comments to Public Assistance Deductible regulations
10. ABA Resilience Resolution-educational follow-up opportunities to participate
11. RNN Activities including Return on investment study-see below

11:00 am EST - CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

1. ROLL CALL:

Present: Tim Trautman; Roger Faris; Mila Harrison (Wightman & Associates); Vince Brown (FEMA); Rebecca Joyce (NHMA Board Member); Ned Swanberg; Mary Kell; Chuck Wallace; Ed Thomas (NHMA Board Member); Tom Hughes (NHMA Board Member)

- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The floor was opened to discussion of the January 2017 Minutes. There being no comments,

A Motion was made by Tim Trautman to approve the Minutes.

The Motion was seconded by Rebecca Joyce.

There being no discussion, **a vote was taken.**

VOTED: Unanimous approval of the Minutes.

3. **NHMA MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS:** Ed Thomas stated he hoped that everyone was a current NHMA Member and will think about that which they can give of time, talent and money. He expressed that NHMA does need money to keep things going in terms of paying bills for its accountants and administrative persons and to build up some money so it can hire an Executive Director.
4. **BRIEF REPORT FROM ED THOMAS:** Ed Thomas reported that we are working with a series of organizations - including the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) - assisting them in scoping out a revision of the old 4-to-1 Study. We are trying to push them in the direction of looking at the economic advantage of doing things safely and properly right from the get-go with regard to zoning, higher standards building codes, and are making progress. We are urging them to look at the remarkable work being done in communities like Tulsa, Oklahoma and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina.

NHMA and the RNN continue to work on the NIST Community Resilience Guide. We are working on a Community Shelter effort being led by a gentleman named Jim Bell that includes some folks from the National Academy. The goal is to move in the direction of developing a standard of care that requires large businesses and apartments, etc., to have some type of tornado shelter in place, whether it's something built under a stairwell or just letting people know where to go when a tornado siren sounds in Tornado Alley. Anyone interested in working on this is welcomed.

After a five-year effort, the American Bar Association (ABA) has unanimously adopted a Resolution on Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction. It includes cyber security as well as natural hazards and calls on government, individuals, and businesses to work on serious efforts in disaster risk reduction. Ed Thomas continues working with others, such as attorney George Huff, to craft an implementation plan on this ABA Resilience Resolution which will mostly be educational, designed for attorneys and their clients, on best practices in resilience. This opens an enormous opportunity for everyone in NHMA – and especially the RNN Community - to speak at national and regional conferences, etc. Ed will be reaching out to a couple of RNN members who he thinks of as likely presenters at the ABA National Meeting in New York next August.

The ABA is crafting the design of a Utah Bar Association Workshop for attorneys and their clients on disaster risk reduction, primarily from the point of view of earthquakes. Ed Thomas hopes to have one or more members of the RNN Community participate in this.

With the help of Tom Hughes, NHMA has picked a day and a half for the second pilot of the RNN/Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum. This is taking place the 17th and 18th of April, 2017, in Harrisburg, PA. The question was posed: Does the RNN Community want to use FEMA Grant money to get to the Harrisburg session in April, or would it rather meet someplace else - perhaps at Georgetown, West Virginia, for a standalone meeting after April, or would it prefer to do something at the Natural Hazard's Workshop in Broomfield, Colorado, or another location of its choosing? The RNN Community was invited to consider this.

Ed Thomas announced an enormous opportunity to publish for anyone in the NHMA / RNN Community. Some folks from the Island Press, which is funded by a major environmental publishing house, are seeking writers in the field of hazard mitigation. Their editor, Laurie Mazur, who has co-authored a couple of pieces with Ed Thomas, is anxious to get more folks in the hazard mitigation field exposed to the popular press. A piece that she co-wrote with Ed Thomas has gone out on US News and World Report, Governing Magazine, and a number of other major news outlets around the country. This is a major opportunity for the RNN Community to get the message out about disaster risk reduction and locally-focused hazard mitigation. Ed Thomas urged as many persons as possible to be part of these training sessions that are coming up.

5. **STATUS OF NHMA CTP:** The FEMA NHMA Cooperating Technical Partner Agreement was next discussed. Ed Thomas stated that we are coming to fruition on this huge effort to develop the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum. We have an excellent contractor (Wightman & Associates) working on this and will next be hearing from them about their concept for redoing the Patchwork Quilt. When field tested, the Living Mosaic document was found to be too cumbersome so as editors we are going back to square one to see how to create a document that informs about the various programs that are out there, and how one would proceed to weave them together for a family, neighborhood, community or a state resilience plan. It is most important that the RNN Community continue to participate in the development of the Curriculum. Tim and Rebecca are taking the lead on this. As the products come together they will be distributed to everyone.
6. **REVIEW OF WIGHTMAN AND CO. CONCEPT OF CONTENT OF THE DAUGHTER OF PATCHWORK QUILT:** Ed Thomas introduced Mila Harrison and Dwight Johnson of Wightman & Associates, the contractor working with NHMA on the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum. He verified that

everyone on the call had received a note that Wightman & Associates would be available to present their very preliminary thoughts on how to present the Patchwork Quilt, Daughter of Patchwork Quilt, or the successor of Living Mosaic, in a way that would be better for everyone to use. Having confirmed that everyone present had opened their link to an Outlook on-line presentation, Mila Harrison began.

Mila Harrison of Wightman & Associates explained that they have been working with the NHMA Project Management Team on both the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum Project as well as developing the new generation of the *Patchwork Quilt/Living Mosaic*. This preliminary presentation will describe the new look and design concept that will carry through the document. The object is to make this document very user-friendly and not voluminous. She introduced Dwight Johnson who is part of their team.

Dwight Johnson explained the initial design concept developed for Patchwork Quilt was a maze. This was because early on in their discussions about hazard mitigation the process of getting to resiliency was often described as being like a maze: It requires navigating, and planning, and there are multiple possible paths of reaching the goal. Though this is very good imagery, there are negative implications: Mazes represent walls, barriers, difficulties, becoming lost and not really seeing where it is that you're going. To avoid these negatives, they began exploring the concept of a maze without walls. The base graphics became a path, or paths that one could take in order to get to the destination. So, the maze without barriers became a tool to plot your course, and develop your own road map.

Dwight described their process of examining some of the things that one must navigate in this road map: What are the people, communities, states, one must navigate to or through or around in developing their own path, and how might these be illustrated within this space? They were thinking about technical support, community partners and funding, and so came up with some initial illustration ideas in different styles of art. When they presented their ideas to Ed Thomas, he asked them to present these to the RNN Community today and also gave some important feedback: The people, communities or states using this roadmap may start and end at different places. The paths may be different for different audiences. At the same time, Gina Wightman and Mila Harrison were creating some concepts for the title of the document along the lines of *Building Your Road Map to a Disaster Resilient Future*. So, using the roadmap and trying to get to the future, with the idea of different paths for different audiences, led him to think of an arrow pointing off in the distance, toward that future destination. Multiple paths could be indicated by different colors, shadows, starting and ending points to indicate that you may have a different path than somebody else, but you can build your own path to a resilient future. This is where the concept is right now. That there should be paths, not walls, that there should be some graphic elements to explain some of the things you will run into along the journey.

Ed Thomas shared the importance of this very early concept work. He urged everyone to consider that we have spent enormous amounts of volunteer time and effort in creating the *Living Mosaic* and then, when it was distributed around the country very aggressively, it didn't resonate with people. So, what we're talking about here is taking the *Patchwork Quilt*, which was extremely well received over its 20-plus years of life through 50 or more editions, adding some concepts from Shannon Burke who's done this work with local governments many times around the country, and make it more user friendly. Trying to get the idea across that your vision for your family may be different from somebody else's vision, and your end goal is going to be different than another family's. Your community may have a vision – like Tulsa – of clearing some areas in a hazardous location that is no longer inhabited and turning it into parkland, or storm water storage, or a whole lot of useful stuff, similar to some of the concepts of Charlotte-Mecklenberg where they did acquisition.

Ed called for a pause to get reactions from people on the call and ask how the RNN Communities would like to proceed. He stressed that we want to have this document available for the April roll-out in Harrisburg. He could see this document being used to educate young attorneys to assist people post-disaster and he, himself has every intention of using this in education for young lawyers, for the entire Bar Association, and training for State Bar Associations and their clients. This is very important: It is going to be a foundational piece, and it only works if your local experts say this is what we want or this is not what we want.

DISCUSSION ENSUED: Ned Swanberg shared that he liked the idea of different paths, and emphasized that paths for individuals, families and neighborhoods, and different municipal paths for planners, etc. and state and federal paths should also be included. He shared that these all have points of intersection and a need for cooperation; our problems are great and we have to find ways to represent them in ways that are graphically useful. He also shared his thinking about process: how do we use this document? It would seem to need to be an online tool as well as a paper document; something online that can be used by a group in

meeting sessions to help identify anything they can think of as being a problem, discover what these are and pull out solutions from a shared graphic database; having it identify features that we have in common, find stories and narratives and resource people, and help create the path to resilience. He shared that every problem people have they tend to think of as unique and remarkable to themselves and unrelated to anything else, and we know that that's not the case. There are whole series of practices about avoidance and mitigation and retrofit and having an actual sustainable successful future figured out, that share commonality. He would take the starting point, then gather it at the next point, and highlight that there are people and stories and history and a bunch of things that can be of help in certain ways, not all the way we necessarily want to go, but there to help us move together and set goals and outcomes that are believable. He thinks of it as an online tool eventually, or even as a graphic sequence on a screen we could start to see this, and there are kind of group process tools that could marry even to the graphic display.

Tim Trautman shared that he liked the roadmap concept and the graphics and the fact that there are different paths; the only thing related to the graphic that seemed to be missing was a vision of what's at the end of the path. The arrows seem to be pointing to a blank space; they need to end somewhere, and that should be a vision of what a disaster resilient future looks like. This is difficult, because everyone has their own vision, each person, household and community is unique, but there needs to be something that conveys a beginning with the end in mind so you can figure out your roadmap and find the path to get you there.

Ed Thomas asked Mila Harrison and Dwight Johnson if it would be permitted to share their slides with the RNN Community to give them a fairly short period of time to react further. The comments from Ned and Tim were very important, and others like Rebecca, who is very involved, may have valuable input. He pointed out that one of our primary audiences is going to be the state hazard mitigation officers, so it was very important to make sure we're heading in the right direction based on input from Tom Hughes.

Mila Harrison said she thought they could put something together for the RNN Communities to review, with the caveat that these are *conceptual preliminaries* and they are looking for feedback. Neither she nor Wightman want anyone to think that this is the final work product - but she agreed they could provide some things for the RNN Communities to review. Ed Thomas thanked her and Dwight for their graciousness and expressed what wonderful partners they are to work with.

Rebecca Joyce shared that she liked what Ned and Tim had to say, and the concept of the pathways. She suggested that, in the context of people speaking of 'sunny days', or 'blue sky days', or 'the future is brighter', that maybe the arrows could point to something sunny or bright which would be a very general symbol and not portraying any particular future, but would indicate that 'brighter days are ahead' and 'you can find your way on this path to something better' kind of thing. She also agreed that if they were willing to share the slides with the other RNN communities, some great feedback could result.

Much praise for Wightman and Associates was expressed. Rebecca Joyce echoed Ed Thomas that working with Wightman has been wonderful, they've just been so helpful. Roger Faris shared that having worked with Wightman & Associates in training at EMI and other field offices during disasters, that there is just no group of people he can recommend more highly than Wightman & Associates for clear, useful educational products. He was very pleased to see them come on board.

Mila Harrison continued the presentation: She explained how the roadmap concept was taken to the next level through the structure of the document. There are six Chapters and an Appendix that will include a Glossary. The content of each chapter will be updated content taken from the *Patchwork Quilt* and the *Living Mosaic* and anything else that doesn't appear in those two documents. The Chapters themselves use the roadmap metaphor. Chapter One is titled 'An Invitation to Travel the Rough Road to Disaster Resilience'. Chapter Two is titled 'Deciding on Your Disaster Resilience Destination'. Chapter Three is titled, 'Finding the Route To Your Disaster Resilient Destination'. Chapter Four will cover the resources and tools to help get you to disaster resilience and that includes funds either from government, public/private partnership, private non-profit organizations; it will also cover some of the sources of technical assistance such as the various programs from USA. And then also introduce a list of tools. Chapter Five discusses the degree of moving after a Presidential Disaster Declaration and after the disaster, changes happen, so there may be opportunities that weren't available during the peak time or non-disaster time that the users of this document can tap into, such as public assistance or substantial damage requirement, etc.; they also want to cover in here some of the rules or ways to avoid road trouble later in the journey. Finally, Chapter Six is 'A Trip Journal From Successful Disaster Resilience Travelers' – these are the Best Practices.

DISCUSSION: A QUESTION WAS ASKED about the concept of routes: If the route one takes will be different whether it's in blue sky times or after a disaster – will this document do the two routes? How will that work? Within the context of a DRR module, a lot of this has to be summarized on how you get from point A, B, and C – ultimately some assumptions on whether it is pre-disaster or post-disaster have to be made.

Mila Harrison responded that this was addressed in some of the other chapters. She emphasized that this is preliminary but is something they want to include guidance on because it is clearly going to be a big issue for some people.

A COMMENT WAS MADE that sometimes after a disaster you have time to build teams, other times you don't or can't and you've got to get stuff done. So, some of the alternatives you can't fill in, you have to go with your gut and actually move forward.

DISCUSSION: Rebecca Joyce shared that she likes the concept and thinks the document looks great; She suggested that Chapter One be retitled to say 'An Invitation to Travel the Road to Disaster Resilience', because if one were reading something that said "rough road" they might not read it. The text of the chapter can mention the challenges, but the title should be inviting. Tim Trautman agreed, and shared that he likes the way the document is structured. Ned Swanberg shared that we do want to use images for timelines and tools that are inclusive of all peoples and represent all classes, races and diversity; we need to not use images that assume only one type of face or profession. Mila responded to this saying it is exactly what they want to accomplish and will make the graphics available for comments. She reiterated that this is rough draft only and everyone is getting the first look.

Ed Thomas shared his gratitude to Wightman & Associates for their excellent presentation. He reiterated that we will get this out to everybody who was on the RNN call and ask for comments in the interest of fairness to Wightman – and then get the comments back to Rebecca and Ed, who will consolidate them and get them back to Wightman. Shannon Burke will be included as she has a lot of wonderful ideas. It was agreed that comments would be returned in seven days. Ed stressed that we're going to be really rocking and rolling to get this done in time for presentation at Harrisburg. In answer to what Ned asked, per his understanding, Ed shared that this document will be presented in hard copy, but is primarily designed to be a web-based document that will have links in it. Mila confirmed this and stated that we want to keep this a very streamlined document so we don't have to repeat material in the document that will date it, but it can also be printed. Ed Thomas shared that one of its uses is post-disaster, and one of the aspects of post-disaster is that there will be a lot of people who don't have power. And part of that is an opportunity, as people who don't have power who are sitting around in shelters, can be given something to read that actually is useful. So, we have it basically both ways.

7. **THE MITFLG COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INDICATORS** - Comments were sent and distributed. Ed asked if anyone had anything to add to on that. There being no discussion, the next agenda item was addressed.
8. **DISCUSSION OF RNN MEMBER ACTIVITIES** – Rebecca Joyce shared some of her ideas of ways for the existing RNN members to feel more connected to NHMA and RNN and also be able to get finished things back through NHMA and the RNN with the idea of keeping time, not increasing time or costs, so those things that were not cost or time prohibitive. She devised a list and will send it around to the RNN Community for discussion and input. This is a way to help existing members feel more connected and for new members to make sure that when they start, they start with a connection.
9. **MEETINGS WITH FEMA AND REVISED COMMENTS TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DEDUCTIBLE REGULATIONS.** Ed Thomas related that NHMA has put in some comments on the incredibly important Assistance Program Deductible whereby essentially good conduct is rewarded, and less than good conduct is not. That would mean that communities would get credit essentially, during a disaster, for their efforts to prevent the disaster through implementing higher standards and various other aspects of hazard mitigation. NHMA enthusiastically endorsed that concept, and sent in comments. FEMA has opened this up again. Anyone who wants to participate in FEMA's comments, do let us know. Anyone who wants to weigh in on that, this is a great opportunity to do so. Ed reminds everyone that all emails from him have his phone number and invites anyone to call him if they are interested. Right now it's Jim Mullen, Ed Thomas, and maybe one or two other people who will be pulling comments together, and they're due in April.
10. **ABA RESILIENCE RESOLUTION-EDUCATIONAL FOLLOW-UP OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE:** Ed Thomas mentioned again the ABA National Conference in New York in August – reminded everyone that we do have a local person slotted there to be part of the panel and stated that it's really important to have

the voice of local resilience, flood plain management, hazard mitigation there at these sessions, as a voice of reality.

11. RNN ACTIVITIES INCLUDING RETURN ON INVESTMENT STUDY: Ed Thomas reported that we are working with NIBS National Institutes of Building Sciences and the Mitigation Counsel; any of you who want to have input on that study are welcomed. Would love to have somebody else involved in that speaking for local folks.

DISCUSSION: Tom Hughes asked if Rebecca Joyce could include in her memo a question if there is a sense of whether the RNN would like to do a session in Harrisburg? Or do they want to come to Broomfield and try to do the hazard workshops so it's much more useful for local grassroots people and state people and not just academics? Is there any sense of the group consensus on that, or do we want to do it in Shepherdstown? How would they like to structure a session for the RNN community?

Tim Trautman shared that some of this for him is the schedule; he asked if there was a way to spell out in an email the several options and dates these would occur; this would help him check his calendar and other things going on and know whether or not it would work.

Ed Thomas replied that yes, we can put together a doodle poll. He will plan on working with NHMA Admin to get than organized.

Tom Hughes stated we do still need RNN Community input on Harrisburg; Ed Thomas recommended that everyone put on their calendar the sessions in Harrisburg for April 17th and morning of 18th – ample opportunity to listen in and reflect on what's presented.

There being no further questions, the Meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING:

The next RNN meeting will be on 3/17/2017 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

12:22 (EST) am – The meeting adjourned.