

**Follow Up Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network
Discussion of Best Practices Database
11:00 am ET Friday, December 29, 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.

**Minutes for Meeting of Friday, December 29, 2017:
Discussion of Best Practices Database**

11:00 am ET - CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL:

PRESENT:

Jim Murphy (NHMA Board Member), **Tim Trautman** (Mecklenburg County, NC), **Janice Roper-Graham** (NHMA Board Member), **Jordan Asulin** (Outreach Process Partners, LLC), **Daya Dayananda** (Houston, TX), **Donna Boyce** (NHMA Board Member), **Roger Faris** (Seattle, WA)

INTRODUCTION:

Janice Roper-Graham reviewed the history of the FEMA best practices portfolio. It was originally on FEMA.gov, with over 800 best practices for both individuals and communities, and was searchable by disaster type, declaration eligibility, and number of other fields. The search list could be printed out with pictures, links, etc. for pulling reports. Decisions were made by people outside of the group that ran the database to move it to a new platform. It was migrated to the DHS's Lessons Learned Information System and lost the bulk of its functionality. It was moved again to a different spot in the DHS library that is hosted by the Naval Bradford School website and has been reduced to a flat, simple Wordpress listing of best practices. Almost all searchable and reporting functionality is gone.

DISCUSSION:

Janice expressed that the database is not on the right platform and really requires searchability in order to be of value. She has spoken with Vincent Brown and the Corps about working with NHMA and the RNN to move it to a more functional platform. At this point it may be more feasible to take some of the 800 best practices and create a new platform for it, designed to accept new material from users and mitigation professionals.

REGARDING FUNDING:

Janice's firm, Outreach Process Partners, LLC (OPP), has a fixed price contract with the Corps, part of which is to provide administrative support to the Best Practices Portfolio. OPP is in the last year of its contract which ends in September 2018. Janice stated that OPP can do the heavy lifting to get the new database set up for NHMA / RNN, and then support it pro bono after that.

WHERE WOULD THIS NEW PLATFORM RESIDE?

The database would move to a new platform built especially for it, probably under the banner of NHMA or RNN, or whoever would want to own it. This is also an opportunity to build an interactive grass roots platform where people can post the exciting things that they are doing and share about their projects.

IS IT DOABLE?

It is definitely doable.

DO WE HAVE THE FUNCTIONALITY ON OUR WEBSITE TO BUILD THIS?

The current RNN website doesn't have the functionality needed, but the NHMA website does. We would essentially create the new website, then redirect the DNS to the new site and integrate it with the intro webpage.

WHAT INVOLVEMENT WOULD FEMA HAVE IN TRANSFERRING THE PLATFORM?

This is the discussion we would want to have. Janice suggested we meet with Vincent Brown and see what FEMA's interest and commitment to this might be. The RNN is going to come up with good stuff we can use between our RNN partners, but that could also have value to others who would ultimately go to FEMA's best practices website if not to the RNN website. We would leave the old platform where it is, and either duplicate stories from it that are relevant to the RNN mission or start fresh and just have fresh stories posted on the new site.

WITH REGARD TO PURPOSE AND DESIGN:

The RNN will want to take some time to come up with specifications for the functionality of the website. The old site does not have the interactivity that would be beneficial to what we build. Janice shared her thoughts that the new site should be called the "Resilient Neighborhood" with "success stories" rather than best practices, so it's not the same thing as the FEMA best practices portfolio. Best practices are an aspect of the website, another is getting people to actively participate on the website as part of a community and post their own stories about what they are doing.

THE WEBSITE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT THE RNN IS ALREADY DOING. NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

It would be interesting to follow up on some of the older best practices to see if a story that was written ten years ago has had any measurable benefit to a community's hazard mitigation effort.

Was it tested in a disaster, and how did it work, etc.? The new site could also include a 'how much did I spend' field, and so build in a 'ticker' for mitigation investment that would be of great interest to FEMA.

MAINTENANCE OF THE SITE:

Whatever we built under the RNN umbrella, ideally should be self-maintaining. As a volunteer organization, having someone responsible to enter material could easily break down. Setting it up so that communities could go in and enter their own story, or action, prompted by certain fields for consistency, would be ideal. Then, on the back end, there could be vetting done by NHMA or the RNN to make sure that the postings are appropriate. That way it's the folks who actually do the work who go and put their stories in.

INITIAL MATERIAL:

There was doubt that starting from scratch altogether would give us the most momentum. With over 800 existing best practices, it would be nice to use some of these to build an initial database, as long as FEMA approves us to use the data they already have. We may need to go through and scrub some of these but shouldn't just throw them out.

Janice shared that FEMA would be happy to have the best practices available to the public through the new website. They want them to be visible. It's unlikely that we would be able to build something on the FEMA.gov site. However, since FEMA is funding the RNN through NHMA, we could put a FEMA logo on the new site.

NEXT STEPS:

A follow-up call to be scheduled for January 18th or 19th, to be decided by Doodle Poll. The entire RNN Community to be invited.

Key persons to attend the meeting will be: Tom Hughes, Vincent Brown, Roger Faris, Ed Thomas, Janice Roper-Graham.

Going forward, the project should be called "Resilient Neighborhood" or "Success Stories" rather than "best practices" to differentiate it from the FEMA site.

A Sub-Committee was formed for the Success Stories Platform:

Janice Roper-Graham, Chair

Jim Mullen, Member

It is critical to have end users on the subcommittee – somebody from the RNN. Janice will reach out to Tom Hughes and seek others to serve.

TALKING POINTS FOR NEXT DISCUSSION:

What sort of platform would be helpful to the RNN members in their jobs?

Defining this would be crucial. If there isn't a group that says we need this and can use this in our work, then we won't do it.

Tim Trautman shared that he would be looking for a tool to upload best practices they've done so that when communities call for advice, they can refer them to the stories.

What does the RNN Community want or feel they need as far as best practices?

There are a variety of uses.

Are the folks that need something like this post-disaster, pre-disaster, or consultants helping communities with an all-hazards plan?

People who call RNN members for help are often post-disaster, looking for success stories to help guide them through their recovery, or to help them understand how to do things better.

Who are the End-Users?

End users will probably be people who aren't in the RNN.

RNN members might have a good perspective but might be the least likely to need something like this because they've been involved in it for a long time.

ACTION ITEMS:

NHMA Admin to send out a doodle poll for the new date and then send an invitation to all the RNN members. - ***DONE***

Meeting adjourned 12:02 p.m.