

Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network **11:00 am ET Friday, May 19, 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 April 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. Status of Island Press Interest, ABA
10. Comments/Issues/Good News

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

Ed Thomas announced that he had sent out a revised Agenda as a proposal for the group. The things that were added/tweaked were with respect to a title for Item No. 5, calling it instead of "Where Do We Stand", to "Next Steps"; also adding a review of the Action Items. There being no other additions/changes to the Agenda, a roll call was taken.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present: Ed Thomas (NHMA Board Member); Tim Trautman (Mecklenburg County, NC); Mary Kell (Tulsa, Ok); Laura Hendrix (Tulsa, OK); Barb Miller (Jefferson County, WV); Rebecca Joyce (Shenandoah Valley, WV)

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

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

The Motion was seconded by Mary Kell.

DISCUSSION: Laura Hendrix noted that a typo appeared in the spelling of Lori Peek's first name.

There being no further discussion, it was **VOTED:** Unanimous approval of the Minutes as amended to correct the spelling of Lori Peek's first name.

3. REVIEW OF APRIL ACTION ITEMS

Ed Thomas noted the usefulness and importance of having the Action Items List circulated within a day or two of the meeting. NHMA Admin to get the Action Items list out within a day or two of each call. Ed suggested that a review of the Action Items be made a regular part of each meeting – just a walk through to keep track of where everyone is on what they committed to do during the previous call.

Regarding last month's Action Items List, Ed asked for a short report from anyone who had an assignment. He noted that of all the people with tasks, he had the most, and reported that most of the tasks assigned to him that could be done were done. The floor was opened to comments/questions.

There being NO DISCUSSION, the topic moved to Item No. 4.

4. RNN COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP – REBECCA JOYCE MEMORANDUM

Ed Thomas mentioned that Rebecca Joyce had suggested we table this item, as she had sent it out at least twice and received very little feedback. Ed pleaded that everyone look at it and make comments so that meaningful action could be taken with regard to the RNN. He stressed the importance of this Memo and that Rebecca did a great job of laying out concepts that have great potential for growing the RNN. He suggested establishing a time frame for comments to come in by.

DISCUSSION: Rebecca Joyce shared that all suggestions and comments on the Memo were welcomed and could be completely different or opposite to what she offered. They could be anything from 'I don't like any of these things, but here's some suggestions I have' to tweaks on what she presented or completely new ideas to add as well.

Tim Trautman suggested moving ahead with rolling out the Memo if no comments come back in another week or so. It may be safe to roll out what Rebecca has put together so far with comments, and then maybe add two (or three) open-ended questions for people to write in – such as, what is your level of commitment, or what are you hoping to give back to RNN; and another one might be, what are you hoping to get out of the RNN. Then type it up and send it out to folks as we go forward trying to get new people to join. He suggested offering it to RNN members and certainly to our two newest RNN members (Myrtle Beach, Allison Hardin and West Arkansas, Tracee McKenna). If no one signs them, then we'll figure out where to go from there.

Barb Miller agreed with Tim's idea and suggested it be sent out for comments one more time and give everyone two weeks to respond. If in that time we don't hear anything back, we should assume silence is consensus and move forward with it.

Mary Kell shared that she had been out of town when the Memo was circulated last time so missed it. She suggested adding a 'respond by' date in the subject line of the e-mail such as "Feedback requested by" and the date. Rebecca Joyce agreed and said that she liked the idea.

NHMA Admin to circulate the Memo again with a message to make it very clear that the Memo has now been sent out twice and we are expecting folks to say what they want and comment on where we should go from there. The email will have a "respond by" date in the subject line.

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

Ed Thomas explained that with respect to reporting on follow up of the Harrisburg event, a Report is being worked up by the Contractor (Wightman & Associates). Shannon Burke is also doing her own report completely separate to the Contractor's report, which will be her recommendations on what we should do next with the materials we've developed. Ed opened the floor for discussion and invited Barb Miller or Rebecca Joyce to comment.

DISCUSSION: Barb Miller said that there was nothing in particular that she had to add, but for anybody who might not have been on last month's call, she thought the roll out went very well. There was a very good mix of people in the room presenting, as well as people on the Connector presenting via the web. There was a lot of diversity in the room; everything from federal, state and local representatives. There were some people there that were government, and some people that were private industry. It was a good mix to have good discussions with. She observed that participants probably learned as much in the hallways as they did in the classrooms, which is normal when you're doing something like that, and FEMA was an excellent host to us – hats off to them for all their efforts in getting us there and working all the logistics, they did a great job.

As a follow up, Barb shared that she had an opportunity to discuss the DRR Curriculum at a FEMA Leadership Course that she was taking just two weeks ago. She said that people found it interesting and wanted more information. When it comes to the State of West Virginia, she explained, travel money is always a problem for everybody, but if a presentation could be brought into the middle of the state, then there is interest in doing it. She thinks more and more people will be contributing once they learn about it. Ed Thomas thanked Barb for her comments and asked if anyone else had anything to share on next steps or Harrisburg.

Ed Thomas shared that he is already hearing tremendous interest in our program now that we have a product we can show people. Even though only sixteen of the twenty-four modules were presented, he has already received a suggestion for a 25th Module on Continuity of Operations for both business, industry and government, from his friend George Huff, and is thinking of it as a no-cost presentation. It certainly is part of resilience and would be something to consider doing in the next year.

Ed Thomas described that a lot of people are interested in our Curriculum and articulated some that were mentioned in the NHMA Board call yesterday:

- We have a Community College that Jim Mullen, NHMA Board member and former NEMA president and former Director of Emergency Management for the State of Washington and former Project Impact Coordinator for the City of Seattle, is affiliated with. They have a four-year program in Emergency Management and would like to use some of our materials. Ed and Jim will be talking with them next week.
- There is also the Practical Community Resilience Initiative with Clemson University.
- Vanderbilt University also seems to be interested in using some of our materials.
- The University of New Orleans - their Chart program - is interested in partnering with us.
- We're also considering a possible add-on to the Texas Flood Plain Managers Conference where we would present a program primarily designed for emergency managers, but also for flood plain managers. We particularly want to reach the emergency managers who draw up the hazard mitigation pilot.

Ed Thomas continued to say that we have to figure out where we want to use the grant funds. He reiterated that Barb Miller had mentioned West Virginia; possibly doing something at the Shepherdstown facility. Ed stated that we're going to have to focus in on partners, and with regard to that, explained that the folks at the National Association of Counties (NACo) are very interested in what we're doing. A number of silo sections and groups within the ABA are also interested. Allison Hardin and Shannon Burke are working with the American Planning Association. And we're going to be doing a state-wide webinar in June and will be getting some information out to everyone on that.

Of these many opportunities, Ed said he would like to give the RNN Communities the chance to speak to these and other things. He mentioned that he had a reporter on the phone from the St. Louis Post Dispatch who was asking "where are communities doing a really good job?" To which Ed replied that two communities came to mind right off - which were inland and were the closest comparison he could think of with similar

situations to St. Louis. The first, of course, was Charlotte-Mecklenburg, and the second was Tulsa, Oklahoma. Ed said he gave the reporter some contact information for both communities and explained that as reporters come in looking for information, NHMA is going to want to get the RNN Communities involved.

The folks from the American Bar Association have been contracted by a group called the Cargo Foundation – composed of big grain operators and cargo companies – who together with the ABA are extremely interested in what was done in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: Where you had a no-federal money disaster that was a catastrophe for the people involved, and how that was worked out. Ed stated that he has asked Roger Faris to be in touch with everyone – especially with Barb Miller, and also Rebecca Joyce and Jim Mullen – about what was done there, how the RNN came together with suggestions from the Communities, and then a follow on about the outcome which was essentially the best practice. He pointed out that it may not have been perfect, but his opinion was that it was as good a result as could be accomplished as far as he could tell, and was sure that there were lessons learned from it that can be shared around the country. The ABA is very interested in this as part of its work with the Cargo Foundation.

Ed Thomas expressed that he and NHMA will try to keep all the RNN Communities involved without burdening them overmuch. There will be opportunities for them to do presentations and there are materials that the RNN members can modify. And as the RNN reaches out to people, they'll be able to make use of the materials without overburdening anyone. He stated that we have to focus in on the best places to put our energy and certainly the Texas Emergency Managers seems like a good place. Also, following up with NACo which he thought won't cost much money; and then thinking about how we can possibly put something together - maybe with additional FEMA funds - to do something in West Virginia. Ed said that he has heard from Allison Hardin and Roger Faris that there are a number of people in FEMA now that seem to have all of a sudden caught on that the RNN and NHMA and here, and have this Curriculum, and it has been talked about considerably in the joint field office in North Carolina. Ed Thomas concluded his report with the observation that there is a lot of potential interest and believes it's going to be like a snowball rolling downhill.

DISCUSSION: Tim Trautman shared that he hoped we can document all these things. He also expressed the thought that, though we certainly want to take advantage of all these opportunities, we also want to be careful that we don't bite off more than we can chew in terms of roll outs, presentations, or anything else.

Ed Thomas responded that a lot of our response to these opportunities will be turning this material over to people and saying, here it is, go use it. Ed expressed that Tim is very correct that it's wonderful to have this interest, but we're going to have to be very careful how we allocate our resources. Ed shared that Pete Baston, our new Board member who runs a company called Ideaz, has really emphasized to him that basically we need to treat volunteer time as an expenditure of money, and be very, very careful how we spend our volunteer time. Ed confirmed that Tim's concern was spot on.

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

Ed Thomas addressed the next item on the Agenda which is where do we go from here with regard to the FEMA contract? He posed the question: Where are we going with RNN and the limited funds we have from FEMA? He reviewed last month's discussion about definitely wanting to do an RNN Annual Meeting sometime after October 1st because of everybody's schedule. He mentioned the possibility of combing this with another event like the Texas Flood Plain Managers meeting in September.

Ed Thomas then asked the group for input:

- Would you like to do something in September, or do you want to do something in October?
- Do you want NHMA to try to find a venue like the Texas Flood Plain Managers to link on to, or does the RNN want to do a separate, stand-alone meeting - more like Harrisburg - in a place like Shepherdstown or another venue like Charlotte-Mecklenburg, or someplace else?

Ed Thomas stated that not much of the \$100,000.00 available for the year has yet been spent, so there is definitely money enough to have the RNN Communities meet. He suggested having a useful meeting, as well as a sort of 'RNN out to the world' event along the lines of Harrisburg, followed by an internal, team-

building RNN or RNN/ NHMA meeting. He stressed that he does need feedback on this from the RNN Communities for him and Rebecca to pass on to the Program Management Team.

Rebecca Joyce shared that she thought it would be nice if the group could get together. She had been to the Shepherdstown Center and found it to be very nice and very conducive for meetings like the one we are planning. She asked Barb Miller for help with the name of the center.

Barb Miller stated that the name of the facility in Shepherdstown is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center. She expressed that she would love to have everyone up there but was also very aware that this facility is pretty expensive. She shared that she would have no problem at all going to another place like Charlotte-Mecklenburg and observed that there are opportunities there to get out into the flood plain via some great tours. She had a conference down there several years ago and there were some bus tours that were very informative. She expressed that she is not so concerned about where the meeting is held, as long as it is held. Rebecca Joyce agreed.

Ed Thomas then asked Rebecca Joyce if she thought that she and he needed any further guidance from the group with regard to advising the PMT to start planning the venue for the meeting. He stressed that this is not a 'forever hold your peace' kind of thing but did state that we need to start moving forward on hiring a contractor. He expressed that there is a whole litany of things on the Action Items List from last month that we promised to include in the contract going forward for the support person. So, if there's anything that anyone really wants to see, we need to know it, and if there's anything anyone really doesn't want to see, we need to know that too.

Ed Thomas shared with regard to this that we don't want to just reach out to emergency managers, we want to include planners too, and of course we want to do both. He asked everyone to please, if something pops into their head after this call to send a note around to the group – particularly himself and Rebecca Joyce who are on the Program Management Team and the CPT.

Rebecca Joyce added one quick thought. She recalled that in past years one of the issues for people getting to the meeting has been getting permission from their supervisors to go. She observed that some people have tight leashes with being able to leave, so if there's anything that we could do to help them be able to attend, we should try to do it. She suggested that we could add a mini-workshop and some kind of training with a credential to the content of the meeting, as this would help people to be able to attend.

Ed Thomas observed that whatever major training we do, wherever it is or for whomever it is, we would do it at an RNN meeting as well. If anyone has any special wording they need for this – for example, if people don't like conferences, if they prefer workshops, or they prefer to have a seminar credential or if there's some other wording your management would prefer – please offer it so we can put that into the announcement. We want to be able to say, 'yes, this is not a conference, this is a workshop', or whatever your management wants.

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

Ed Thomas shared that the Natural Hazards Workshop will be taking place and will not be a combined event with NHMA; that didn't quite happen. However, Erin Capps is in the process of trying to set up a breakfast meeting for Wednesday morning which NHMA is going to try to get a speaker for. There is a Texas Emergency Manager who has just joined NHMA and is very interested in promoting hazard mitigation within the emergency management community. He is apparently a real 'whiz-bang' – so stay tuned, we may have a breakfast-type meeting out at the Hazards' Workshop. Ed explained that he had suggested to Erin that if we've got some good speakers we ought to try and turn this breakfast meeting into a webinar so the RNN communities and NHMA members can at least listen to what's going on out there.

8. STATUS OF PRACTICAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Ed Thomas next addressed the Practical Resilience Communities project in South Carolina that is planned for Lawrence County. Ed has been in touch with the International Director of the Clemson Resilience Project who was looking to set a meeting with him in June. Clemson is obviously trying to do something within Lawrence County, and beyond, so their Director reached out to Ed Thomas for a meeting. However, Ed suggested that instead of himself, the Director might rather meet with one of the RNN Community members, as a more peer-to-peer communication, and the Director liked that idea. So more to come on that. Ed shared

that he suggested several RNN Community members by name; and then also came up with Allison Hardin who is, after all, in South Carolina; so again, more to come on that, but a possible speaking opportunity has been presented and if someone for example – say Allison Hardin, or Barb Miller, or Rebecca Joyce, or Tim Trautman - would be the spokesperson for the RNN and the DRR Curriculum, then NHMA would also turn around and be able to pay for that out of the Grant. So, we did come up with such an invitation for the RNN. Again, more to come on that; it's a very slow start, but apparently Clemson and the community really want to do this right. They're going to be talking about this a little bit in the Workshop in July.

9. STATUS OF ISLAND PRESS INTEREST, ABA

Ed Thomas next addressed the American Bar Association's (ABA) request for him to put together a book on Resilience. Ed is in the process of working on this with his friend and partner, George Huff and Nancy McNair, an architect, on coming up with the outline. Ed explained that he is considering doing something much like presentation of a case, where he would have experts like the RNN coming up with short articles about how to do resilience at the local level. Ed asked anyone who is interested in helping with this to please let him know. He thinks this would be a real opportunity to speak about the practical implementation of resilience in tandem with the legal perspective, including impediments to resilience at the local level. Anyone who might be interested, please let him know.

Ed Thomas spoke about another potential book project. The ABA is considering developing a very slender reference book that would be more than a pamphlet, but smaller than a paper-back. It would be a very simple and easy to follow instruction guide, aimed at individuals and their families, on what to do if you've been hit by a disaster. It would offer useful information such as here are some things to avoid and here are some things to do, and present it in a very simple, easy to follow way in order to help people through what might be the worst event of their entire lives. Ed shared that if this goes forward, he will be insistent that folks like the RNN and other people in NHMA have the opportunity for input. He shared that, with the ABA doing this, it really could be an incredible product. Ed welcomed anyone's thoughts on whether this is a worthwhile thing for ABA and him to be involved with.

10. COMMENTS/ISSUES/GOOD NEWS

AWARDS: Laura Hendrix congratulated Tim Trautman on receiving the 2017 Local Floodplain Manager of the Year Award from the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) at this year's conference. This is a huge award and well deserved. Many congratulations to Tim for this wonderful achievement.

Ed Thomas shared that Alisson Hardin also got an award. She received the Jerry Louthain Distinguished Service Award which is the highest award ASFPM gives and recognizes individuals who have clearly influenced the work of the association through their long-term efforts. Many congratulations to Alisson on this well-deserved recognition.

NFIP: Tim Trautman shared that he spent the last two days in Washington DC. The PEW Charitable Trust has an initiative they call the Resilient Communities that they've started in the last year and a half. They have a couple of ideas basically regarding NFIP reform or legislative ideas on how to make communities more flood resilient and reduce the cost of disasters. Tim reported that they flew in some folks from certain states, who spent a day just going over logistics and things with the PEW folks. He was there with about 11 or 12 other representatives from ten different states, plus the PEW staff. He spent one full day on the Hill meeting with nine of the North Carolina representatives (they were either House staffers or two Senate officers) and just talked about NFIP reform. A lot is going on in Washington, and there are many priorities, but because the flood insurance program expires at the end of September, they've already held some hearings. In terms of the House and Senate Committees putting out a draft proposal, they're shifting their focus in the next couple of weeks to flood. This is one of their top couple of priorities in some of the committees for the year. All sounds very positive. Both Democratic and Republican officers that he spoke to seemed interested in making good, sound reforms to the Flood Insurance program.

CRS: Tim Trautman shared that, with respect to his community recently moving up to a Class 4 CRS rating, this became official on the first of the month. He wanted to share that this coming Monday will be especially significant because they are having a big celebration of this award. There will be a press release promoting flood awareness and what this accomplishment means. Also, FEMA Region 4 Staff are coming in from

Atlanta just for the City Council Meeting and presentation of the plaque. It will be an all-day thing with staff recognition and a luncheon event to thank staff for all their work on elements that touched the CRS program. Ed Thomas and all shared huge congratulations to Tim Trautman and his team on this achievement.

RNN COMMUNITY: There was some discussion about finding and reconnecting with former RNN member Daya Dayananda. Barb Miller reported that while everyone was speaking, she went online to find his contact information and forwarded it to everyone. She also sent an email to Daya telling him that we've missed him and if he ever has an opportunity to jump back on one of the calls, he'd be most welcome. Ed Thomas thanked her.

OTHER MATTERS: Rebecca Joyce wondered if anyone knew if their communities were aware that certain facilities which are Medicare and Medicaid eligible now have new planning and preparedness requirements that go into effect in the fall. She learned about this since her community ended up getting two requests for their hazard mitigation plan and had to do risk assessments and things like that. She suggested that this would be great opportunity to education people on mitigation options if anyone has an organization with facilities in vulnerable areas. Ed Thomas agreed and asked Rebecca to please send out whatever information she has garnered on that.

Rebecca Joyce explained that she has worked with some of these organizations before but most of the issues that come up for them are things like storing enough water, particularly for a nursing facility or something like that, and having enough space to house all the supplies they would need for the amount of people that are in their facility. However, the requirement that surprised her most was evacuation planning.

Rebecca said that she spoke to a lady this week who was very shocked to learn that evacuating their clients was basically their responsibility. The localities would certainly not turn a blind eye to them if there were any available resources, but a lot would be going on in the case of a community-wide event, and facilities should not count on the community being able to aid them. Rebecca reported the lady seemed very surprised to learn this and wondered if anyone else in the RNN Community had experienced this as well. She observed it is an excellent opportunity to educate facilities and organizations on resilience,

Ed Thomas shared that, to his knowledge, from the perspective of a disaster response person, so many folks who do have responsibilities for patients and such do not recognize that they have that responsibility. It's nice to let them know this ahead of time so they're not totally surprised in a way that creates difficulty during a disaster. Ed shared that this information was very exciting and would be something that we could put into the Newsletter. He asked Rebecca if she would be willing to write something up - not to burden her, but just a short blurb with some links portraying this as an opportunity for people at the local level to get some assistance to folks who would presumably be in need, and also do stuff that will actually help the community with resilience.

Rebecca Joyce responded she could write a little something up on that.

Ed Thomas thanked Barb Miller for tracking down Daya, and thanked Rebecca for all her assistance. Ed addressed an email from Tim Trautman about good possibilities with respect to an RNN Meeting in October that could incorporate a couple of DRR Modules with the idea of reaching out to both flood plain managers and emergency managers as well.

There being no further discussion, the Meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING:

The next RNN meeting will be on 6/16/2017 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

12:02 (EST) am – The meeting adjourned.