

## **Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network** **11:00 am EST Friday, January 20, 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.

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### **AGENDA:**

1. Review and Acceptance of the Minutes/Action Items of the December Meeting distributed January 3 and attached again for your convenience
2. NHMA DRR Curriculum & Workshop Status
  - a. RNN Matrix Slide - Inclusion of Earthquakes for Communities/Updating RNN Matrix
  - b. Discussion of Leadership Component to include in DRR Curriculum Modules - Contribution about this and other topics from RNN members. Update on Curriculum attached
  - c. Module 4: "Whole Community Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation" (RNN Module) - update on status
3. RNN Community Membership - Current members and outreach to potential future members
4. Natural Hazards Workshop/NHMA Symposium - combined event July 9-12, 2017
5. Status of Practical Community Resilience Project in South Carolina
6. Comments/Issues/Good News

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

#### **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Rebecca Joyce (NHMA Board Member); Tom Hughes (NHMA Board Member); Marcy Leach; Ed Thomas (NHMA Board Member); Bill Robison; Mary Kell; Eugene Henry

#### **1. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES/ACTION ITEMS OF THE DECEMBER MEETING:**

The Action Items List was addressed.

**DISCUSSION:** Mary Kell had Action Items #7 and #8. Allison Hardin had Action Items #9 and #13. These are unfinished but will be completed shortly.

Ed Thomas had Action Item #6. This was completed and he has sent out everything that is appropriate to send out on the Hazard Center, especially concerning the note from Lori Peek, the new Director.

Concerning Action Items #2 and #3, Rebecca Joyce corrected these to attribute them to Barb Miller, as they were assigned to Rebecca Joyce by mistake. NHMA Admin to make this correction.

Concerning Action Item #3, Rebecca Joyce reported that she hasn't heard from anybody.

Bill Robison had Action Item #11. Bill reported (with regard to Tulsa's LID Design Criteria Manual) that he hasn't received anything yet but will send this material on as soon as he does. Also, with regard to Action Item #11, Bill does not know what "SMOA" Design Criteria stands for. After some discussion, it was determined that this was supposed to say "Storm water" Design Criteria Manual. Bill reported that this is also a work in progress and he will send it on when it gets drafted up. NHMA Admin to make this correction to the Action Items List.

Ed Thomas emphasized that he hopes to spend a lot of very productive time at Transit Disaster Risk Reduction working at the American Bar Association ("ABA"). Anyone in the RNN Community with contacts who would like to present to a lawyer as a design professional or hazard mitigation professional, or who wants to pass information on to lawyers regarding hazard mitigation issues, or otherwise wants to become involved in these educational opportunities, please let Ed Thomas know. A number of training sessions are coming up through the ABA.

**A Motion was made** to approve the Action Items List as amended.

**The Motion was seconded** by Eugene Henry.

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

**VOTED:** Unanimous approval of the Action Items List.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** The floor was opened to discussion of the December 2016 Minutes. There being no comments,

**A Motion was made** by Rebecca Joyce to approve the Minutes.

**The Motion was seconded** by Eugene Henry.

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

**VOTED:** Unanimous approval of the Minutes.

- 2. NHMA DRR CURRICULUM & WORKSHOP STATUS:** Ed Thomas reported that status of the DRR Curriculum was sent out. Tom Hughes was asked to describe plans for April in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania will not necessarily be the location of the RNN Retreat, as Shepherdstown, West Virginia may be considered for that. This will be discussed.

**a. RNN Matrix Slide - Inclusion of Earthquakes for Communities/Updating RNN Matrix**

Rebecca Joyce reported on a briefing with the Contractor (Wightman & Associates) that is working on the DRR Curriculum. They are including a slide from the RNN Matrix that shows what kinds of disasters everyone either spends money to work toward or include in their mitigation program. Because of the increase in earthquakes, particularly in the mid-west, they were wondering if people wanted to add that as a disaster to include in their programs for mitigation. This was sent around in an email for comment. Also, a copy of the Matrix was sent around for updates/changes. There are some communities that are newer which aren't on the Matrix, so a fillable PDF form was provided for easy changes. Do people feel that more changes are needed to the Matrix?

**DISCUSSION:** It was clarified that changes and updates can be sent as people are able to make them, whether now or three or four months from now is fine. It was agreed that the Matrix would remain a fluid document. The Matrix will remain an open item on the Action Items List.

**DISCUSSION CONTINUED:** The concept of risk probability was examined. Fracking was used as an example of something that can exacerbate an already present risk of earthquake. If an area already has fault lines and a high risk of earthquake activity, and industrial fracking is practiced in that locale, it increases the probability of earthquake so communities may want to update their All Hazards document to state this. Risk would be clarified by spelling out consequences in the consequence management plan and identify mitigation.

Bill Robison shared that Oklahoma has always included earthquakes in its hazard mitigation plan but they were played down because there was never an earthquake risk perceived there. They will redo

their plan in 2019 and most likely more emphasize earthquakes more than has been done in the past. Their Hazard Mitigation Advisory Board has discussed the need of looking at seismic codes in local building codes, but they are still not rated as a high seismic zone area so the likelihood of code change is not very high.

Ed Thomas summarized that the group did not appear to think this issue deserved specific and different mention other than just as evolution of change to risks as life unfolds. He expressed hope that people in South Carolina and Northern Louisiana now realize the possibility that their risks of flooding are different from what they perceived before because of irresponsible allegations of “thousand-year” rainfalls they have had. The DRR Curriculum could be used as a tool to point out that basing risks on past events in an era of unfolding human knowledge of change is not going to work. There are many things happening that could not have been anticipated. Who would have known, for example, that a massive earthquake in Oklahoma could allegedly result from the practice of fracking? Quite a surprise to a lot of people. The question was asked: Do we have a consensus?

Gene Henry agreed and observed that Oklahoma, for instance, will be looking at their codes because of seismic activity. Obviously if there was an after-action report that explained all the changes in frequency and such and got everybody’s attention, it would be very much worthwhile to stress the fact that communities must look at their risks. If nothing else, at least on an annual basis just to see if there is a frequency change and then keep track of it, working between the five-year updates to see if, instead of an aberration, there’s a literal change in risk and probability. He observed it was important to stress this more because the changes in Oklahoma are dramatic. His community will be looking at changing their hazards document to look at some of the causes and higher risk zones and some of the mitigation that goes along with it. Input from a lot of political leadership as well as industry and those sorts of things also comes into play. But yes, he will be part of this consensus theme, it is a good direction.

Ed Thomas stated that the group will write this up this consensus in a note and get it out. He observed that there is a lot of uncertainty out there. The era of stationary reality is over with respect to hazard mitigation.

Gene Henry shared that Tampa Bay area makes comprehensive plans 20 years out and examines benchmarks every five years to look at sea level increase on their side of the Bay. Other counties are being very active as far as looking at future and proposed conditions now versus simply trying to monitor. He asked is there some way that we can stress the importance of looking at proposed/future conditions, and identify when to change from passively monitoring to actively performing analysis on those proposed conditions and what type of mitigation they require?

Ed Thomas asked if Bill Robison could take a crack at drafting this idea so that it could be circulated to the group with an eye toward potentially including it as a concept in the Curriculum. Bill Robison will forward a link he received from the Chair of the Storm Water and Hazard Mitigation Board to a paper that FEMA recently came up with on this.

Ed Thomas asked Mary Kell and Gene Henry for their thoughts on possibly making this consensus into a discussion piece between and among the RNN Community members. Gene was willing to but lacked time to write; he suggested the group could have a discussion about it and just make notes out of it and go from there. Ed Thomas will have the Contractor flesh this concept out for the Curriculum. NHMA Admin to add this to the Action Item List.

Gene Henry observed the tremendous value of this effort as it is pure risk analysis examining a change in probability. Just growing up the first 30 years of his life, so much of the environment was static; now we are seeing significant changes in very short periods of time. Things are changing all around us. Ed Thomas agreed and observed that debate in the academic community about what they call “stationarity” doesn’t work anymore, exactly because of what Gene just said.

Ed Thomas summarized consensus on the discussion: In terms of the Matrix, nothing will be put in, but in terms of concept, it will be part of the Risk Assessment Module and include an idea essentially along the lines of ‘you can’t rely on the past for the future anymore.’ Weaving into this the idea that it is irresponsible to use the term “thousand-year floods.” There is no scientific basis for that statement yet it is parroted from government agencies and gives people an excuse to avoid recognition of an impending hazard and prevent action. The fact that we’re now seeing five hundred-year and

thousand-year storms and floods all over the place, has as much to do with extremely poor design in storm water systems and other aspects of the problem of flooding as the hazard itself. It was decided that this concept should slide over into the Risk Assessment Module. The RNN will work with the Contractor to come up with language, and also Steve Pardue, who's in charge of the Risk Assessment Module.

**Discussion of leadership component to include in DRR curriculum modules - contribution about this and other topics from RNN members.** The Leadership Module was discussed. Ed Thomas made a pitch for someone to step in to take over for Dave Miller, who has become involved in a lot of paid work that has taken him away from the progress we need to make on this Module in the Curriculum.

Ed Thomas explained that he is looking for a way to get quotations from people like Terry Young, and Ann Patton, who supported Terry Young, into the Module. Leadership quotes should say look, this is what it takes and this is how you can support it. From the stance of a grass roots activist, or someone that wants to do hazard mitigation, climate adaptation, and/or disaster risk reduction, how can we induce this quality of thoughtful leadership and meaningful action, how do we support the people who demonstrate it; and what are the characteristics that produce lasting positive change at the local level? It is hoped that the RNN Community can help as a group on this particular Module. This is one piece of the Curriculum that is critically needed and we are far behind on.

Questions were asked: Why is Tulsa so different from so many other communities when they had all the same tools that everybody else had but they used them in a way that was transformative? What's the difference between Charlotte- Mecklenburg and their approach, the Tulsa approach, and all these other places that are really and truly making enormous progress? Can we capture these ideas in a webinar? What do we want to say about the State of Florida, about Tulsa, about the State of Oklahoma? What do we want to say that others can learn from to support their community officials in their decision making?

Gene Henry observed: A lot of the political driving force is in those persons and institutions that (not in a bad way) contribute to our elected officials being where they are, and helping to make the decisions and policy for top plans and strategies such as the Hazard Mitigation document. This concept could be a round table topic of discussion. What would we like to tell our leadership?

Understanding the bulk of the needs of the community and also understanding the demands of the community is important. There are many conflicting decisions that need to be made – such as conserving environmental lands that affect water, which, if you work with it and enforce water quality, gives you a better bay, for example. A beautiful bay allows for tourism, fishing, skin diving, and many other things; but at the same time, you have waterfront development and regentrification of various industrial areas into either commercial or residential properties. So, there are all these conflicts.

Thinking out loud, we would have to tell our leadership how to make clear objectives as to where the community should be for the quality of life it needs. Looking at quality of life first, and at the same time and almost parallel to, looking at the community being sustainable and thriving financially. How do we get these objectives on track?

By instilling guiding principles that, regardless of the community, we still need to work to some level of attainment such as water quality, for potable water and everything else. What are those points that we need our elected officials to work on that obviously include sustainability and resilience, but also quality of life and resilience, some financial stability, or a transition as you go along in time?

**DISCUSSION CONTINUED:** There is conflict - this isn't easy. An elected official has to look at things in a certain way, and what we need to do is weave in the concepts of disaster risk reduction any way that we can, whether its quality of life, the economy, financial stability, looking at legal, moral ethical obligations. It's anything we can do to get disaster risk reduction into the matrix when policy makers are making their decision. And how do we support a local elected official that wants to make a decision that we think is the right thing, which is to definitely include disaster risk reduction in the matrix?

Ed Thomas shared that one of the things that struck him while doing the tour of Tulsa in 2015 was talking to folks about doing this wonderful stuff; about making tremendous progress; yet there is still

significant push-back. Policy makers see all this wonderful land that seems like it's totally suitable for development, where houses used to be, until they were bought up by FEMA funds and other funds set aside the land, and people would like to put nice high rise buildings there, and who knows what else, for economic development purposes.

So, we need to balance economic development against all these other complex criteria, and I think what we really need to get across is that some communities are doing a really good job of this. And of course, Hillsborough County, the State of Florida as a whole; the State of California as a whole; Tulsa; Charlotte-Mecklenburg; these are some of the real stars in the firmament there, and yet other states that have the same problems are simply not doing much of anything or are going backwards.

Some localities that have the same problems with respect to flooding or other issues are doing essentially nothing. Just in terms of leadership, what can NHMA, and the RNN Communities do?, What tricks, tips techniques would you share? What would you want to say to a community in Louisiana, for example, that just finished abolishing their free board requirements, of all places on the planet to do that.

This is part of the concept of crafting and selling the concept of space and resilience development.

Gene Henry's comments to be shared with the Contractor. Mary and Bill agree to the Contractor calling them to get some further ideas and thoughts for this Module

Bill Robison mentioned that the University of Colorado of Boulder is doing a project for FEMA that they interviewed Tulsa on – they're using Tulsa as a target community on a Return on Investment Study for Mitigation. The results of this will be very interesting once they come out.

**b. Module 4: "Whole Community Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation" (RNN Module) - update on status.** The Whole Community Module was discussed. Rebecca Joyce summarized status on this Module.

Rebecca will be wrapping the Module up this weekend as far as the first wrap is concerned. The Contractor will take it and format it to fit into the form of the rest of the Modules. If any of the RNN Communities would be interested in reviewing comments, please let Rebecca know. The Contractor's product will also be distributed so everyone can review it.

This Module is the RNN Communities' chance to let everyone know about the RNN and what the different communities are doing, and how they engage their communities. If anyone has anything else they'd like to contribute, please do.

Following up on Ed Thomas' comments earlier, if someone doesn't have time to develop their thoughts, even just a simple bulleted list in an email to her about some of the things their community has done to engage all sectors of their Community would be great. The list does not have to be comprehensive, it can be one or two things. Rebecca will forward these on the Contractor and make sure they are added. It would be great if to show RNN the Hundred Resilient Cities Program some of the things that are going on in other communities so any communities that are new to disaster risk reduction and mitigation will be able to see many different kinds of things.

The Module will focus on what do your cities need – do they need more resources or more wide-scale programs as well as how smaller communities do work with not as many resources. It will try to paint a picture so that communities that may be interested in starting to deal with hazard mitigation can get a good overview of what is happening elsewhere and may build connections to other communities as well.

Ed shared that there will be more time for this Module. It will be scrubbed up and sent out to the RNN Community. This will likely be one of the modules that will be presented at the Retreat. The Retreat may be a good time to do a session where we go through this Module and let people offer what can be included or changed. We're on the timeline as far as our FEMA Grant, so we want to have at least a fair product to say that it's been completed, but we can always refine it and make it better and include more.

Rebecca Joyce addressed Gene's comments on coping with too much to do with too little time. She shared that this may be something to look at in this Module as well, that a lot of staff are doing a lot of things, so adding this on, how are you able to do it with the greatest time-efficiency and staff efficiency as well.

It was agreed this should be included in the Module. Gene Henry observed that there are other communities that are not so resource constrained so they're moving ahead with building resiliency just around Tampa Bay itself. It's very worthwhile to share that you don't have time to do everything. You can't, even though you may know how to do an analysis and set up your objectives and such, you just don't have time to do it, you're a master of all trades. So, the Module can say, here's what you need to look at, and here are the bulleted items that you need to put into a scope that you can cost effectively go out and seek assistance if this is a target objective that you're trying to do. This is a powerful idea.

It was decided to have the Contractor accelerate the Whole Community Disaster Risk and Adaptation Module and plan to devote an RNN Call in perhaps February or March to going through it before it is presented. It was decided that this should be one of the Modules that is presented in April in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania session was discussed. It is planned for April 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Hughes explained that his Region brings in for Fall and Spring the State Hazard Mitigation Officers of their region and the National Flood Insurance Program State Coordinators as well as the FEMA staff, and then they bring in some headquarters staff to talk about issues that they see day to day that need to be planned for. Tom wants to bring in a pre-workshop for this event and have the FEMA Region 3 Administrator and his Director in on it. He will use some moneys he has from the Flood Mitigation Assistance Technical Assistance Grant to bring in communities that have been hardest hit by repetitive fires, and also their CRS Communities, to sit down with the directors that are in his Region. He has also invited Kentucky, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and North Carolina to come to this pre-session to look at a few of our Modules, whatever we have available, and give their thoughts on how the material appears from the perspective of the locals and also from a State perspective on the tie-ins.

Most of the towns in his Region have supervised risks. Pennsylvania has Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and everybody thinks of those two cities when they think of Pennsylvania, but their number one industry is agriculture and they have a lot of rural areas in between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Looking at the Module from a Supervisor's standpoint, who has just been thrust into a pre-disaster or disaster event, what are some of the best practices that you would need to know about? How do you attempt to address it? Once this thing occurs, you only have so much time. If you ask someone to go out and repair a road, for example, they can do that blindfolded. But when you start asking them about doing mitigation activities or resilience activities you get glazed eyes.

This Module therefore looks at the issues through the lens of doing checklists. He hopes that a lot of the Modules are styled as "how-tos" that if someone doesn't have a lot of background mitigation, they can break the cycle, get help to do that, learn where to find the resources that are available, and who they can reach out and tap because they can't do it all by themselves. That's kind of the theme that is planned for our free workshop.

Tom Hughes verified that there would be ample room for the RNN Retreat in the brand-new, almost billion-dollar facility in Pennsylvania on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Room 113 alone is about 80 or 90 feet long, broken up into 3 different rooms with screens and state of the art facilities.

Ed Thomas recapped for the group that we had talked about a Retreat in Shepherdstown just for the RNN Community, but could possibly do some presentations of the Modules and then do a Retreat just for the RNN Communities. We could do the presentations, the RNN Community would be intimately involved as instructors and critiquers. Then they would hold a separate Retreat with everyone meeting elsewhere on the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup>. At a future date he can negotiate with others to consider Shepherdstown for presenting a workshop much more like what was done in Tulsa, where it will present to local officials. The Pennsylvania session would be rolling out some of the Modules, having RNN Community members as presenters and critiquers; and then at some future date do something at Shepherdstown, West Virginia, as had been suggested.

Gene Henry shared that this sounded good. Especially pulling together to help with the presentation and delivery of information with checklists so someone like himself can just grab that and move ahead with it. It would be nice to have as a roadmap.

Ed shared that what we're looking for is no-cost, low cost stuff; and another item he will want to include such some checklists to start with, is one that was developed for Vermont. It's work that he did with a professor from Georgia State law school looking at no-cost things that can be put on your books just so that you're ready for a disaster, whether it's making sure that you have the ability to debris removal and all that stuff that's associated with that recovery ordinance so you know how to do stuff. And weave together as Tom has suggested, checklists of things for things you want to look out for and things you don't have to look out for.

TOM: Looking at it from the standpoint of what does a municipal official have to have when they want to do, say, an elevation project or acquisition project. We've got 2400 incorporated municipalities in our State and I can't be everywhere nor can my staff be everywhere but at least they can do the triage; It may not be an eligible program under our FEMA program, and based on the answers that they provide us I may be able to lead them to somebody else. If they can just go out there and be storm troopers give us the information bring it back as we ask for it, in this simple checklist, that to me is using our resources wisely. When doing my Module, I'm finding out that there's nothing out there and no wonder we're having a hard time at the local level. You can fill out applications all day long, but what about the triage checklist?

Ed will put a Note out that we're planning on doing the roll-out of the RNN Workshop which will be scheduled for April – the weekend after Palm Sunday; probably travel on the 16<sup>th</sup>, doing something the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> with presentations and then the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup> probably just an RNN huddle about the RNN Retreat. The group agrees.

Tom Hughes mentioned information on the Recovery Course. Some of the RNN members have already taken the T210 Recovery Course at EMI – which is also coming up in April. Maybe having the call if we can, do the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> here but as a backup, could we also put it on the book that some of the RNN members did sign up for that T210 Course, just to make sure that we've got that on the back burner too.

The T210 course is the week before the workshop: April 10 through the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ed Thomas stated that it will be a busy time and some folks will not be able to make it to the Retreat, but we'll be in touch with them. Tom Hughes is still waiting to hear whether he got into the course or not.

- 3. RNN COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP - CURRENT MEMBERS AND OUTREACH TO POTENTIAL FUTURE MEMBERS.** Community Membership was discussed. Pasadena, TX has basically dropped out. Daya Dayananda reported that his whole department was let go. We haven't been hearing much from some of the newer members.

It was asked that if you know of communities that you would like to somehow induce into Resilient Neighbors Network, please let us know and we'll reach out to them. Right now, our membership seems to be dwindling and it's such an incredibly important input to the overall concept of locally based hazard mitigation. Any discussion on that? We really need local presence in Resilient Neighbors Network.

Gene Henry offered that the City of St. Pete is growing. Just in the past six months to nine months they increased their freeboard so they are moving ahead faster. Clearwater is improving as well with their Resiliency to Sea Level increase and they spell that out. So there are several communities right there we could approach. Gene will provide their contact information.

- 4. NATURAL HAZARDS WORKSHOP/NHMA SYMPOSIUM - COMBINED EVENT JULY 9-12, 2017.** The Hazards Workshop was discussed. Ed Thomas reported that Lori Peek has strongly suggested we consider not having a Symposium this year, as she would like to take all the excellent work, the concepts, the locally based practical community resilience type stuff that we do and put it into the Natural Hazards Workshop. The Hazards Workshop has turned into an

academic, esoteric situation that is frankly an embarrassment. We probably won't be doing the Symposium, but will be doing something else trying to weave in with them. Erin Capps, Tom Hughes and Ed Thomas will be negotiating with Lori Peek about this. NHMA will probably do some type of NHMA Membership and Board Retreat following the Hazards Workshop, or possibly before it.

**5. STATUS OF PRACTICAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT IN SOUTH CAROLINA.**

Ed Thomas mentioned the Practical Resilience Community Project. This was originally going to be a three-area pilot that would include the Navaho Nation, one community in Pennsylvania, one sort of dwindling, poor Pennsylvania Community and then a community in South Carolina, almost as a form of selecting a South Carolina pilot community. Ed has been working with the South Carolina Silver Jackets and the folks from Clemson and the idea is to use Clemson University students in a practical way to go into the community and work with them on developing disaster risk reduction and some elements of overall resilience. Ed to keep the RNN Community informed of progress.

**There being no further questions, the Meeting was adjourned.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be on 2/17/2017 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

12:05 (EST) am – The meeting adjourned.