

Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network 11:00 am ET Friday, August 18, 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. [Review of June Action Items](#)
4. [RNN Community Membership – Rebecca Joyce Memorandum](#)
5. [Pilot of the RNN/Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum in Harrisburg, PA](#)
Next Steps
6. [NHMA DRR Curriculum & Workshop Status:](#)
Where are we with respect to the RNN and DRR Curriculum's further rollout?
7. [Natural Hazards Workshop - July 9-12, 2017](#)
8. [Status of Practical Community Resilience Project in South Carolina](#)
9. [Report from Vincent Brown of FEMA on the many things happening in FEMA Headquarters](#)
10. [Status of Island Press Interest, ABA](#)
11. [Comments/Issues/Good News](#)

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

New guests/members to the RNN were introduced: [David Alamia](#) of Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Texas, and [Joe Rossi](#) of Marshfield Citizens Coastal Coalition, Massachusetts. Both were warmly welcomed by the RNN and invited to consider membership.

[David Alamia](#) noted that Pasadena, TX (close to Houston, TX) is a founding member of the RNN.

[Daya Dayananda](#) (formerly of Pasadena, TX), greeted David Alamia and shared a little of his background and the history of Pasadena, TX as a member of the RNN.

[Joe Rossi](#) shared a little of his background representing the Coastal Community stakeholders in Massachusetts and his involvement with the National Flood Determination Association and explained that he is very busy with flood issues.

[Ed Thomas](#) expressed his excitement to have Joe Rossi involved in the RNN and hoped it will help raise the quality of CRS in Massachusetts, which has eroded over time and needs to be upgraded.

[Tom Hughes](#) introduced a new guest community member from Muncy, PA: The Borough of Muncy is trying to redesign their town, and Tom shared with them that the RNN could be a great help and benefit to them with this. The Muncy Borough Council is enthusiastic for this involvement, and passed a Resolution to allow the

Borough Manager, Mr. Bill Ramsey, to participate in this group, and took the additional step of forwarding a Letter of Introduction for him to us.

Ed Thomas clarified for everyone that the policy with regard to new members in the RNN is that we invite community representatives to join us on an RNN meeting call so they can then decide if they would like to become a member. The RNN has never in the past insisted that a whole Community participate and will not insist that all communities take these steps that the Borough of Muncy has done. He reminded everyone that we are looking for personal participation as part of the grass roots movement, and to share this knowledge with others all around the country so that NHMA can bring this knowledge to FEMA to assist with hazard mitigation.

Tim Trautman observed that these steps spoke very highly to the commitment of the Borough of Muncy to have their Borough Manager be able to participate.

Tom Hughes will provide a copy of the Resolution and Letter of Introduction from the Borough of Muncy to distribute out to everyone. It is hoped that Bill Ramsey will be on our next call so he can decide if he would like to join.

Ed Thomas mentioned, for Tom Hughes to pass on to Muncy and for David Alamia and Joe Rossi to be aware, that there is an enormous slug of materials on the NHMA website. Ed Thomas is happy to send a personal note on that to each of them with a summary report to help them get on board with all of it.

Rebecca Joyce also offered to talk with Joe or Dave or anyone in PA to give a brief overview of the RNN and pointed out that all the members on the call are great to talk with.

Ed Thomas mentioned that Tim Trautman and Gene Henry in particular are shining stars in the nation with regard to CRS.

Joe Rossi especially appreciated having access to the CRS network in the RNN and would like to trade contact info.

Gene Henry and Tim Trautman to speak with Joe Rossi and David Alamia about CRS and get contact info to them.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present: **Ed Thomas** (NHMA Board Member); **Tom Hughes** (NHMA Board Member); **Joe Rossi** (Marshfield, MA); **David Alamia** (Harris County, TX); **Daya Dayananda** (formerly of Pasadena, TX); **Tim Trautman** (Mecklenburg County, NC); **Gene Henry** (Hillsborough County, FL); **Rebecca Joyce** (Shenandoah Valley Region, VA)

[Back to Agenda](#)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ed Thomas opened the floor for discussion of the July 2017 Minutes.

Rebecca Joyce called for a quorum to approve the Minutes.

A quorum not being present, the July Minutes were tabled.

[Back to Agenda](#)

3. REVIEW OF JUNE & JULY ACTION ITEMS:

Rebecca Joyce reported that she is still working to complete her Action items.

Rebecca Joyce stated that due to its current status, she will table the NC Questionnaire.

Ed Thomas invited comments on the remaining Action Items.

Rebecca Joyce suggested we combine what is left on the List of unfinished tasks with the August list so we can start in September with a clean slate.

All agreed.

NHMA Admin to combine all outstanding Action Items into the current list for August and distribute.

[Back to Agenda](#)

4. RNN COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP – REBECCA JOYCE MEMORANDUM

Rebecca Joyce explained the purpose of the Membership Memorandum. The most current version has been forwarded to NHMA Admin for posting on the RNN website. Rebecca Joyce will get the final draft of the Membership Memorandum materials out to everybody. It was agreed that this will continue to be a work in progress.

[Back to Agenda](#)

5. PILOT OF THE RNN/DISASTER RISK REDUCTION CURRICULUM IN HARRISBURG, PA: NEXT STEPS

Ed Thomas shared that the Harrisburg Pilot Workshop was very successful. We have begun addressing feedback/questions. Ed shared that he noticed the extreme anxiety expressed by a couple FEMA attendees who were not familiar with the Flood Insurance Program, and who were basically saying that the speakers talking about base flood elevations and floodways were wrong. This shows the depth of misunderstanding about what a floodway is and what a base flood elevation is, and the need for higher standards if we really want a future with less flooding.

[Back to Agenda](#)

6. NHMA DRR CURRICULUM & WORKSHOP STATUS: WHERE ARE WE WITH RESPECT TO THE RNN AND DRR CURRICULUM'S FURTHER ROLLOUT?

Ed Thomas reported that NHMA is in the process of hiring some contractors to help with the Curriculum in 3 areas: Follow on to Harrisburg, getting questions answered and organizing info on the website; Moving forward with the Curriculum by finishing the Modules; and turning the Curriculum into an actual accreditation program for college courses. He stated that we have some colleges and universities who are interested.

Ed Thomas explained that we were not able to do the NC Flood Plain Managers Conference in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Instead we will be doing pieces of the Curriculum such as an introduction similar to what was done at the ABA and ASFPM events earlier this month. We will have one or two of our RNN community members there to do a presentation on the Curriculum and introduce the thought of making it part of the Flood Plain Managers Meeting.

Who would be willing to do that from the RNN?

NHMA to pay for travel from the FEMA grant.

Tim Trautman stated that if anyone does come into the Flood Plain Conference he would be glad to get together with them. Also, one of the speakers at the conference will be the new FEMA Director.

Ed Thomas mentioned that Rebecca Joyce had volunteered at the NHMA Board call to attend the Conference; she had suggested that perhaps she and Tim Trautman could do a co-presentation of the Module that Rebecca Joyce and Barb Miller had used in Harrisburg.

Tim Trautman agreed that he would be glad to do a dual presentation with Rebecca Joyce on the Module.

Rebecca Joyce and Tim Trautman to get together to see about doing a presentation at the NC Flood Plain Conference.

Ed Thomas to provide Rebecca Joyce and Tim Trautman a copy of the skinned-down version of the intro to the Curriculum that he used for the ASFPM Committee meeting.

NHMA Admin to put together a newsletter by the end of the August with an article on the successful APA event.

NHMA will continue forward with contractors RFPs.

[Back to Agenda](#)

7. NATURAL HAZARDS WORKSHOP - JULY 9-12, 2017

Ed Thomas reported that we weren't able to get onto the Agenda at the Natural Hazards Workshop this year. Though we weren't on the Agenda, Tom Hughes and Erin Capps were able to organize a couple of events, and we had some impact at the Workshop and will perhaps have more of an impact next year. We may try to do an RNN meeting out there or someplace else.

We are looking for a place and time for the next RNN meeting.

[Back to Agenda](#)

8. STATUS OF PRACTICAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Ed Thomas reported that he had a splendid conversation with folks in New York and with John Garigiola, who was basically unaware of NHMA, and Ed sent them a great deal of info about what we're up to. Ed continues suggesting that people use the DRR Curriculum.

Ed Thomas offered to send out a copy of the Agenda for the Utah presentation in Salt Lake City next month to anyone who would like a copy. He is trying to work with the ABA to have pieces of our Curriculum included.

Ed Thomas reminded everyone that NHMA is alive and well because it has received funding from workshops given by NHMA members about NHMA activities and materials. NHMA presenters have allowed the fees from the workshops to be directed in part or in whole to NHMA to help cover its operating expenses.

Ed Thomas suggested that as any of the RNN Communities can get special funding from FEMA, to take advantage of the opportunity to do such presentations using the DRR Curriculum materials.

[Back to Agenda](#)

9. REPORT FROM VINCENT BROWN OF FEMA ON THE MANY THINGS HAPPENING IN FEMA HEADQUARTERS

Vince Brown was not on the call to give a report from FEMA.

[Back to Agenda](#)

10. STATUS OF ISLAND PRESS INTEREST, ABA

Ed Thomas reported that he continues working on a Book for the ABA about hazard mitigation. It is designed around short essays by various persons in the hazard mitigation field. Anyone interested in helping with this to please let him know.

Discussion turned to The Island Press article.

Gene Henry shared his thoughts about liability, i.e., about the frequencies of storms changing, etc. He mentioned the growing concern that if we don't share this information with the public, it opens the door for communities to come back later and say why didn't you tell us this.

Ed Thomas discussed post-disaster liability and shared his thoughts that this issue is covered in at least two Modules that we have in the Curriculum. This is also a topic that he hammers on whenever he presents.

[Back to Agenda](#)

11. COMMENTS/ISSUES/GOOD NEWS

DISCUSSION:

Rebecca Joyce shared her thoughts that, being located as they are about 30 miles from Charlottesville, and the events of the past weekend and it being a very emotional week for everyone with much turmoil, she sees this as giving us a little window into what people will feel when climate issues make themselves felt.

Ed Thomas agreed, and shared that one of the key aspects of the Curriculum is trying to talk to everyone and find common ground. He stressed that we need to get that message of hope and common concern across to people wherever they are; be they here or in Barcelona, which is going through tremendous suffering as well.

On a happier note, Tom Hughes shared that there are five workstreams coming up in the External Stakeholder Group that will be discussed by FEMA on a call in August. As these work products come out, Tom Hughes will send them around to the RNN Communities to get comments from the local perspective. Specifically, they want to know: Are we making it a little easier for you, or are we adding more work? Comments from the RNN Communities are very much appreciated.

Ed Thomas congratulated Tom Hughes and asked him to please think of recruiting some members for the RNN from the External Stakeholder Group. We do not have any native American members, sadly, so as he works with them to please talk up the RNN; we really want to have the opportunity for the RNN members to give input to the External Stakeholder Group.

Ed Thomas to talk with Tom Hughes more about that.

Ed Thomas suggested that if the RNN Curriculum is not exactly what these people need coupled with existing FEMA courses, EPA, & NOAH courses, then we need to adjust our Curriculum to suite the need.

NHMA Admin to add this to the next Agenda as an item for discussion.

Tom Hughes to let Ed Thomas or Erin Capps know if there is anything that they or George Huff can do to support him while they are in Utah.

Ed Thomas will reach out to the Kresge Foundation and keep the RNN informed and will also loop Rebecca Joyce in on that.

David Alamia and Joe Rossi to be included in the next meeting announcement and we hope they will become members of the RNN.

[Back to Agenda](#)

There being no further discussion, the Meeting adjourned.

NEXT MEETING:

The next RNN meeting will be on 9/22/2017 at 11:00 a.m., EDT.

[Back to Agenda](#)