



## Resilient Neighbors Network (RNN) Communities



# Report *of the* Minutes *and* Proceedings *of the* Resilient Neighbors Network (RNN) Communities

October 2015 *through* December 2016

Natural Hazard Mitigation Association (NHMA)  
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**Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**  
**11:00 am EST Friday, December 16, 2016**

**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. Roll call
2. Approval of Minutes
3. NHMA Membership & Donations
4. Brief Report from Ed Thomas
5. Status of NHMA CTP [sent previously]
6. MitFlg Community Resilience Indicators-comments sent, distributed
7. Update on follow-up to RNN Retreat
8. Meetings with FEMA
9. ABA Resilience Resolution [see attached]
10. RNN Activities including Return on investment study-see below

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

**1. ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Tom Hughes (NHMA Board Member); Jim Murphy (NHMA Board Member); Marcy Leach; Ed Thomas (NHMA Board Member); Tim Trautman; Bill Robison; Mary Kell; Allison Hardin; Vincent Brown (FEMA); Eugene Henry.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

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

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

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

**VOTED:** Minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

**3. NHMA MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS:** As NHMA is a membership organization and relies upon membership fees and donations for a significant part of its important work, it is hoped that all will renew

their membership and consider making an extra donation to NHMA. Ed Thomas and his wife have made a *Donation Challenge* through December 27<sup>th</sup> and will match all contributions up to a 6-figure amount disclosed to the NHMA Treasurer.

**DISCUSSION:** A question was asked about the term of NHMA memberships. Right now memberships are based upon the date one joins through the same date the following year. Ed Thomas will propose to the Board that it consider an Annual Membership date for convenience of record keeping. It was asked that any donations made via the web include a description of purpose, as this information sometimes doesn't come through.

- 4. BRIEF REPORT FROM ED THOMAS:** Ed Thomas reported that the ABA is in the process of developing a resilience curriculum for attorneys. It is just scratching the surface, and anyone interested and wanting to work with the ABA on this is welcome to assist. This is the direction that NHMA is going in order to integrate its work on the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum into what the ABA is doing for resilience.

**DISCUSSION:** A question was asked about the National Transportation Research Board. Bill Anderson, the new director, is extremely interested in incorporating NHMA's program into the material that HUD is funding to develop a curriculum for schools on resilience. It is hoped we can integrate with them so all are on the same page, direction-wise, and get folks in the RNN Communities and the RNN-like communities around the country to have access to this amazingly useful material, and also be considered as Instructors. The Army Corp of Engineers-Silver Jackets are very interested in NHMA's progress on this.

- 5. STATUS OF NHMA CTP:** Ed Thomas reported excellent progress on the CTP. A meeting is scheduled with FEMA today, thanks to Vincent Brown, to review our status with some high-level FEMA folks. A report was recently prepared and sent out to everyone discussing where we are on the CTP, and where we're going over the next period of time. The plan is to eventually establish a Credential Certificate in Disaster Risk Reduction designed to be a program informing people at the grass roots level who have a considerable amount of both national and international expertise, and also peer-to-peer, on changes we see that need to be made in order to have resilient communities that promote disaster risk reduction.

**DISCUSSION:** The Army Corps of Engineers-Silver Jackets are extremely interested in the status of our CTP, and the NIST Community Resilience Program is also interested in our progress, along with folks at the National Transportation Research Board and other research groups who want to contribute to or otherwise be part of this program.

- 6. MITFLG COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INDICATORS: Comments Distributed.** Thanks to a great deal of effort on the part of couple of folks - especially John Wiener - NHMA produced extremely helpful comments on the Mitigation Leadership Group Community Resilience Indicators document. Multiple pages of comments were submitted last night designed to weave in RNN and disaster risk reduction concepts. Everyone should have received a copy of this important document.

- 7. UPDATE ON FOLLOW-UP TO RNN RETREAT:** Ed Thomas explained that we are working on details for one or more meetings in 2017. Rebecca Joyce is working on planning for this. Anyone wanting to help to make it the most useful meeting possible for the RNN Communities, please let Rebecca Joyce or Ed Thomas know, or otherwise incorporate yourself into the discussions.

- 8. MEETINGS WITH FEMA:** Some very important meetings with FEMA have been scheduled. The proposed Agenda that we worked out with Vincent Brown was distributed. A report on the results of these meetings will be circulated. Anything else the RNN Communities want to bring to FEMA's attention at this time was invited.

**9. ABA RESILIENCE RESOLUTION:** Ed Thomas has been working on this with the ABA for the past five years. This very important document is finally being presented to the ABA Governing Counsel for adoption in February. It is a non-partisan plan for moving forward on disaster risk reduction as an element of Resilience, and is supported by people with a wide range of philosophies within the ABA, including an attorney with particular experience from the viewpoint of suing governmental agencies for being overly regulatory. It is significant that the ABA is very supportive of the work NHMA and the RNN Communities are doing, and considers them to be especially valuable and quite different from the focus of other organizations because we emphasize the idea of *prevention of harm to others*, which is a basic tenant within the law.

Anyone wanting to share the Resolution with their organization's attorneys, or who are looking to get more support for their programs within the ABA, or who have ideas for rolling this material out and incorporating concepts of the RNN and the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum into the ongoing resilience educational effort are invited to let Ed Thomas know. This includes efforts to educate attorneys who work under the ABA/FEMA Memorandum of Understanding providing legal support following disasters; we want to make sure they are well educated on mitigation as well as the programs themselves.

Ed Thomas is working to establish a committee of lawyers within NHMA and is seeking lawyers to help incorporate these ideas into ongoing legal matters concerning Resilience.

**10. RNN ACTIVITIES INCLUDING RETURN ON INVESTMENT STUDY:**

**Hazards Center:** Discussion turned to the new management at the Hazards Center and its relationship with NHMA. Ed Thomas thanked Bill Robison for sending around the Hazard Center materials. Laurie Peek, who is taking over as manager, is clearly much more interested in hearing from practitioners and making the Hazards Workshop practitioner-friendly. Ed Thomas will be sending out some additional materials on it. Finding ways to do a better job of integrating policy makers and practitioners into the Hazards workshop would be very useful, and having someone like Mary Kell, who is speaking internationally, and Bill Robison, Eugene Henry and Tim Trautman as presenters is incredibly important.

**Mary Kell reported** on her activities in October and November 2016. She attended two important conferences: The United Nations Conference on Housing and Resilient Urban Development in Ecuador, where she participated in a moderated panel discussion, and the FPAA Conference in Paraguay, where she gave a stand-alone presentation.

The United Nations Conference on Housing and Resilient Urban Development is an international conference that happens once every 20 years and was attended by over 50,000 people from all over the world. Importantly, its *New Urban Agenda* was adopted at this meeting, and Mary Kell will provide a copy to Ed Thomas to distribute. This is a 16-page document that all of the United Nations groups have agreed upon as the way forward to develop resiliency in everything from infrastructure to international communications to use of resources, etc. The document is very broad, covering physical, social and economic matters.

Mary Kell discussed her experience speaking on the panel with two other female architects who attended on behalf of AIA (the American Institute of Architects), as part of a delegation from Washington, D.C. There were also AIA member architects from Chicago, Santa Fe, and Tulsa, OK. The AIA National President moderated the panel.

Fifteen minutes into their Power Point presentation the power went out. There was no electricity, no emergency exit signs, and no emergency lighting at all - just pitch-black darkness in a room full of 100 people - with her presenting panel at the front. Everyone was invited to leave if they wanted to. Instead, people turned on the flashlights on their cell phones and everybody stayed until the end of the presentation and asked excellent questions.

Mary Kell next reported on her participation in the FPAA Conference in Paraguay, where she gave a stand-alone presentation. This took place over Thanksgiving and was a much smaller conference, about 300 people, hosted by the Federation of Paraguay and Architects Association. This Conference occurs once every four years, and includes a group of about 13 participating nations in North and South America who come together to work on best practices in resilience and hazard

mitigation. The AIA (American Institute of Architects) is trying to build these international relationships and help everyone design sustainably and do the right thing, and really maintain good relations. She spoke at this Conference with a translator, as the entire conference was in Spanish. A lot of her time was spent speaking with others at the Conference either through various translators or in broken English and meeting different people from around the world. These were great experiences in connecting with different people on similar projects and sharing experiences and information.

**DISCUSSION:** Ed Thomas mentioned that Mary Kell is one of the architects he particularly recommended to Vincent Brown of FEMA as someone he should connect with and will get her contact info out to him. Mary Kell will provide information on her tour and international meetings for the NHMA and RNN websites and Newsletter, along with an introductory paragraph. Allison Hardin offered to share copies of Mary Kell's materials to her state APA group.

**Bill Robison reported** that FEMA has selected Tulsa, OK as the City they're going to use to develop a Return on Investment Study. Several draft questions have been produced, such as: i) What kind of activities have you done; ii) Do you have any metrics to review these activities to see what works and what doesn't work; and iii) What have you learned through this?

Bill Robison also reported on the Tulsa City-County Library's recent exhibit on *Documenting The Flooding of Mingo Creek*, the worst flood event in Tulsa's history. This was well advertised through local media and had an excellent turnout. A lot of good documentation is available about it on the Oklahoma University website and on the Carl Albert Center.

Bill Robison further reported that Tulsa is nearing completion on an LID Design Criteria Manual, which will be included as appendices to its SOMA Designed Criteria Manual. The final draft is due in March, per a contract with Oklahoma State University.

**DISCUSSION:** Ed Thomas suggested that as this develops we should get it posted to the websites and share the links with everybody.

**Tim Trautman reported** on updates for two projects he has mentioned in previous RNN calls:

First, Mecklenburg County has started a local grant program by setting aside \$250,000.00 to be made available for property owners to apply for flood-proofing projects to lower their insurance rates and make their homes more resilient to flooding. This has been in place for about 9 months and has funded 5 projects, which is a good start. A couple of homeowners have implemented the projects and a few others are still working on signing the Grant Agreement. The County has produced an Annual Report, which is a very simple 8-page annual summary of the Program, which their Advisory Committee approved last night and which will be delivered to their County Commissioners as a way to make elected officials aware of some of the work that they're doing. They hope to fund more of these projects for homeowners.

Second, Tim Trautman announced that the City of Charlotte has learned unofficially that they have cleared the last hurdle to become a Class 4 CRS Community. They hope to receive an official announcement in the next couple of weeks and will either be a Class 4 or potentially a Class 3 CRS Community, depending on how many points they have.

**DISCUSSION:** Many congratulations from everyone to Tim and the City of Charlotte on this incredible achievement. It is a lot of work to fulfill the requirements.

**Allison Hardin reported** she recently came across a fabulous project by the North Inlet-Winyah Bay Reserve. They have compiled a Low-Impact Development Handbook for coastal South Carolina for planning and design. The document is 300 pages, extremely well done, broken down into chapters, with strategies for local governments, approaches to conservation, storm water b&p, and local case studies with appendices and the like. It is a huge document that has been uploaded to their website in pdf so anyone can download just what they're interested in. Allison will send a link around to everyone on the call as a potential resource for coastal communities.

**DISCUSSION:** It was suggested that information about this be incorporated into the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum.

**FURTHER DISCUSSION:** A question was asked and discussion ensued about lessons learned from Hurricane Matthew related to Myrtle Beach resiliency.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be on 1/20/2016 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

11:52 (EST) am – The meeting adjourned.

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## **Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**

### **11:00 am EST Friday, November 18, 2016**

**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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#### **11:00 am EST - Call to Order and Roll Call:**

**Present:** Brandon Valley (representing Barb Miller); Erin Capps (NHMA Board Member); Allison Hardin, Mary Kell, Bill Robison, Tom Hughes (NHMA Board Member); Chuck Wallace

#### **AGENDA:**

1. Possible RNN Meeting at the Emergency Management Institute: Tom Hughes
2. Status of NHMA-FEMA CTP: Rebecca Joyce and Ed Thomas
3. RNN-Developed Modules for the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum: Erin Capps
4. Marketing Grass Roots Mitigation products we have developed
5. Location of Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum presentation in March or so this year

**MINUTES:** The Minutes were approved.

- Erin Capps gave an update from last month, reported progress on the DRR Curriculum.
- Wightman and Associates helping with the modules.
- Opportunities exist for RNN members to contribute with subject matter expertise.
- Module 1 addresses what the DRR is and its purpose; also complete are a Facilitators Guide and a Logo.
- The deadline for the Modules is March 2017.
- The Modules build on presentations given in the NHMA conference of 2 years ago, with regard to Safe Rooms.
- Erin Capps discussed two module reports she assisted on and presented to Wightman and Associates and mentioned the *Hide From the Wind Report*.
- Wightman and Associates needs more information on this material.



- Bill Robison is comfortable with Wightman and Associates reaching out to him for input on safe rooms. He mentioned that the expert on safe room grants, Melissa, would be the best person for Wightman to contact.
- Bill Robison offered to forward copies of material he received from Melissa to Erin Capps and Wightman Associates, which include a good number of guidance documents on things one needs to include in a grant application.
- Erin Capps will follow up and have Wightman and Associates contact Melissa.

**The floor was opened for questions** from the RNN community.

- Erin Capps mentioned that Rebecca Joyce had planned to inform everyone about progress on the DRR Curriculum but was not present.
- Erin Capps reviewed the modules.
- The first Module is an introduction to the Curriculum and Whole Community mitigation risk and adaptation. It incorporates Ed Thomas's *Patchwork Quilt* approach, which was published as the *Living Mosaic*, discussing how to use these different grant programs and tie them together.
- The first modules will look at leveraging resources and achieving community buy-in, then move into specifics on how mitigation planning, risk assessments, climate and weather, catastrophic events, etc. can be woven in. Later modules will address fires, floods, thunderstorms, earthquakes, etc.
- The current CTP Grant is up for renewal of the 2016 – 2017 Grant next year.
- The CTP Grant renewal in 2017 will look at giving continuing education credits for participating in NHMA webinars, symposiums and presentations. These will be offered at conferences and symposiums going forward.

**DISCUSSION ENSUED** about Matt Rollins taking over for Annie Vest in Oklahoma. Erin will attempt to involve Annie, Lois, and Matt for participation in presentations.

#### **THE 2017 SYMPOSIUM WAS DISCUSSED.**

- Erin Capps announced the Theme of the 2017 Symposium: 'Mitigation in a Changing Climate', which would include such things as the changing administration.
- The Symposium will go back to the presentation structure of two years ago.
- The Symposium will focus around many more experts doing presentations over two days, with concurrent speakers and sessions going on.
- The goal is to give the RNN Community an opportunity to have a separate discussion as part of the Symposium.
- Erin Capps is producing an Announcement of Theme and a Call for Presentations, which NHMA has never done before. Rather than creating subjects in advance, finding speakers and announcing the Theme at the end of the planning process, this approach will announce our Theme up front and enlist potential speakers' ideas on how to fulfill the vision. Speakers can then be picked for the suitability of their ideas.
- Erin Capps will make a draft and present it to Ed Thomas and Tom Hughes.
- The draft is expected to be ready closer to this time next month.
- The RNN Communities can help in getting the word out and learning if there are any presentations that they would like to do.
- The Symposium is expected to be around the same dates as last year, tying in to the Natural Hazards Conference.
- Offering continuing education credits is an opportunity to encourage even more attendance.

**MITIGATION RECONSTRUCTION WAS DISCUSSED** with regard to the flooding event in West Virginia. Five months out communities are still in the process of demolishing homes and seeking an extension from FEMA. Hazard mitigation is a volunteer program so the state is trying to find out from communities, individuals, homeowners, and renters what they want to do with regard to hazard mitigation. It was pointed out that very little is taught about this subject because it is considered too difficult to achieve.

#### **ACTION ITEMS FROM OCTOBER WERE REVIEWED:**

- Item 1: *“Barb Miller to write up a brief statement about her giving a shout-out to Tulsa, OK and Pasadena, TX for their help on her community’s five-year re-evaluation for its TPI program, and submit it for the Newsletter.”* Barb Miller not on this call; **status ongoing.**
- Item 2: *“Chuck Wallace to write up a few sentences about the “Great Shake-Out”, a practice tsunami drill, and provide it to Ed Thomas to share with other people he knows and governmental agencies who could be instrumental in expanding it.”* **Status ongoing.**
- Item 3: *The Pilot Program Recovery Course: ‘An email note from Tom Hughes (related to the EMI conference) was mentioned which, because it did not reach everyone, was redistributed with the Minutes of the October meeting.’*
  - Anyone who hasn’t attended the pilot program can still go to the one in April. They are taking comments from the first class to incorporate into the April Course.
  - Tom Hughes spoke to EMI and got the forms required to arrange for a separate room for the RNN group to meet in if they want to attend. They can get together at the end or during.
  - It was suggested to Ed Thomas that NHMA could meet some of the Grant requirements this way. More importantly, though, is to have the RNN meet on Saturday and have it paid for through EMI.
  - Tom Hughes to reach out through Robert Perry to see if he can get a list of who they’re seeing on the back end as the paperwork flows through EMI; wants to make sure we get the RNN folks who want to participate into this course.
- Item 4: *“Tim Trautman volunteered to help with the Curriculum by offering specific materials he has already created to be used for the modules with a little cleaning up.”* **Status ongoing.**
- Items 5 through 8: *“The RNN Communities will be providing the material for the modules and Wightman and Associates will be crafting them into the Curriculum.”* RNN communities to help with some of the Modules as subject matter experts for the webinars.
  - *“Rebecca Joyce will provide an outline of the RNN Module presentation so everyone can fill in their information, photos, etc. Wightman can then put the Module together.”* **This is forthcoming for next month.**
  - Facilitators Guide so far is finished.
  - *“Rebecca Joyce and Ed Thomas to send a list of the modules around for everyone to find things they may already have developed that can be dropped in, and help spot holes that need to be filled.”* **Status ongoing.**
  - *“Barb Miller to help on the RNN Module.”* **Status ongoing.**
- Item 8: *“Rebecca Joyce to send an email to the RNN Community members who were not on the October call and ask for anyone who’s interested in helping to reply.”* **Status ongoing.**
- Item 9: *“Allison Hardin volunteered to help NHMA form national linkages between its Curriculum to the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center and other organizations like it. She will speak with Ed Thomas about how to contribute.”* Allison Hardin reported that she has talked to Ed about helping NHMA form national linkages. **Status ongoing.** Erin Capps to follow up with Ed Thomas about seeing where she can help with the tie-in.

- Item 10: “*The RNN Communities to market the modules and cross link them to other resources. . .*” once they are up and going. **Status ongoing.** Must first get them up on NHMA website and into the Newsletter and then have the RNN members promote them in their communities. Not much action on this right now as the Modules are not ready yet.
- Item 11: “*Barb Miller to reach out to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife facility which might be available to NHMA for its Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum presentation. She will investigate costs and report back to Ed Thomas. A smaller group is planned, 30 to 50 rather than 100 people. For planning purposes, it is expected to be 2 days long, including an evening session or a speaker or interactive event.*” **Status ongoing:** Barb needs a date for the conference in order to reach out. Ed Thomas/Erin Capps to get a date for her.
- Item 12: “*Rebecca Joyce to follow up on the RNN Matrix. Communities to fill it in and return to her.*” **Status ongoing.** This item tabled for Rebecca Joyce to report on in December.

**DISCUSSION:** Erin Capps shared that the Module development process is very fluid. When the Grant was originally put together, 14 Modules were identified. People and Board Members have changed over time. Erin Capps is pleased with the status so far and where it’s going. NHMA / RNN may get 12 modules done by March rather than 14; the goal is that they get it running and successful with some Modules under the belt by March and then look at expanding this effort for the next year through stand-up presentations for expanding the curriculum, adding continuing education, etc. These will get other communities interested in and get attention from FEMA to help continue this grant effort going forward and for our new effort for the RNN.

- Erin Capps called for new action items to add to or address before next month’s call.
- Allison Hardin offered to help review modules.

**DISCUSSION:** A question was asked with regard to giving Barb Miller a date if it was tied to the deliverables deadline. Erin Capps stated that she was talking about doing a presentation tie-in after the fact but would check with Ed Thomas. It may instead be a tie in for the Symposium in July. Tom Hughes asked Erin to also check on the Pilot in PA as this was on the list too; to check the dates for the Pilot in PA and the Fish and Wildlife presentation confirming if they were going to be held jointly with the Symposium in July or if there was a separate presentation.

**FURTHER DISCUSSION:** It was suggested that the RNN Communities sit back and think about what may happen under the new Administration that’s coming in. Reviews on climate change and a possible reduction of funding in PHS and FEMA were something to start anticipating in the event they occur. It was suggested to consider a change in the way we present things. Regardless of causation, we still need to address consequences.

A question was asked about webinars; the goal is to do one a month. There was discussion about the need for a consistent webinar platform. Erin Capps to speak to the webinar producer at her company to see what is available to us through them. Whatever platform we use must have recording capabilities.

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be on 12/16/2016 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

11:52 (EST) am – The meeting adjourned.

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## **Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**

### **11:00 am EST Friday, October 21, 2016**

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

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#### **11:00 am EST - Call to Order and Roll Call:**

**Present:** Allison Hardin, Rebecca Joyce, Barb Miller, Steve Allen, Tim Trautman, Ned Swanberg, Chuck Wallace, Ed Thomas (Board Member)

#### **AGENDA:**

6. Nominations for NHMA Volunteer Work: Board, Advisory Committee, Committee Chairs
7. Possible RNN Meeting at the Emergency Management Institute: Tom Hughes
8. Status of NHMA-FEMA CTP: Rebecca Joyce and Ed Thomas
9. RNN-Developed Modules for the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum: Rebecca Joyce/Ed Thomas
10. Marketing Grass Roots Mitigation products we have developed: Ed Thomas
11. Location of Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum presentation in March or so this year
12. NHMA Fundraising and Membership

**AGENDA:** There were no changes or additions to the Agenda.

**MINUTES:** The Minutes were not addressed.

**THE MEETING BEGAN WITH A BRIEF DISCUSSION:** Members on the call took turns introducing themselves and describing their communities and their backgrounds. Barb Miller gave a shout-out to Tulsa, OK and Pasadena, TX for their help on her community's five-year re-evaluation for its TPI program. She will write up a brief statement about that and submit it for the Newsletter and the RNN Communities' website. Chuck Wallace reported on the first vertical evacuation tsunami-engineered safe haven building in their county. He reported on the "Great Shake-Out", a practice tsunami drill. The success of this project came through a community effort and willingness to re-write building codes in order to implement a higher standard of tsunami safety and awareness. It has started a ground swell of interest. Chuck will write up a few sentences about this and provide it to Ed Thomas to share with other people he knows and governmental agencies who could be instrumental in expanding it.

1. **Nominations for NHMA Volunteer Work: Board, Advisory Committee, Committee Chairs:** As an all-volunteer organization, NHMA is looking for more people to become involved in its efforts. The NHMA Nominating Committee was discussed. Anyone on the call or in the RNN Community is welcome to serve on this Committee or volunteer for another committee. The possibility of a task force committee to support Chuck Wallace on the building codes effort was mentioned. Rebecca Joyce was invited to describe her experience as a member of the NHMA Board. She will be coming up for nomination and re-election this year. Rebecca described how her experience on the Board has helped her understand both the RNN and NHMA better. She stressed the value of carving out a little piece of time to help on a committee or a project and how it brings back so much more than is given.
2. **Possible RNN Meeting at the Emergency Management Institute: Tom Hughes:** A possible RNN Meeting at the FEMA recovery session in April of next year was discussed. This is a pilot that Bill Robison, Ed Thomas and Barb Miller have been to in the past and hope to weave NHMA materials into in the future. **DISCUSSION:** Chuck Wallace expressed interest in attending and asked who might be planning to go. Barb Miller explained that EMI only allows a person to take the course one time. She offered to meet with anybody coming up for the EMI. **FURTHER DISCUSSION:** The EMI model is focused on emergency management and the responsibility of local government. Mitigation is not stressed. Ed Thomas suggested that Barb Miller would be a great resource person to be brought into the course and could expand its focus to include more about mitigation. An email note from Tom Hughes was mentioned which, because it did not reach everyone, will be redistributed with the Minutes of this meeting.
3. **Status of NHMA-FEMA CTP: Rebecca Joyce and Ed Thomas:** NHMA has hired a contractor – Wightman & Associates – to fulfill the DRR Curriculum. Wightman & Associates has reached out to Tim Trautman to develop some of the modules. Tim Trautman volunteered to help by offering specific materials he has already created to be used for the modules with a little cleaning up. Wightman should be bearing the primary development burden of the Curriculum so volunteer efforts can be maximized.
4. **RNN-Developed Modules for the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum: Rebecca Joyce/Ed Thomas:** The RNN Communities will be providing the material for the modules and Wightman and Associates will be crafting them into the Curriculum. Rebecca Joyce will provide an outline of the presentation so everyone can fill in their information, photos, etc. Wightman can then put the Module together. Rebecca Joyce and Ed Thomas will send a list of the modules around to everyone to find things they may already have developed that can be dropped in, and help spot holes that need to be filled. Rebecca Joyce has agreed to take the lead on the RNN Module. A call is scheduled with Veronica Wightman on Monday morning to go over the logistics and needs of the module and that information will then be send around. The Module is called *Engaging the Whole Community on Disaster Risk Reduction*. It will highlight the RNN Communities' success stories and their challenges so that when this Curriculum is shared with other communities it will be an introduction to the RNN and a way for them to connect with us. Barb Miller agreed to help on this module. Rebecca will send out an email to the RNN Community members who are not on this call and ask for anyone who's interested in helping to reply. **DISCUSSION:** The Module will be done as a webinar in the permanent part of the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum. Whoever presents these webinars will be recorded, and the recorded module can be played as part of the Curriculum. A further goal is to produce "snippets" from these recordings with examples of specific challenges and solutions that can be offered, either in or outside of the Curriculum, for reference. Pieces of each module could then be cross-referenced to other materials and used to augment other presentations. It was suggested that the technique used by Chuck Wallace on building the tsunami shelter would make a good Module. **CONTINUED**  
**DISCUSSION:** A question was asked about the overall schedule. The first 12 modules are due by the end of March, possibly April or May, as a version of the Tulsa Pilot. At the same time moving toward an actual Certificate program is to be done within the next 12, 18, or 24 months. Meanwhile, NHMA will be rolling out webinars on a regular basis, starting in November 2016, on aspects of this program. Chuck

Wallace had requested a webinar on the legal aspects that support flood plain management, disaster risk reduction, and hazard mitigation, and this is planned as the first webinar. **CONTINUED DISCUSSION:** NHMA hopes to form national linkages between our Curriculum to the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center and other organizations like it. Allison Hardin volunteered to help and will speak with Ed Thomas about how to contribute. She reported that the Training Center has just dropped support for the Coastal Flood Risk Reduction Course, so that document will be available August 4<sup>th</sup> next year for someone else to pick up and adopt ideas from. This might be something NHMA could incorporate into its Curriculum. **FURTHER DISCUSSION:** In terms of fulfilling other goals of its Curriculum, Ed Thomas reported that Tom Hughes has tentatively touched base with some folks at Oklahoma State University who are trying to develop a Resilience Certificate Course. NHMA's Disaster Risk Reduction platform would be an ideal cross-link to their program.

5. **Marketing Grass Roots Mitigation products we have developed: Ed Thomas:** With the above efforts progressing, NHMA has a tremendous amount of materials that the RNN Communities will find useful. It's up to the RNN Communities to market these modules and cross link to other resources. Can pick and choose among these materials to get them out in the Newsletter and up on the website.
6. **Location of Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum presentation in March or so this year:** This is planned to be a smaller presentation, similar to the Tulsa Session. The RNN Communities need to pick a place to present this. Barb Miller suggested the National Conservation Training Center near her in Jefferson County. It's a U.S. Fish and Wildlife facility which might be available for the time slot NHMA is looking at. She will reach out to them, investigate costs and report back to Ed Thomas. **DISCUSSION ENSUED** about group size. A smaller group was suggested, 30 to 50 rather than 100 people to facilitate more meaningful interaction. For planning purposes, it is expected to be 2 days long, including an evening session or a speaker or interactive event.
7. **NHMA Fundraising and Membership:** NHMA is an all volunteer organization and functions on donations and membership fees, which are kept very low to encourage people to become members. It is hoped that everyone on the call is a member. Membership levels were reviewed: \$50 Individual, \$15 Student/Retiree, \$100 Institutional. It was reported that The Ed Thomas Challenge will be held again this year. All were urged to think about membership and making a donation to NHMA. Also, reaching out to foundations and organizations for contributions is urged, as NHMA is a 501(c)(3) organization. People can join on line and donate on line.
8. **OTHER BUSINESS:** The RNN Matrix was discussed and a form to update it. Rebecca Joyce reported that it has been designed in a PDF format which should be easier to fill in than a Word document. Those on the call who aren't on the Matrix are encouraged to go ahead and fill in their information so the Matrix can be updated and made ready to use as a reference. It will be a great resource for mentoring, support, assisting other communities, etc. **FURTHER DISCUSSION:** Ed Thomas reported that NHMA plans on putting together a document for the Transition Team on the importance of hazard mitigation and disaster risk reduction.

## 9. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be on 11/18/2016 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

12:00 (EST) pm – The meeting adjourned.

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**Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**  
**11:00 am EST Friday, September 16, 2016**

**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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**11:00 am EST - Call to Order and Roll Call:**

**Present:** Shannon Burke, Eugene Henry, Ed Thomas (Board Member), Rebecca Joyce, Mary Kell, Ned Swanberg, Chuck Wallace, Bill Robison, Daya Dayananda, Tim Trautman

**No changes or additions to the Agenda.**

**MINUTES:**

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

The **Motion was Seconded** by Daya Dayananda.

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

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

1. **Discussion and Report from NHMA's Practitioners Workshop/RNN Retreat:** We are in the process of pulling together all the notes on the NHMA Practitioner's Workshop and the RNN Retreat. Hoping to get it out soon. Anyone with notes, photographs or things to include please send to Ed Thomas, Rebecca Joyce and the NHMA Admin.
2. **RNN Communities Matrix Draft Materials Distributed by Rebecca: Review & Next Steps**  
Rebecca Joyce has constructed a Worksheet for the purpose of updating the Matrix. This will be circulated to everyone in the RNN Community for all updates, comments, etc. and returned to her for finalizing. Mary Kell suggested a column be added for areas of expertise. Rebecca Joyce to circulate the Worksheet within the week. Responses are expected approximately two weeks after that.
3. **Update on NHMA Activity: CTP Contract; Publications; Congratulations to Mary Kell on her publication; Coordination with American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP): Transition Team Briefing & Comments on FEMA NFIP Regulations.**  
Congratulations to Mary Kell for her excellent article recently published in American Architects Magazine. This material to be uploaded to NHMA & RNN websites and put out on Social Media as soon as possible.

Publications: Ed Thomas encouraged all RNN members who put out or contribute to publications to reference the NHMA materials with resource links in order to support people at the local level.

CTP Contract: NHMA has put out RFPs and will be interviewing contractors next week for the DRR Curriculum contract. NHMA expects to award a contract shortly. Will keep the RNN Community informed and seek the RNN Communities' involvement in the development and eventual presentation of these materials, webinars, workshops, etc.

Coordination with American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP): This Organization is designed to do the same thing that NHMA does but from a different perspective. Their focus is looking at hazard mitigation more from the federal level. They have a new Executive Director formerly from NOAA. They are taking the lead in coming up with a Transition Team Briefing Document. This is an important opportunity for NHMA and the RNN Communities to be a part of the recommendation effort. Ed Thomas will send out the draft to the RNN Communities for comments.

FEMA NFIP Regulations: NHMA has put together a team to develop comments on the FEMA Flood Insurance Program Regulations. This is the first major change in the Regulations in 40 years. They amount to about 140 pages. FEMA is expecting comments from NHMA. Comments to focus in on higher standards and local level implementation, issues, etc. RNN Community volunteers to notify Ed Thomas if they would like to assist.

4. **Further Discussion of potential new program of the RNN - "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" Program and creating a niche for RNN.** Thanks to Mary Kell for thinking of the Expertise concept. NHMA will continue to push with the American Planning Association and others to get the NHMA materials, *The Living Mosaic*, the *Nine Step Process*, etc. out. We want to augment this with a list of people who are willing to be contacted from time to time to offer peer to peer networking at the local level. Anyone wanting to participate in this to contact Ed Thomas. French Wetmore and Barry Hokanson to contribute to this effort. It is important NHMA and the RNN Communities take action in this regard; already some LA communities are looking to reduce their higher standards in order to promote quick recovery.  
**DISCUSSION ensued about** assisting those in flood hazard areas without flood insurance who are looking to rebuild their homes on minimal assistance. Sending NHMA's *Living Mosaic* document is the best and most helpful response as it includes a comprehensive list of resources for communities who are in this very situation. Webinars, a summary, etc. can also be offered on this. All members of the RNN Community are invited to look at these materials and improve them. Eugene Henry will look over the *Nine Steps* and suggest how to get these materials distributed meaningfully to folks in need and get back to Ed Thomas. Shannon Burke will work with Gene Henry for ideas on how to proceed.
5. **Review meeting dates for the rest of the year.** Meeting dates for the rest of the year were announced: October 21, 2016, November 18, 2016, December 16, 2016, and January 20, 2017. Advance notices have already been sent; responses received.
6. **General Discussion:** Daya Dayananda shared that he is doing some analysis on properties in the city that can be mitigated.  
Ned Swanberg to send out information to the RNN Communities on publications by a group associated with the University of Massachusetts reviewing [room for rivers](#) and adjusting for their energy, water and power as a way of protecting flood plain functions and reducing erosive power. Also, celebrating the recent anniversary of Tropical Storm Irene is among other steps to promote river corridor protection in the Northeast. A summary of some of the progress in Vermont around the [Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund \(ERAF\)](#). ERAF is a State fund and incentive program that supplements public assistance. It offers incentives for communities to receive higher levels of additional emergency funding if they take several explicit steps in order



to qualify. It was observed that something like this would be most helpful in places like Louisiana. Eugene Henry to circulate this material to everyone. The NHMA Admin and Nicole Bernard to work to get this material up on the website and widely distributed via social media along with the suggestion that this is what needs to be done when there's any discussion of higher supplemental funding amounts.

**FURTHER DISCUSSION:** Gene Henry to forward a brief write up he did for the Division of Emergency Management for the State of Florida for the State Hazard Mitigation Planning Advisory on how they look at zoning and all hazard planning with the zoning and development applications for horizontal development. This material to go up on the RNN website to give people a taste of their review process.

Chuck Wallace seeks testimonials or success stories from communities who have taken affordable mitigation steps and demonstrably improved their situation to offer to communities in his area that are reluctant to take these steps. The Tsunami shelter in Grays Harbor was mentioned as a good example. Tom Hughes offered a Silver Jackets success story he had just sent out that they had the local community write up which included a phone number for someone to speak to about the project. This information also to go up on the website. The Roger Faris resource can also be woven into the community success story project. Everyone who is interested in doing this to have their write-up done by October 7, 2016 and get it to Ed Thomas and the NHMA Admin and work with Roger Faris to see how the RNN Community can pull this project together.

Shannon Burke introduced herself and shared her background.

The Tulsa 1986 Flood anniversary and the importance of high water marks in raising public awareness was discussed. Bill Robison to share a copy of the Tulsa high water mark sign supplied by the National Weather Service with the group along with a copy of the Flyer. He will also send information on the FEMA program which donates \$2,000 worth of high water mark signs to any community. This material to be shared with the NHMA Admin or Ed Thomas so it can go up on the website and be distributed through social media.

## **7. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be on 10/21/2016 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

12:04 (EST) pm – The meeting adjourned.

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## **Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**

### **11:00 am EST Friday, August 19, 2016**

**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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#### **11:00 am EST - Call to Order and Roll Call:**

**Present:** Ed Thomas (Board Member), Mary Kell, Marcy Leach, Barb Miller, David Mallory (Board Member)

Rebecca Joyce was not on the call; only 3 folks from the RNN Community were present. Barb Miller suggested a short meeting so she could attend to a medical appointment. It was agreed to spend more time discussing the Symposium and Retreat on the next call. It was hoped that a more comprehensive report would be prepared.

#### **8. Discussion and Report from NHMA's Practitioners Workshop/RNN Retreat:**

RNN Retreat Notes will be sent around to the RNN Community members. These will include Tom Hughes' Wrap Up Notes and Rebecca Joyce's Retreat Notes for distribution.

With regard to the Practitioners Retreat: not all information is in. Barb Miller sent out material on the Break-out Sessions for the RNN Retreat. Broomfield report status still to be determined.

#### **9. Update of current status of RNN Communities Matrix**

Rebecca's excellent notes were reviewed. Discussion ensued with regard to what the RNN Communities want to do. It was explained that while the RNN Communities were meeting in a break-out session in Broomfield, the rest of the group was meeting to discuss how NHMA could support all current and potential RNN communities. Profiles of the communities were used to update the Matrix for Agenda Item 4 (below), with respect to how the RNN Communities want to function and how they can help with peer to peer networking. Roger Faris to help refine these profiles for the Matrix. The NHMA Admin to follow up with Rebecca Joyce to get the current Matrix out to everyone.

#### **10. Revision of RNN Mission Statement**

Discussion of the Mission & Vision for the RNN Communities was deferred to the next meeting to allow Rebecca Joyce's notes, Tom Hughes' Wrap Up Session notes, and the RNN Communities' Matrix to be distributed and linked with the community profiles that Roger Faris had agreed to do.

#### **11. Discussion of potential new program of the RNN - "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" Program and creating a niche for RNN**

The flooding in Louisiana was discussed. NHMA, Ed Thomas and French Whitmore especially, developed materials to help with the Superstorm Sandy recovery. These materials have been dusted off and they are working with the Louisiana Flood Plain Manager's Association to redo them and get the information out on recovery. Ed Thomas suggested they use the *Living Mosaic*, the successor to *Patchwork Quilt*, and other materials that NHMA has developed. The situation in Louisiana may present an opportunity to connect with folks on a peer to peer basis and distribute these materials to help with recovery. Rebecca Joyce has some great ideas on how to do this and it is something the RNN will be proceeding forward with over the next period of time.

Barb Miller shared that 14 counties in her state were recently devastated by flooding, and there were some excellent recovery groups coming out of this. The county she was in, Greenbriar County, W.V., may actually have moved forward a little quicker than surrounding counties, for a variety of reasons - one of which may be the fact that the probable next Governor of the state is in that particular county. She shared many lessons learned, recovery work and stakeholder groups which are developing. She offered to get information out about this.

Ed Thomas suggested that anyone with additional materials about progress like this please direct them to Nicole Bernard so they can be put up immediately on social media, the websites, and included in the Newsletter. The more information put on line, the more NHMA and the RNN Communities can help people.

Barb Miller further shared that the state senator from her area was appointed by the Governor to set up a recovery plan for the state, and that he and Barb had worked together in the initial stages of getting the programs up and started. She will try to connect with him and pull together a good list of links to forward for the newsletters and social media.

Ed will be working with Rebecca Joyce regarding the 9-step process developed by NHMA. He hopes to be working with some folks to start spreading the word that in this era of climate variability, statements such as "ten-thousand-year flood" or "thousand-year flood" (or even "five hundred-year flood") are not only unscientific, they are irresponsible. One can responsibly state that a flood event is unprecedented or really big, but not that it is something which can only happen once in 10,000 or 1,000 years. The problem with this type of statement is that it dismisses an event as being so rare that people don't have to prepare for it, which ultimately creates tremendous catastrophic damage later. He cited the example of Hurricane Camille: When Camille hit in Louisiana and Mississippi, officials there did not redesign the levees in New Orleans because the storm was supposed to be an unbelievable, never-to-be repeated event - a "once in 10,000-year event", which of course is not the case. Such storms are no longer unprecedented. He stated that NHMA has a webinar on this issue that can be put together to help inform people about this.

Mary Kell shared that she is working with FEMA's High Water Mark Program. She will be working with FEMA on October 3<sup>rd</sup> on their High Water Mark 30-year Anniversary dedication. They are preparing a lot of press and information about flooding, etc. for that day.

Ed Thomas congratulated her on this achievement and asked if there was anything that NHMA could contribute to this event – such as a plaque, a statement or certificate – whatever would be

appropriate and helpful. He invited her to share any of her notes and press releases for the website, which could serve as a model for other people. He mentioned in general that Tulsa is doing this with the same resources that are available to all other communities, and if they can do it, so can others.

##### **5. Agree on meeting dates for the rest of the year.**

A list of RNN meeting dates have been sent out – all will be at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time on September 16, 2016, October 21, 2016, November 18, 2016, December 15, 2016, and January 20, 2017. There being no objections to any of these dates, invitations will be sent for each in advance.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be on 9/16/2016 at 11:00 a.m., EST.

11:44 (EST) am – The meeting adjourned.

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**JULY 2016 RNN MINUTES from BROOMFIELD, CO**  
**Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**  
**8:00 am MDT, Friday, July 15, 2016**

**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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This month's meeting of the RNN was held in Broomfield, Colorado, as part of the RNN Retreat. The meeting took place as part of the Wrap Up Session for the NHMA Symposium which preceded the dial-in time for the RNN Community call. All RNN Community members who could not attend Broomfield were invited to call in as usual to participate in the meeting.

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**8:00 am MDT - Call to order and roll call:**

**PRESENT:** Ed Thomas (NHMA Board member); Jim Murphy (NHMA Board Member); Chuck Wallace (Grays Harbor, WA); Ed Thomas (NHMA President); Jim Mullen (NHMA Board Member); Rebecca Joyce (Central Shenandoah Valley, VA and NHMA Board Member); Shannon Burke; Rosina Philippe (Lowlander Center, LA); Dan Deegan; Mary Kell (Tulsa, OK); Roger Faris; Tom Hughes (NHMA Board Member); Daya Dayananda (Pasadena, TX);

**ED THOMAS OPENED THE SESSION** by inviting comments and suggestions with regard to the Symposium and RNN Retreat held the day before.

**DISCUSSION:** A very timely article in The Denver Post entitled "Mitigation Prevents This House from Being Destroyed," was talked about which described an incident of successful fire hazard mitigation. The article coincided amazingly well with the NHMA Symposium and RNN Community Retreat. Ed Thomas asked that a link to the article be sent for posting to the RNN website and inclusion in the NHMA Newsletter.

**WEDNESDAY EVENING DINNER.** Everyone present who participated in the dinner agreed that it was a most enjoyable evening. Many thanks were offered to Ed Thomas for his great generosity in covering the costs of the dinner.

**Ed Thomas recapped group accomplishments over the past two days.** One of the things Ed wished to get out of this meeting, in addition to what NHMA will be asked to do with respect to the RNN, was to hear from the RNN, either individually or collectively, about how they would like to contribute to NHMA with respect to membership, participation, or anything else they can do for the collective effort to help NHMA do things differently and better.

**Ed Thomas** mentioned the contributions of Roger Faris, who has committed to working with the RNN to produce their community profiles, and has been asked to take on an additional task of writing up and

downloading the profiles of the RNN Communities with regard to their successes and challenges. Ed observed that it is important to be honest about the impediments and the challenges that each community has faced and the techniques they have developed over time that will work for other communities in similar circumstances. He eloquently conveyed that the job of hazard mitigation is the job of overcoming impediments.

Challenges of nomenclature were discussed with regard to describing a flood event as a “thousand-year” storm or flood. It was pointed out that, to the extent we ever knew what such an event looked like, that term is improperly used.

## **RNN RETREAT:**

Rebecca Joyce commented that she felt that the RNN Retreat was very successful with many excellent thoughts and ideas shared.

Ed Thomas agreed that an enormous amount of work got done, and mentioned that it was all captured. He shared that Lawrence Frank and Erin Capps will be writing it up; photographs were taken, and the RNN Communities made commitments with regard to what they will be doing to move their purpose forward. Chuck Wallace’s suggestion that the RNN Communities be given more time together at events like this to get to know each other was echoed as a recommendation. This should be built into the Agenda for the next event.

Roger Faris shared that the Retreat helped him realize the depth of knowledge and vast experience of the RNN Community members and that this network is the most incredibly powerful tool he has ever seen.

Ed Thomas agreed that we are lucky to have the mixture of people that we have, and gave a synopsis: we have city managers; we have people who come to this from the standpoint of architecture; we have a grass roots activist; we have a brilliant professional engineer; we have a person who comes at this from the point of view of money – community development: Where’s the money going to come from? We have a former federal insurance administrator who comes with a deep background in emergency management; we have two past presidents of NEMA; we’ve got a state hazard mitigation officer; all this is very necessary. Yet there are many missing pieces: We don’t have an elected official, we don’t have the experience of a mayor.

## **NHMA SYMPOSIUM:**

**The roleplaying exercise of the day before was discussed** and found to be of great help in understanding the dynamics of communication and the need to highlight positive aspects of any situation.

**COMMENTS:** The scenario exercise helped to cut through people’s tendencies to talk past each other with their own ‘state-speak’, ‘town-speak’ or ‘local speak’, and show the different interests and needs that live in ongoing day-to-day concerns.

At the local level, if someone is angry at you as a planner or engineer, they are on you and it doesn’t go away until you deal with it. Whereas at the state level, if somebody wants to yell at the state director, they have to drive out to him, manage traffic and parking, check through reception, be ushered into an office, etc. By the time they meet the director they’ve quite cooled off.

Another dynamic at the state level is that things are generally more tenuous; everybody has to worry about the mood of the governor. Therefore, emphasizing what goes on in communities and trying to extrapolate that out to larger, broader policies and approaches is the better way to go.

## **AGREEMENTS OF THE RNN COMMUNITIES:**

Ed Thomas observed that five RNN Community representatives were present and expressed the hope that the 8 community members that were not present would agree with the consensus formed that new members to the RNN would be ‘taken under their wing’ so to speak, and otherwise mentored on the RNN successes collectively.

Talents from each community were mentioned including Tim Trautman who could share insights about planning for the future; Daya Dayananda who could speak on how to redesign plans; the Navajo Nation which doesn’t have the same challenges as the other communities, but has different challenges that could help with communicating how a professional planner or emergency manager can approach mitigation in ways that are

different and better. All could share their respective successes and challenges in helping bring new members on board.

Chuck Wallace was mentioned as an example of 'the power of one' in developing an emergency plan that was so wildly unacceptable to the community that they decided to do something about it.

**COMMENTS:** The importance of documenting what the RNN Communities do was shared. It is important to have a set of values to communicate, but it's more important to show action on them.

## **FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF RESILIENCE and COMMUNICATION:**

The money side of resilience is typically a very frustrating subject to address unless the issue around resilience metrics becomes not how do you pay for resilience, but how do you generate interest in the opportunity to invest in the community? The conversation needs to shift to tap into the willingness of industry and economic development to come into a resilient community and bring greater opportunity for mitigation continuity. This is a very powerful way to get the economic development side of the house on board with mitigation planning.

**COMMENTS:** Using the right language to address an audience is crucial. When talking to planners, city engineers, local representatives or government administrators, we need to speak their language. Not everyone interprets "resilience" or "mitigation" to mean the same thing and this concept is actually toxic in certain circles. It was found that nomenclature also varies also from community to community.

Tom Hughes commented on the importance of cultivating a curriculum for speaking with locals versus speaking with city officials and administrators. It is important to separate how you speak between the two, otherwise locals will just turn you off.

Chuck Wallace shared from his experience at Grays Harbor that listening well is an important and difficult skill to cultivate. Often you are negotiating between conflicting needs in different parts of the community. It's hard to listen well, because your mind's already working on solutions to information you already think you know, so how do you listen to the solution that this part of the community may be seeking, and how can you help it and support it?

The school at Ocosta is itself a solution to both tsunamis and community development; it brings business because of the beautiful building that's there and it also potentially saves lives. So, the message needs to be translated. The message is exactly the same, it's just a matter of how do you present it to the different communities.

Shannon Burke spoke about working to recover communities that had been decimated and the process of gathering information, copies of hazard mitigation plans, etc. after the event. In New Orleans, there may have been many people in the community who wanted to rebuild their homes right away, but the planning department and the building department were both decimated - they lost everybody. So, there was no one there to sign or approve the plans. She actually went to the City of New Orleans and got the documenting papers so the rebuilding efforts could begin.

Tom Hughes spoke about an opportunity for NHMA in talking about the review process recovery plans for communities that have been decimated by natural disasters. In January 2016, Pennsylvania had 32 counties that were hit hard by snow emergencies. Five plans came out of the recovery effort. There were so many communities affected, and so few that the disaster declaration could actually help, he saw the RNN as being the best resource that could help the other impacted communities.

A question was asked if the communities had recovery plans. Tom shared that all the affected communities had a hazard mitigation plan with recovery integrations. Though each community was prepared for a disaster, none expected to be hit as hard by a storm as this one did. Two-thirds of the communities were affected on the scale of Hurricane Katrina; he was actually buying out half of their community (the borough). Effectively, there's no longer a community in those areas. He could not suggest to them that they merge with another municipality; that was not an acceptable option. How do you talk from the RNN standpoint to a disaster of this magnitude? To give an idea of the size of the recovery effort, the Joint Field Office was staffed with 500 to 600 people. Recovery went from ESAP 14, long term community recovery, that we're now seeing known as the National Disaster Recovery Framework, and produced a total of five plans out of the whole effort. There were many, many more communities that could have used RNN support.

The problem of limited resources and flood assistance was explored. Also, the need to identify stakeholders and find out their needs and what kind of support they would be willing to accept.

### **NHMA/RNN EXPANSION AND OUTREACH:**

Ed Thomas shared a list of solutions with respect to the question, “What are you going to do about it?” Per Tom Hughes’ suggestion, he concurred that the RNN Communities could be brought into the mix in disaster recovery situations; also, unique NHMA materials could be distributed; the whole idea of training and credentialing people who could go into communities to provide technical assistance around disaster risk reduction was explored; this is something that would have to be recorded as people would need to take time off from work; the possibility of some governments doing government to government transfers; this would take funds to implement. What NHMA can do is take the thought and offer a lot of different ways to deliver the solution.

Ed described the training that was done in Iowa for people who had zero knowledge of disasters but who were excellent community organizers. They were trained about disaster reduction and sent into the community on a very long-term basis paid by FEMA through the National Park Service. He asked the question, is it possible to train Native Americans? Ed and Rosina Phillipe (Lowlander Center) agreed that though there might be issues between tribes, certainly Native Americans would listen to another Native American much more readily than a non-Native American. This would be an ideal way to reach and train the Plains community.

The concept of tribes was further applied to other non-Native American groups such as engineers, attorneys, people of color, etc. All these groups are important for us to reach; we need to have Native Americans, people of color, planners, engineers, architects, involved in RNN in order to reach those tribes. It is more than just peer to peer.

Shannon Burke asked if we could identify which conferences there are that we could do quick presentations at. Ed shared that a group from the RNN Retreat is working on that. We used to do a lot of such presentations; he himself has done them many times at various organizations. Ed Thomas and Tom Hughes will get that information to Shannon Burke and then see who is going to what conferences that we do not yet have representative members of – such as NACo. Other volunteers spoke up to offer information about tribal organizations which could be good introductions to RNN.

Flood insurance and resource allocation were briefly discussed and the value of NHMA’s and the RNN’s engagement in all aspects of policy work related to this.

Ed Thomas briefly addressed issues around the Stafford Act, his meeting with the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute, and the American Bar Association.

### **DISCUSSION OF STAFFORD ACT, TRIBES, MEMBERSHIP, AND OUTREACH:**

Ed Thomas summarized his hopes for what NHMA can do for the Native American RNN Community members. First, to get them linked to people who are Native Americans and who continue to struggle with resilience issues and who learned lessons. Second, and at the same time, to cross-link the materials that Ed and the NHMA members have developed talking about what lawyers – not Native American lawyers – but the tribe of people called lawyers – can do to make it easier for their community to respond to a disaster.

Ed shared that having a better dialogue between the Lowlander Center and NHMA and active participation from their organization - membership, getting linked in; there’s tremendous benefit that can flow from the collective knowledge of this group to anything that they are dealing with Chief Albert.

A brief history of the Narraganset Nation was described: One of the priorities of FEMA years ago was giving tribes recognition so they could negotiate directly with FEMA. However, the language in the Stafford Act stated that tribes were to be contributors to local government. In 1990 the Narraganset Tribe was legally and federally recognized – one of the first in New England. They determined that they would not deal with the State of Rhode Island because they had just won recognition of their sovereignty and would not jeopardize it. It came to pass that the Federal coordinating officer for FEMA had met someone at the Justice Department who said the way around this was what was called in lawyering terms, a ‘conflict of laws’ – the Stafford Act said one thing, and numerous other statutes said something else, and the Justice department on its own resolved the conflict and



said that not only can FEMA deal directly with tribes, but in fact, it must. That became policy in 1990 and FEMA signed a separate tribal agreement with the Narraganset Nation.

**COMMENT:** In terms of the 'uncommon audience', a suggestion was made to take a closer look at the resiliency projects being done in Iowa. They are long-term projects with cooperative funding and other fundraising that looks more like some resiliency planning we've discussed. How does this work? They're putting hundreds of millions of dollars every year in the major communities to do mitigation, with an economic development format. Now we've got a whole new audience.

Ed Thomas agreed this is important. Per his knowledge of Iowa and territories there, his thought was that federal money is involved and suggested looking to see where the money's coming from, how they're doing it. This could be a best practice for mitigation funding, as Iowa is a beyond-conservative, conservative state.

Regarding language, Ed Thomas pointed out that we are a boundary organization. He learned that using the term "disaster risk reduction" is toxic to some people. So, we need to talk about business continuity. Think long-range, different words for different people to keep them happy.

Meeting recessed 8:52 a.m.; To resume at 9:00 a.m. MDT

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## RECESS

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Dial In at 8:55 am. MDT.

Meeting resumed 9:07 am.

Ed Thomas brought the meeting back to order and continued the previous discussion.

### **CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON OUTREACH:**

With regard to promoting RNN and the NHMA, right now RNN is a volunteer organization; the power effectively is in its volunteer members. If the members want us to do more, or be a part of growing the RNN, we want them to be that person. We want them to be 'on fire' as we grow the organization.

Chuck Wallace concurred. This is the message he talks about all the time. In his state, all the emergency managers are willing to help somebody else. If somebody made the phone call to them, they'd send someone. One way or another, you would get help. This is also true of the RNN. If somebody has something you need, we may call you and you may say, okay, I'm willing, but how do I do 'whatever'? Well, we'd make sure you have a place to stay; here's the support we're going to give you; here's three phone numbers, if something comes up, you call these numbers and somebody will be there to be able to help you if you need other assistance while you're there. Everybody's willing to do things, we just don't know how the process is going to work yet.

### **DISCUSSION ON FUNDING:**

Ed Thomas reiterated that both the RNN and NHMA have done absolutely incredible things with the most minimal of resources. We need more passionately committed members who stay and are not transient. We need more volunteers to commit to being involved.

Last year's membership list showed about half the Board and half the RNN members weren't paid members of NHMA. We do have a system of reminding folks about their membership renewal. NHMA has very modest membership dues of \$50 per year, \$15 per senior, \$15 per student. We need to bring in companies and sponsors.

This year we had only 2 sponsors for the Symposium; in the past, we've had 10 or 12. Also, this year we have a non-cash contribution of the facility - which is wonderful - and only a single thousand-dollar contribution. That was it.

### **DISCUSSION ON MARKETING:**

Ed Thomas shared that we need people to market the NHMA/RNN. The marketing committee – which started off great guns about 3 or 4 years ago – died. Then in January we had 2 people promise to market like crazy, and that died. This is the kind of thing that we can do and have done in the past with just about nothing. The end result has been enormous personal sacrifice of time by 3 or 4 people.

The Board has been re-energized and has committed to do a lot of work. We have volunteers who are committed to doing a bunch of stuff, both Board and non-board members. The RNN Community has committed to do a whole bunch of stuff that we've never had before. This will draw new members into the organization.

The more you contribute, the more you're a part of it, the more you speak out on behalf of the RNN as Rebecca Joyce is doing, the more this is going to energize a plan to hire a professional staff to do a lot of stuff. We need continuity;

### **DISCUSSION ON CONTINUITY:**

Ed's remarks continued: We get to know Ann Patton, you know Alessandra, Tim Lovell, and then their contract is up and they go their separate ways. Then we get to know Katie Skakel and her contract is up. To keep consistent people in place we need to have funding coming in.

### **MARKETING**

We need to market the incredible materials that we have to offer. We need to do this in a way that is going to be worthwhile for a lot of people, and that requires membership. Let me be clear; there are people in this room that are not paying NHMA members. I ask you to do what Rebecca Joyce is talking about and promote the organization, but most especially with the information called for. We are unique in terms of the multidisciplinary approach that will serve the underrepresented minority – the approach that can serve by not saying no but by saying yes; the knowledgeable place of really getting this stuff done. And that requires money so we can have an executive director eventually, it requires promoting the organization, and what I hope is going to come out of this is that we are promoting the materials, using the materials, and promoting the organization.

### **COMMENTS:**

Daya Dayananda offered to share some presentations and materials.

Ed Thomas suggested this be done through Drop Box. Everybody in the RNN and on the Board member list (some 27 names), should be admitted to the Drop Box with a link so they can start putting presentations in.

Roger Faris shared his thoughts on the responsibilities of being a member of a Board and the tremendously generous matching offer made by Ed Thomas.

Ed Thomas shared that the response this offer last year was very disappointing. He will check with the Treasurer and let everyone know the final figure, but he recalls that only \$115 were raised during match offer. That was in addition to the \$5,000.00 he personally contributed.

Responsibilities of the NHMA Board were discussed, particularly with regard to the requirement for each Board member to make a personally significant donation to NHMA each year. Ed noted that at least 3 people in the room did donate. There were members of the board, however, that have never donated and do not contribute, and some of them work for major corporations.

Rebecca Joyce shared that her goal as a member of the Board is to be that communicator between the Board and the RNN members and communicate from the Board to them, and from them to the Board. Per her discussions with Ed on this, even though she can't financially contribute, she can give her energy and time and hopefully stimulate others to do the same.

Ed Thomas shared and stated very clearly that it was because of Rebecca's generous personal contribution of time to develop the Agenda for the RNN Communities that NHMA was able to divert some money from within the FEMA grant and allocate it to other tasks. The Agenda was developed by Ed and Rebecca and everybody else in the RNN Community. The need to convey to the RNN about the things NHMA has done is something we should strive to address. Also, through webinars, and other communications we can show people within the RNN the value of the material, knowledge and expertise we bring to the table.

Roger Faris commented that the website alone is significant for him and is enough to keep him volunteering and involved because he sees what's on there is growing, showing continually expanding resources. Ed Thomas suggested that if Roger could help with updating the RNN portion of the website alone, that would be a huge help. There is outdated material in it and it should be looked at to see how we can improve and inform better through it.

Rebecca Joyce commented that the newspaper article passed around this morning would be a great addition to the website.

Ed Thomas called for volunteers to right it up. He noted that the language in the article signaled a significant shift in viewpoint from the standpoint of firefighters seeming to embrace resilience.

The value of adding articles routinely to the website was discussed, the NHMA website being a valuable resource for mitigation related materials. It was shared that the value of just looking at it every day offers two things: 1) you get an idea of what the communities are saying about what's going on in mitigation-related areas, and 2) you get an idea of what communities are doing in these areas.

Shannon Burke suggested a clip service that could forward articles and stories that fit desired criteria that could be added to the website.

Ed Thomas suggested that even such a service on Twitter could be useful.

## **THE RNN RETREAT**

Rebecca Joyce shared from the RNN meeting the previous day, that the RNN members committed to getting the other communities who weren't able to be there more engaged in activities of the RNN. They each saw and felt that the ideas they were coming up with were really moving them forward. It impressed her that the RNN members were able to gather together yesterday and come up with some terrific ideas and plans. Hearing about what NHMA can do to support the RNN is great; but then experiencing that support through the different statements people made during the day really uplifted and energized them. That was a great thing for the RNN.

Ed Thomas emphasized that everything the NHMA thinks, does and says, has to be and must be designed to support the RNN Community members at the local level. That's really what we are. So, to that extent, there is no 'us' and 'them' within NHMA and the RNN communities.

Part of this is reflected by the fact that the majority of people who are in the RNN right now are not members of NHMA. This is a problem he hopes can be turned around because without support we cannot fulfill our corporate purpose and serve them better and well. It's not that membership has its privileges; it's that we need to have the sense that we are all in this together. Ed shared that this is why we've always had consensus in what we did, and we need to continue to do that going forward.

## **VOLUNTEERS:**

Ed Thomas mentioned the need to have a lot more volunteer spirit. He cited Chuck Wallace's offer to do some things to promote some stuff to promote NHMA and the RNN. Ed mentioned that both Chuck and Daya are looking for some things in order to do that: Daya asked for some PowerPoint presentations; we'll make sure that a bunch of PowerPoint presentations are put up online. A lot more materials will be uploaded to the Drop Box.

Ed Thomas reiterated that the most important NHMA materials are its own work products: in particular, The Living Mosaic. He wondered how many people in the room had read this document and could report on the very important material it contains.

## **PRESENTATIONS / WEBINARS:**

Ed Thomas mentioned the need to put out monthly webinars and asked the RNN for their ideas and desires. He mentioned available material on personal responsibility with regard to hazard mitigation. Also, material on policy and other legal aspects. Ed offered to provide 1 ½ hours of material from the Arkansas Bar Association presentation related to uncertainty of the flood wave and the flood elevation. He offered to switch out the Arkansas cases with Texas cases so Daya could present it as being part of NHMA by NHMA's President, expert, Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, etc., etc., whatever Daya needed.

It was asked if this presentation contained a slide about NHMA at the end. Ed confirmed that it does as a standard part of our presentation routine. We put up a slide on the NHMA and talk about the other materials we have.

## **WEBSITE:**

A question was asked about updating the RNN website; Ed Thomas suggested anyone interested go straight to the webmistress, Jaime Marso, with any suggestions. Ideas on how we can do this differently and better are welcomed. It is most important that our materials be used.

A question was asked about limiting the website to paid NHMA members. Ed Thomas explained that NHMA made a strategic decision that it's more important to get the information out than to get the money in. But one way of financing it, is to reach out to other organizations who might be interested in us presenting our materials. Some of the contributions could be from the DRR Ambassador Curriculum.

## **PUBLISHED MATERIALS:**

The Living Mosaic was discussed. Ed has asked a couple of people to look at it and comment. It should be compared to the old Patchwork Quilt to see if we need to update it. The Patchwork Quilt has gone through over 50 editions. Well over 100 professionals have commented on it. This doesn't mean it's perfect, but it has been embedded as a mitigation resource and used a lot. Needs updates and changes.

Roger Faris agreed to write up nice pieces on each of the RNN Communities. A lot of smaller papers, TV shows and radio shows would love to have a piece on Grays Harbor or Tulsa. Tulsa has been talked up a lot, but we could find an aspect of it that would be really interesting. Also, a positive story about Daya Dayananda's community and their success in getting funding would be excellent.

## **RECOGNITIONS / AWARDS:**

Ed heard Rebecca Joyce offer to take on more burdens and to help somebody with plan review. He suggested we need to build in a methodology so that when this happens, at least a letter of thanks comes back from the beneficiary of that support to her management. That's going to make them feel good about her involvement.

Ed Thomas stated that we need to think about awards. We had an awards committee of one person (Ed Thomas). We did an award for Tulsa called the Tulsa Award. The highest award that we'll ever give out to a community that turned a community around into to a positive mitigation level. We awarded it and got some press. We don't know if there's going to be any long-term results from it, but it means that the people who did the incredible work from Tulsa, OK, at least all felt very good about it. We had a reception, it got a lot of social media attention, people snapped it up. We can do more of that.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA:**

Ed Thomas announced that we have someone who does social media – her name is Nicole Bernard. Nicole maintains our Facebook account. We also have some kind of RNN LinkedIn or Facebook site but not sure how to access it.

## **REPORTING SUCCESSFUL MITIGATION**

Chuck Wallace asked how do we prove that mitigation helped a community by preventing an impactful event?

Tom Hughes shared that he had an emergency operations center in the Borough of Huntington County, where they did some mitigation. After the mitigation, there was an ice storm and they had water and an impactful event. When they came back, the houses that were mitigated had nothing happen. That's the first time ever that that happened.

Ed Thomas urged that this get written up and posted to Facebook.

Ed Thomas answered Chuck's question that only one agency he knows of regularly puts out a press release when an event takes place, and that is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Every time it rains in New England, someplace in one of the papers it will show up that 'because of the magnificent efforts on the part of the Army Corps of Engineers, x million dollars of damage in Gardner, Massachusetts was prevented, due to the glorious construction of such & such...' We don't see that anywhere else and since we don't brag about it, we don't hear about it.

Chuck Wallace shared that when they have events in his area, he thanks everybody that helped respond to it. He is the only one that reaches out to the 911 communities. So, when something comes up and he needs help, they don't bat an eye, they say "What do you need?" Because he's the only guy who recognizes the positive impact of their efforts. When you start thanking people, they'll do things for you that they don't do for other people.

Shannon Burke offered to help write some old-fashioned press releases announcing the projects for Tom and Chuck. Ed Thomas suggested that once it's written it can go up on all our social media accounts.

Roger Faris mentioned a best practice article he once wrote for FEMA called "The Storm Was Here but Nothing happened" could be repurposed for NHMA.

Ed Thomas explained that while we are an all-volunteer organization, we have really four paid professionals involved. One is our CPA/Accountant, one is our webmaster, one is our admin, and the other is Nicole Bernard. And while we have a limited budget, Nicole is doing in very short amounts of time able to get all sorts of stuff up on the Social Media.

Tom Hughes described the incredible interest his fictional article about an event that never happened generated. He wrote it in the first person and though he announced it was fiction at the beginning, he got an incredible amount of email from people believing the event was real. This spoke volumes about the value of telling our true stories so people can connect and get involved.

Ed Thomas described a reverse-engineered article he once presented to congress asking for funds. It said "there's 250 disaster panels at the local level that never required the states to get involved. There were 550 disasters at the state level that we never needed the feds for because we had people handling it. There were 13,000 events that the locals never brought to us at all. We had 99 disasters in the worst year ever and it could have been 500 or 600, so don't tell me there's too many disasters, If you don't want to help with disasters, beef up the local level resources and then you won't have to spend all that money."

Ed Thomas shared the concept "half done is well begun", a spin a quote from Benjamin Franklin. He made the point that as a matter of demographics, 50% of the improved square footage of infrastructure that will exist in the United States in 2050 does not exist today. So, if all we did in hazard mitigation was safely and properly build all the new infrastructure with higher standards through building codes, zoning, planning, development, etc., in 2050 we would be 50% of our way to resiliency fruition. Or we can continue on our path of tradition.

A story was shared about the impact of Superstorm Sandy in New York. The flood administrators and flood insurance knew they were going to be impacted, the question was how much and could we give them information that would influence their decision about how to build and how to rebuild. Something that came out of the Mayor's office was very informative. Where we drew the line in the new map of who was in and who was out of the floodplain, it was no longer a scientific analysis of natural hazard impact. it was purely and exercise of dollars and cents about where to draw the line on rebuild and new build. Moving the line by a matter of mere blocks represented hundreds of millions of dollars. And that's the discussion we need to have in our communities. They were looking at it as hundreds of millions of dollars of cost; from the standpoint of prevention, it becomes hundreds of millions of dollars in loss prevention.

Ed Thomas: So that, I think, sums it nicely.

**OTHER MATTERS:**

Ed Thomas made presentations and thanked everyone for attending.

As Chairman of the Awards Committee, Ed Thomas named Roger Faris as Volunteer of the Year. There being no objection, it was unanimously VOTED:

**Roger Faris named 2016 Volunteer of the Year.**

Ed Thomas declared the meeting ended, having accomplished all that it needed to do.

There being no objection, it was unanimously VOTED:

**Meeting adjourned.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be on 8/19/16 at 11:00 am EDT.

10:36 (MDT) am – The meeting adjourned.

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## Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network

### 11:00 am EST Friday, June 17, 2016

**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:**

11. Roll Call & Introduction of New Participants
12. Approval of Minutes
13. Practical Community Resilience Project & Opportunity for Applying for USACE/Silver Jackets Resilience Support - Ellen Berggren USACE, David Vaughn, Integrated Resilience LLC
14. Final Preparations for Broomfield Retreat - All
15. Update from NHMA – Ed Thomas
16. Update from RNN Communities
17. Additional business - All

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

##### **1. ROLL CALL:**

PRESENT: Ed Thomas; Ellen Berggren (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers); David Vaughn (Integrated Resilience, LLC); Daya Dayananda; Chuck Wallace; Jim Mullen; Eugene Henry; Nicole Bernard; Laura Hendrix; Richard Krajewski; Rebecca Joyce; Tim Trautman

**2. MINUTES:** Minutes of the May 2016 meeting were adopted.

##### **3. PRACTICAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT & OPPORTUNITY FOR APPLYING FOR USACE/SILVER JACKETS RESILIENCE SUPPORT - Ellen Berggren USACE; David Vaughn, Integrated Resilience, LLC:**

Ellen Berggren asked David Vaughn to speak about the Practical Community Resilience Initiative as he was one of its original working group members. She followed with an explanation of how the Silver Jackets work with it.

David Vaughn explained the founding of the Practical Community Resilience Initiative which was formed as an effort to support hazard resilience in smaller, economically challenged communities, some of which are adjacent to major populations or metropolitan areas but don't have access to their funding capability or capacity for resilience. A pilot project is being planned to run in a community not yet chosen in South Carolina.

The Pilot will be designed along the lines of work done at Clemson University by a group of students called *Clemson Engineers for Developing Countries*, who were doing work in Haiti focused on clean water project sanitation and getting it into schools, etc. The students were embedded within the communities to help begin and follow through on clean water initiatives. They were very successful.

The Army Corps of Engineers looked at the results of the students' project and asked three questions: 1) Is the program sustainable, could it get larger? 2) Could the program go to other countries? 3) Could the program be refocused domestically to put students into communities, working from within to help them become more resilient? The answer to all three questions was Yes.

The plan for the Pilot is to 1) select a pilot community, start working with it on education, create a common vernacular, and embed students within the community to begin helping with some of the active inventories, understanding what's critical to the community, and what they are focusing on; 2) the next step is going through to identify threats: what are the vulnerable areas that need to be addressed and how they might be mitigated over time.

Key partners in this effort are the Army Corps of Engineers and the Silver Jackets, and NHMA, which has a lot of curriculums that it will be able to push into communities to help raise the knowledge level. These partners continue to move forward with this effort in a Pilot project. It is expected that some things will go very well, and that there will be some false starts in the overall process; however, the intent is to keep moving forward in trying to improve the process.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Ed Thomas asked David Vaughn to confirm that two other pilot communities were planned.

David Vaughn confirmed that they would like to target one additional community in Pennsylvania and possibly one on the Navajo Reservation.

Richard Krajewski shared that, with regard to smaller communities, they have found them to have a particular kind of resilience that is often overlooked by the experts. Ellen Berggren asked for more information, and he shared that, as a community and as people, small communities work together. Because there are so few governmental resources or other resources to rely on, they have learned to rely on themselves. One of the Lowlander communities, for example, which was hit very hard by Hurricane Katrina, was back up and running within two weeks after the storm, and their electric power was back on within a week afterwards because the Mayor proactively got the citizens out with their chain saws to open the roads so the power trucks could get in. He shared that there are a lot of examples of this kind of resilience and that we will see it in other small communities as well, where the citizens are actually involved in self-help efforts. He suggested that we need to understand what these dynamics are and help identify them so other communities can build on them.

Chuck Wallace shared that one of the biggest problems he sees in his communities with regard to government or organizational programs – and his community is one of the small communities where everyone has to come together during a disaster – is that, though there are tons of University of Washington programs, Washington State, and other organizations that offer terrific programs that could be immensely helpful, the small communities are so lacking in funds to sustain these programs that they just can't implement them. Unless there is funding in place, or a way to tap into funds to support the program in a sustained way, such programs do no good for anyone in the small communities.

David Vaughn commented with respect to funding for community programs, that when they first had the conversation with the Chief of Staff of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, he was talking about the fact that they actually had a lot of FEMA mitigation funds that were available to the tune of \$30 million. He sent out a request to all of his counties asking them for their mitigation projects and how to reduce vulnerability for the state, and to identify whatever mitigation support they needed. Ninety-five percent of the requests that he received back were for funds to spend on generators. This in itself was not bad; but the problem they found was that, after about two years those generators either would not have been installed, or an O&M on them was never received and they would not be operational. So, the problem remained that true vulnerabilities within the communities were not met and identified, and these needed to be addressed. The community members themselves did not truly understand what the threats and needs were, where their vulnerabilities lay, and how to actually identify appropriate projects. From his perspective, the issue wasn't that they didn't have funds, the issue was that they didn't know what they didn't know.

Chuck Wallace reiterated that his situation was completely the opposite. His communities know what the problems are; they just don't have the manpower to do what's needed, and FEMA has turned down every single request they've made in the last 8 years for assistance. Even including the school they are



building in Ocosta to perform as a tsunami shelter - when the state begged him for a project, he gave this one to them and they still turned it down saying they didn't have the money to take action on it, they would only approve the planning for it. His point was that plenty of time and energy had already been spent on planning, and the communities really need support to implement.

Additionally, Chuck Wallace shared that with further regard to funding for his communities, it seemed that FEMA was eager to give money to the City of Seattle, or larger jurisdictions, but smaller jurisdictions where funds were sorely needed were always passed over. He did not understand why, but had observed this to be the truth. He has communities in his jurisdiction with incredible resiliency plans and ways to move them forward, but they just don't have the resources or the funds to do so. He stated that this will continue to be the case unless something changes. However, when help did come, it was usually in the form of short-term support which couldn't be sustained by the communities after ending. He has had to turn down many attractive programs because they were unsustainable.

David Vaughn shared that a lot of what they heard at the Workshop was that there is a lot of focus on larger cities, but what they did uncover was that it is possible to go through and identify those communities who will be vulnerable before the next event happens, and for whatever reason, the current policy or approach isn't addressing this. There is a need to highlight this going forward and change the focus. The other part of talking about the current policies that are in place is that we are focusing a lot of the effort post-event, when the reality is that we need to change that focus to more of pre-event planning, part of the reason for this call today is so we can start effecting change going forward.

Chuck Wallace offered his observation that over the past ten years this has all been said many times by many different groups; that the focus is always to change from post-disaster to pre-disaster, but it never seems to get there. All efforts continue to stick at planning for it, when what is needed is to sit down and make progress.

David Vaughn responded that this is what they are hoping to accomplish with this Pilot. A couple of years of work have gone into asking how to make this happen. The issues Chuck expressed are the reason they are trying to move forward on this - to actually effect change and show people it can be done.

Tim Trautman offered that the ultimate goal - to have people embedded in the community to help identify where they are getting their knowledge and training on resilience - will connect with some issues that are very complex, and asked about how this will all work.

David Vaughn explained that they do have some knowledge of resilience, and they are going to be working closely with NHMA to help with training; but the other part of the equation is trying to get communities / students paired up with subject matter experts - for example, the Corps of Engineers Silver Jackets model. They definitely want to get them married up with South Carolina Emergency Management and are getting DHS and FEMA involved. The point is they're trying to get the SMEs within this realm working with the students, because even if the students have a lot of energy and basic technical knowledge, it's going to take the community of mitigation professionals to guide them toward success.

David Vaughn further explained that one of the reasons they are trying to execute in this manner is to reach a lower cost-execution model. It is true you can go out and hire SMEs in the world who will do a great job; the problem is that when you're talking about \$1,500 to \$2,500 per hour, how many communities can afford that? By utilizing interns embedded within the community, backed up and fortified by subject matter experts in the area, it is hoped an equivalent benefit can be demonstrated.

Ed Thomas pointed out that among these subject matter experts are the RNN Communities. This is the whole purpose of trying to weave together experts, students, and folks who actually know what they're doing and have experience on the ground. He acknowledged that both Richard Krajewski and Chuck Wallace are right in that the community can do a lot, and the smaller and more impoverished communities are used to getting things done on their own because they don't get help, so to some extent they are inherently more resilient. He observed that we have to figure out how to create a model of community resilience that actually works. It is a huge challenge, so all will look to see how the Pilot goes.

**DISCUSSION TURNED TO THE SILVER JACKETS PROGRAM:**

Ellen Berggren next explained the Army Corps of Engineers Silver Jackets Program and her role in providing support to it. She stated that some people on the phone were working with the Corps locally on a Silver Jackets project for the area protected by the Arkansas River Levee.

Ellen explained that, after Hurricane Katrina, the Corps as well as FEMA realized the need to focus and develop resources to do a better job of managing flood risk in the nation. A couple of key talking points or key messages have informed the steps they've taken and the direction that flood risk management within the Corps can go.

One talking point is *Share Responsibility to Manage Flood Risk*. A lot of federal programs have certain responsibilities, as the states do in terms of being coordinators of the NFIP program and being emergency responders, and the local government – who have the power to pass ordinances; response to a disaster begins at the local level. The Corps felt that within its agency, they need to have an opportunity to do a better job of engaging through all of the levels of the life cycles of flood risk. That means preparing for flood risk, responding to flood events, recovery, and mitigation.

The Corps' challenge, historically, has been to engage 24/7 on flood risk management issues because they are a project-funded organization, and Congress has to give them specific appropriations to do specific things. By creating a Silver Jackets program, and funding Corps folks at the district level to be coordinators or liaisons with state agencies, it has allowed them to do a better job of engaging throughout all levels of the flood risk life cycle. The Corps established the Silver Jackets program and through it provides a lot of funding to support Silver Jackets Teams. Their hope is to build an established active Silver Jackets Team in every state. But those Teams are not Corps teams; the Corp doesn't manage them. They are led by the state, and the Corps is a member of the Team and provides funding for web pages to help the Teams network with other Teams and share information.

The goal of the Teams, the state agencies, federal agencies, academics and NGOs and sometimes tribes, is to have a forum through which these state Teams work together and focus on flood risk management based on priorities identified by the state. The Corps has learned that none of us are as smart as all of us, and most of the programs that the different entities are involved with in regard to flood risk management, may not be fully able to solve a problem. So, once a Team comes together, their resources are leveraged within the existing programs to hopefully help all communities better respond to a flood event.

After ten years of success with this, the Silver Jackets are trying to evolve the Teams to think about more than just flood risk management, but also flood risk resilience. With regard to multi-hazard matters, some of the Teams do focus on multiple hazards, but in terms of the Corps' current authorities, their focus and involvement has to be primarily on flood-risk.

Ellen Berggren further explained that one of the things the Army Corps of Engineers does to support the Silver Jackets Teams is that, under an existing program called the Flood Plain Management Services Program, they have the ability to fund the Corps to do planning and technical studies in support of what they identify as interagency projects. A Team might identify a project, such as developing a flood plain management plan for a community, and the Corps might provide their technical services to build a model, and perhaps FEMA would get involved through RISK MAP and leverage its funding or studies that they're doing through RISK MAP, and USGS might be engaged and might have gathered the LIDAR, and the state might help in terms of coordinating with communities and helping to disseminate information to help a community better understand their risk – all of this as a kind of quick-and-dirty on how a project might come together.

The funds that are awarded in the inter-agency projects go to support the Corps' role in the project.

Finally, with regard to practical community resilience, every year the Corps puts out a Request for Proposals for interagency projects. The majority of responses they receive are from the state-lead Silver Jackets Teams, and they currently have a Request for Proposal out that emphasizes non-structural flood risk management solutions. As part of this Proposal process, the Corps is working with David Vaughn in South Carolina to pull together the project he just gave highlights on. The Corps would work with Clemson University and the state. The state would help the Corps identify a community that would benefit from driving this concept of practical community resilience; then the Corps would provide support and technical review and assistance in mentoring students. The state will help identify the communities, work with the

communities, and there will probably be workshops. The DRR Curriculum that NHMA has put together can be implemented to deliver resiliency information to the community.;

Ellen Berggren explained that the Pilot is working on three communities to see if they can use the Silver Jacket's Team to integrate the different pieces and parts and tools and frameworks that various organizations bring to assist a community. South Carolina has been mentioned, New Mexico is one, and hopefully the State of Pennsylvania is another.

Ellen added that her experience over the last decade on flood risk management in Idaho gave her particular insight into what Chuck Wallace shared about communities in Washington State, as they had some of the same issues in Idaho. She expressed that, though funding to small communities might be needed across the country, and the nation as a whole has a challenge with funding and maintaining infrastructure, the Corps is trying to work with communities to understand how to empower them for resilience even if they don't have a lot of money as a first step. What can be done in terms of non-structural solutions? Perhaps update their emergency action plan, make sure they have a good evacuation plan, see if more can be done with their zoning and ordinances to reduce a certain level of risk in advance of an event.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER QUESTIONS,** Ed Thomas thanked Ellen Berggren and David Vaughn for their presentations and commented that NHMA will go forward with the Pilot project as we really want to weave the talents, skills and abilities of the RNN Communities into this effort to help communities in need. He added that another basically no-cost thing that can be done to help communities is to look at community ordinances, making sure construction is done more properly & safely going forward.

Ed Thomas mentioned that John Marshall had worked with him to put material in for an on-line publication called The Conversation that ended up in US News and World Report talking about taking a look at city ordinances to make sure they're in better shape for inevitable disasters.

We want to make sure that a copy of this article goes out with the Minutes of this meeting. (The article can be found on-line at: <http://theconversation.com/cities-can-prepare-for-hurricane-season-by-reforming-shortsighted-and-outdated-laws-59875?sa=pg2&sq=article+by+john+MARSHALL&sr=3> )

Ed Thomas noted some very low-cost things that can be done for disaster resilience, and at the same time the need to recognize on a national level that our policies and procedures need to be changed for a better disaster risk program, but most especially for pre-disaster mitigation, to get stuff done before a disaster occurs. This is one of the many things that we can work on together with the limited resources that we all have.

#### **4. FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR BROOMFIELD RETREAT - ALL**

An RSVP will go out to all the RNN communities about Broomfield and ask for those who have not yet told us if they are coming to please let us know so we have a good headcount.

We really need to know who is coming because of budgeting, in order to make sure we have enough money to cover costs for the folks that are going to be there. Anyone needing all of their expenses paid need to let us know; or if you can fund it on your own, please let us know that too.

A draft Agenda for Broomfield has been pretty well nailed down. We'll be getting out a questionnaire before the Retreat and we'll be putting together a post-Retreat report as well.

Richard Krajewski mentioned that Rosita Phillippe will attend on behalf of the Lowlander Center but did not know if she'd sent in her reservation or not; any help with costs for her would be great.

We want to make sure that the letter which went out to all the RNN communities listing what was available, be re-sent. If anyone can pay for any part of that, it means that we can better invite other folks to come in from national levels to help assist us in this process.

The Retreat will give us all a chance to get to know each other.

#### **5. UPDATE FROM NHMA – ED THOMAS**

Ed Thomas reported that the article he wrote with John Marshall in turn had hyperlinks to a number of things being developed by NHMA, such as the RNN Curriculum, the Living Mosaic successor to Patchwork Quilt, etc. There are many things that communities can do to prepare for disasters. This is

something he hopes to follow on with in his work with the America Bar Association – he was just appointed by the ABA Special Committee on Disaster Preparedness and hopes that that group will help NHMA develop a better sense for attorneys about what they can be doing ahead of time before disasters strike, so that they are ready to ‘rock and roll’ with mitigation and delivering services to people.

Ed Thomas next reported he is excited about a number of other efforts he is involved with in terms of disaster risk reduction that will help get NHMA’s and the RNN’s messages out at large a lot more – he is working with FEMA on a Special Committee on Outreach and Mitigation under the Risk Map Program; Many things happening, a lot of moving parts.

Ed next reported that he is working with the Island Press Publications Company – he will be talking to them about trying to bring in some professional resources to help get our materials published and more widely disseminated. Roger Faris has agreed to start doing Community Profiles beginning with our newest community, Myrtle Beach, and then moving on to the Lowland Center, talking about all the good stuff, the bad stuff, and what we need to do in mitigation dramatically, differently and better than we have done before. He shared that he is frantically juggling.

GLOBAL CHANGE INSTITUTE: Ed Thomas is working with others to prepare a community resilience resource book that will come out of our friends at the International Committee on Disaster Risk Governance (IRGC – International Risk Governance Council).

Regarding Island Press, Richard Krajewski shared that one of the things he has been trying to do is get the academics and their students to listen to him and start writing for them. Students need to do papers and related research. He suggested reaching out to the Disaster Resiliency Research Centers, to try to get students who can work with mitigation professionals to write papers and gather information that will be valuable to the research community and to practitioners as well.

Ed Thomas agreed, and added that we should try to have the words of the RNN included in such materials, much like what Chuck Wallace shared. This would be very appropriate to discuss in the RNN Retreat. Richard Krajewski suggested building in some time on the agenda to present something to them and see if they can be helpful to us in getting this material written and we could be helpful to them. Ed stated he hoped we could make some progress on that.

Ed Thomas reported that he is also working with FEMA on the Public Assistance Deductible; there have been some concerns about not getting a disaster declaration. He suggested this is important to supporting mitigation and moving in the direction of what we have done with fire resilience over the years. He suggested we are going to want to work with that effort and with organizations that are looking to improve building codes to better take into account vulnerability and disaster risk reduction.

## **6. UPDATE FROM THE RNN COMMUNITIES**

Ed Thomas called for any reports from the RNN Communities.

### **COMMENTS ON BEST PRACTICES:**

Richard Krajewski suggested that the tremendous mitigation work that Ed and he did down in the U.S. Virgin Islands be written up as a best practice example. Ed Thomas shared that he and Dick worked one of the most difficult disasters he remembers down there, and were able to collectively do some incredible things in terms of disaster response and recovery that aided the community and their sense of empowerment as to what they could do. It was a great example of successful mitigation using local folks and reaching out to overcome impediments to mitigation.

### **COMMENTS ON THE CRS:**

Gene Henry gave a nutshell report on activities that his community in Hillsborough County, FL is currently doing. They are working on several things and are in the midst of updating their Community Rating System program. They are moving to the new Manual, and all of its different activities so they have a lot of agencies and parts of their community involved. Also, they are updating several areas to better share the risk: FEMA is doing the coastal areas, his team is doing the 17 basins. They are probably going to do the 17 basins over the next four or five years, starting with two of them this coming year. He noted that it will be interesting as to how to integrate the inland riverine systems with the impact to the coastal areas. They are also looking at their All Hazards Document to better understand consequences and how mitigation can work

with those levels of consequences, and this is expected to be about a 2-year project. Along with that, they are updating their Long-Term Disaster Recovery Plan, what they call their Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan, just to make sure they address some of the 150 different action items in it and go from there. They will be looking at their codes and statutes that have recently changed; examine any areas that have seen flooding along the coast, and look at some sort of mitigation. Gene shared that they don't yet know what all this means, as the state hasn't made a final determination yet, nor are they accepting anything at this time because they haven't finalized some definitions in the legislation itself. They'll be working along with that and will finish up the mitigation activities for a lot of the Florida Coastal Communities probably within the next five years or so, or sooner. They expect word this coming year and then will have some time to pull that information into their Land Development Code. They're flying very fast trying to get everything done.

Ed Thomas thanked Gene for a great report.

Bill Robison had one comment for Gene Henry and suggested that if they are going through the new Manual, they pay particular attention to the new PPI (Program for Public Information) section, as there's a bunch of points to be picked up in there.

Gene Henry thanked Bill for the great input and explained that they are doing it in two phases and are just going to sustain the five that they have and build a roadmap. He explained that PPI is on a huge part of his radar; they are going to be working into it, but there's such a sense of the planning process involving the community – they will cycle this; but the PPI is significant and wonderful – better than the old strategy they used to use. It is bringing it all together for the community.

Tim Trautman shared that that is basically what he wanted to include in his update of the CRS for Mecklenburg County, VA; they are basically in the same spot as Hillsborough but are probably about a month ahead of them. They are Class 5, had their visit in December, and their plan was to go to a Four. He reported that they did a lot of work getting a watershed plan adopted, met some of the requirements and thought they were in good shape so spent the last six months trying to put together other documentation, and basically found that they we're looking at going back to a Six. But so far, he thinks they have enough points to go to a Four, and described the implications of their work over the last five years in relation to many of the programs under the new Manual. He observed there is much more bureaucratic box-checking in the new Manual.

Gene Henry agreed that the new Manual is very extensive, and he was also jumping at the bit going head over heels toward the next level, but his team was cool and suggested they just keep it at a Five and see what they needed to do with that first, and make a roadmap. He shared that someone must have heard the pain that Tim and his team were going through, and it definitely resonated down to them and some of the folks down there heard it.

Tim Trautman explained that he and his team made a bunch of assumptions and fortunately, ISO had been working with them. He guessed that, as for everyone, after their cycle hit, it was out at least 3 months or 6 months of flexibility where they couldn't get any points for lots of little reasons, many that were useless types of actions that were not helpful toward resilience at all. Given that as a team they had to do a dozen different things that had an impact if going through CRS. And under this Manual, he shared that it's a lot of work, and his overall concern was that it's even harder for smaller communities to do much with it, as for even the larger communities like theirs the paperwork requirements were overwhelming, making it the focus rather than implementing better programs to get them a higher rating. Anyway, he expected they would be able to salvage a Five, where they had been looking at going back to a 6 when he thought they were a sure-fire Four going into it.

Ed Thomas shared that this is exactly the kind of information the RNN and NHMA can be part of the solution for, and say look, this is what's happening with the CRS; and our concern is for it to be useful for all communities. Ed stated that one of the things that really resonated with the folks in his lectures out in Arkansas was this whole idea of cross-hazardization. A number of people have come back to him with the idea that the people that may be for the reduction in flood insurance premiums are the communities that are *not* in the CRS program; even FEMA, across the board, recognizes that there's no net reduction in the flood insurance premium if one community is a Four, and is getting a 30% discount, somebody else is paying for that, and often the somebody else is the less prosperous community. That seems to help sell it, but if it's just impossible for people to get into CRS unless you're an affluent large community, that has a number of

implications that should be addressed as we go forward, and is something that should go into our report coming out of the RNN Retreat.

Barb Miller shared from the perspective of being one of the small CRS communities, and it being time for their review and they just having received their Crosswalk, that they've been doing a ton of work just trying to keep up and stay where they are at. She shared that she feels like a 'slacker' in this group, because her community is only an 8; but they have updated their Storm Water Management Plan over the last 2 years so they're hoping to get some additional points off for that. One of the other things that they're trying to figure out is where to put this in the CRS, because it should be worth some points for them. In West Virginia, their Storage Water Protection Plan, there's a lot of crossover between their plan and the original mitigation plan and everything that works into CRS, so they're trying to find some way to integrate all of it as well as some of the other plan integration that FEMA's interested in them doing. She shared that the PPI is something that she has been struggling with and asked if anyone had info on that they could send her. She explained that they do have a strong group that has worked on the CRS for a long time, and has worked out a strategy from the way that they have done it in the past, but they are struggling to be able to check the boxes and see a lot of opportunity there. It's obvious they need technical assistance, being in a smaller community. She shared how helpful this whole conversation has been for her, and will probably follow it up with some phone calls. She thanked everyone for sharing.

Ed Thomas urged those who have commented on this issue to open a discussion about this on the RNN website or the NHMA website or on the LinkedIn site – it is incredibly important. If somebody would write up just a few sentences on this, and particularly if you've got some stuff on any aspect of CRS that you're particularly proud of, or if you've got some problems, heartburn, let's get it posted and see if we can get some people to spread it around so that Barb doesn't have to make individual calls, but we can actually work as a group to get some best practices up there and get some problem solutions for FEMA or anybody else on the website.

Daya Dayananda shared that his community has really good information about PPI and would be happy to share it with the RNN Community.

Ed Thomas asked Daya to get a copy of this to us so it can be posted on the NHMA website; and Nicole Bernard can distribute it out on LinkedIn, He expressed that a few lines of comments can produce all sorts of great results for everyone.

Bill Robison shared that Tulsa went through their reverification under the new Manual back in 2014 and there were a couple of communities in Oklahoma that had gone through their reverification and dropped classes, and a couple that were completely booted out of the program. He shared that he was scared to death when they went through it, but did manage, by the skin of their teeth, so to speak, to maintain the Class Two rating; but it was tough. Another big factor was open space; a tough one to verify is open space and floodplains now, because it's all got to be mapped, but there's a bunch of points there to be found as well. He offered to send their PPI plan as well as their approach to annual PPI reports.

Ed Thomas asked Bill to send copies of these around to the whole group.

Bill Robison further shared that he thought this was really helpful to them when they were developing it but he never knew what to put up there as far as a post regarding their CRS program. If anybody has a specific question, he invited them to email him anytime.

Ed Thomas thanked Bill for the terrific and helpful offer; he pointed out to everyone that Bill had just casually mentioned that his community is a Class Two – Tulsa has managed to hold on to that rating, and they had challenges. It's not like they had this wonderful open space right in their floodplain area, and there were a number of people they told when we were out there last year, that just think it would be a splendid place for a subdivision or an office building or a whole bunch of other developments.

Bill Robison confirmed this and shared that their current Mayor, unfortunately, when asked by the management group who's listing city owned property that we're not utilizing that can be surplussed, included an area called Flat Rock Creek Park, which is about 600 acres of natural beneficial function, which you can probably imagine why it shouldn't be surplussed, but did so anyway. The entire thing is floodplain. Bill suggested that a silver lining could be that when the developers realize they can't develop it they can donate it back to the City who could then sell it all over again and have quite a scheme going.

Bill Robinson mentioned, with regard to the new IRC codes, that in some of the supplements to it, they adopted one to where now all critical facilities must be protected up to a 500-year flood event and also there's a supplement that deals with high wind to where now when they adopt that they'll be designing their residential structures up to 130-135 mile per hour winds.

Ed Thomas congratulated Bill on this tremendous accomplishment.

Rebecca Joyce shared quickly for everyone to check their emails to make sure they include Gene Henry from Vermont and Allison Hardin of Myrtle Beach because we want all the communities to be getting the emails.

We will check that the email list is complete and no one is left off.

Chuck Wallace shared that their vertical evacuation tsunami safe haven school was dedicated last Saturday. It's the first one in North America and it was a huge effort with very little government support. No elected official supported it, the community just decided it was what they needed to put up and they actually had to change building codes and everything to get it up. But it's actually there, its standing, and it was dedicated last Saturday so it's a huge success for small communities.

Ed Thomas agreed that this shows what a small community can do, and sadly on their own. He is really looking forward to hearing more about how that happened. He has picked up over the years about how Chuck Wallace achieved it, it is a feat and it's a national model of a community pitching in with their money to solve a very serious problem with respect to protecting their children and their community, and congratulations to everyone involved in that.

## **7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS - ALL**

**Next month's RNN meeting will be at the Retreat – phone call from Broomfield.**

Gene Henry can't make it.

Rebecca Joyce and the NHMA Admin to learn now to integrate the RNN phone call into the meeting next month.

11:59 a.m. - Meeting adjourned.

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## **Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**

### **11:00 am EST Friday, May 20, 2016**

**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.

#### **11:00 am EST - Call to order and roll call:**

**Present:** Ed Thomas, Nicole Bernard, Social Media Consultant, Board Member Jim Mullen, Daya Dayananda, Rebecca Joyce from Staunton, Virginia, Mary Kell from Tulsa, Barb Miller, Chuck Wallace, Tom Hughes, Tim Trautman

**MINUTES:** Rebecca Joyce Moved to accept the Minutes as distributed.  
Motion Seconded by Barb Miller;  
Voted: Minutes adopted.

#### **ED THOMAS REPORT:**

**ABA** - Ed Thomas discussed his many years of effort within the American Bar Association toward a resilience initiative that focuses on disaster risk reduction. The status of this initiative requires a major report to be written, which could not get done up to this point. However, the ABA does have another shot at it in about six months. Ed Thomas has been urged by folks at very senior levels within the Administration during the course of the White House meeting on Resilience and Building Codes which was recently held in Washington DC, that such a resolution could have enormous impact during the course of a forthcoming Presidential transition. Ed will be working on this very hard, is working with a number of attorneys from around the nation on it, and welcomes anyone from the RNN Community who is interested in this or wanting to look at it - or who may have contact with attorneys who may want to become involved in it - to let him know.

**WHITE HOUSE MEETING ON RESILIENCE AND BUILDING CODES:** Ed Thomas and NHMA were very excited to receive a personal invitation to participate in this event. Per Ed's conversation with some of the folks who organized the event, the White House is very pleased with the way the meeting went. Though the President was not there, some very senior folks from the National Security Council did attend. Our presentation will be included in the Minutes about going to the meeting, and the report of our video will be made available on our website and social media, and two excellent presentations by locals there on the Building Code and post disaster issues were especially excellent, and are highly recommended viewing. Ed also attended another meeting with senior FEMA staff while in DC; there is a lot of enthusiasm about disaster risk reduction and NHMA's disaster curriculum, and tremendous interest in the RNN Community.

**ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS:** NHMA has been working on a joint effort on community resilience with the Army Corps of Engineers/University of Maryland. It is headed up by Ed Hecker from the Corp, along with David Vaughn and a variety of people from the University of Maryland. It calls for community resilience; it is designed to help folks at the working level promote resilience and disaster



risk reduction. Some of these people will be in Broomfield discussing this effort, so we'll be getting two sets of presentations: one at our Symposium / RNN Retreat, and one at the Hazards Workshop.

**KRESGE FOUNDATION:** The National Task Force, sponsored by the Kresge Foundation, dealing with Hazard Resilient Communities is just tottering on the brink of publishing their report; it is expected to be superb. Tulsa is one of the communities featured in it, and he expects it will have a lot of good information on local community resilience and leadership.

**HAZARDS WORKSHOP:** There were a couple of fairly good presentations at the Hazards Workshop this year. There is also a group called the International Risk Governance Counsel who have asked Ed Thomas to write a short article on the legal aspects of resilience, and impediments to resilience. He has been working on it along with Lillian Robison and some other folks.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

**Chuck Wallace** asked Ed to share more about the legal aspects of resilience with the RNN Community, as this issue comes up every single day in his experience, with all the different entities that he encounters in his daily work. He suggests that Ed's materials would be tremendously helpful.

**Ed Thomas** reminded everyone that NHMA has developed Modules on this topic in the Curriculum. He is happy to distribute what he has to anyone on the call, with the idea that the RNN Community give him feedback on what it really needs so they can be developed more thoroughly in the course of the 2016 CTP work, as a priority. He offered to send out a copy of his presentation to the Arkansas Bar Association (which distills about 7 ½ hours of workshops on this topic).

**2015 CTP WORK:** **Ed Thomas:** Per his communication with Rebecca Joyce and some other folks in the RNN Community, Ed suggested proceeding forward with everything in the current Statement of Work except for the two big workshops that had been planned. He suggests refining the content of the Curriculum instead to concentrate on clear instruction and doing some simple webinars on topics that members of the RNN Community have particular expertise in. The RNN Community would decide what those webinars should consist of. Ed Thomas invited discussion.

**DISCUSSION:** **Rebecca Joyce** agreed that this would be a good first step.

**A question was asked** about whether the webinars would replace the activity done in Tulsa – the actual in-depth kind of workshop. Ed suggested not so much replace it as focus this year on better, more thoroughly developed material.

**It was observed that** if the goal was to truly educate, inform and have workshop types of learning, it may be hard to do that in a webinar format, since a lot of people who dial into webinars are multitasking - sitting at their desk, kind of listening, but not really focusing on the information the way they would in a more interactive workshop session. Though webinars and one-pagers are certainly valid formats, they may not produce the same results as rolling out a series of travelling workshops.

**It was acknowledged** that this was a very good point. However, the motivation in favor of webinars was the difficulty of getting people to go to large workshops. It was decided to find a way to do this in a simpler venue. An added benefit of doing webinars is the opportunity to spend more time fleshing out the material in the Modules.

**It was agreed** that this made sense. Though webinars can't deliver the same kind of learning and interaction as a workshop, it is probably okay as curriculum is continuing to be built.

**FY 2017 WORK** – **Ed Thomas:** Ed reminded everyone that FY 2017 work is expected to start October 1<sup>st</sup>. He suggested that workshops be developed a bit more, along with some of the other materials, to eventually produce a product that FEMA could employ. He suggested an effort be made with this year's money for coming up with a Certificate so that at the end of a workshop, a participant would receive a credential. The priority then for FY17 would be for the RNN Community to actually deploy some of these major workshops, with reading materials – along the lines of the earlier discussion - and have one or two webinars that must be attended by a participant before they could go to the big workshop. The workshop would be a sort of capstone. **It was agreed** that this was a good working plan.

**Ed Thomas observed** that many people in the hazard mitigation community who are doing amazing work don't have time to write up their experiences as best practices or profiles. He suggested that the

CTP is an excellent vehicle for this: Collecting and writing up short summaries, experiences, successes, and observations of how practitioners have overcoming real world obstacles under tremendous pressure, pushing back against adversity. Weaving these in with some of the other success stories that are forthcoming from the Kresge project, and possibly from the Rockefeller project, would tremendously inspire other communities. Even folks in key management – people who were at the White House for example – were confronted with things that they could and couldn't do. The RNN Community has information that needs to be widely disseminated. He suggested developing that capability be included in the 2017 work. **Ed Thomas** gave the example of the Mayor of More, Oklahoma, who tried to get a requirement in place for safe roofs for all new homes in the community, and was shot down – it just wasn't politically feasible – couldn't happen. Ed stressed the importance of understanding the why's and the wherefores of these situations so hazard mitigation professionals can deal with them. The truth is that beautiful, acquired properties in gorgeous flood plains areas are now under significant development pressure. We must find a way of handling these in a safe and equitable and realistic way.

### **DISCUSSION:**

**It was shared** that a lot of these difficulties relate to human nature. The fact that communities are so diverse, that if the RNN Community can figure out what those impediments are, help identify these roadblocks and some clear paths to take around them, then, if delivered in the right way, this could actually help people as they start out to be successful in their resilience efforts. **Ed Thomas agreed** and pointed out the progress made toward that in the Negotiations Module.

**It was shared that** experience demonstrates success often comes down to marketing and advertising of good resilience ideas. The public today is all about 'what's in it for me?' So, to move forward in finding out the reasons why a project wasn't approved, the initial thing that has to be understood is: How was this project marketed to these people, what kind of information did they receive? Nothing happens in a vacuum. The importance of marketing/advertising needs to be included.

**Ed Thomas agreed** and suggested more development for the Crafting and Selling Our Programs Module.

**RETREAT/SYMPOSIUM** - **Ed Thomas shares** that we are heading into a really successful RNN meeting in Broomfield, and it is hoped that everyone can make it there using the grant money that NHMA will get from FEMA. We will send out a Doodle Poll as soon as possible to the RNN Community members to see how many of the members are coming, in order to do a proper budget allocation. Ed Thomas hopes to come up with some extra money for national experts to participate there as well as make it possible for as many RNN Community members as possible to come.

**NEW RNN COMMUNITY MEMBER:** **Ed Thomas asks** if the RNN Community would approve of inviting Allison Hardin from Myrtle Beach, SC be a member of the RNN Community.

### **DISCUSSION:**

**It was asked** if it was ever decided what it means to be an RNN Community.

**Ed Thomas commented** that this will probably be decided in July at the Retreat.

**Rebecca Joyce asked** if her understanding is correct that one of the goals of the CTP funding is for the RNN Community to show some expansion. **Ed Thomas** clarified that no one in FEMA has put it in those terms, but they do ask if the Community is growing, so it seems to be encouraged.

**It was asked** where most of our communities are situated on the map. If we are mostly involved in the Northeast, for example, we should consider involving communities from the West to demonstrate our appeal to communities across the country as a whole. **Ed Thomas agreed** this was an excellent point. He offered to reach out to some Resilience Officers he knew of in Colorado and Northern California and suggested the group really think about this and how to help the RNN better represent the whole nation.

**Mary Kell shared** that she and Barb met someone in San Francisco who they felt might be a really good contact point to reach the CRO out there. She offered to forward contact information to Ed Thomas.

**Ed** asked if Mary could do a little bit of an introduction about who we are and what we're trying to do here and suggested it would be good for her – and all the members – to help with a little bit of marketing for RNN.

**Barb Miller moved** to accept Allison Hardin as an RNN Community member.

Daya Dayananda seconded;

Voted: Invitation is approved.

**It was suggested** that RNN consider reaching out to tribal nations as members. It was discussed and agreed that their inclusion would make RNN much more encompassing. Ed Thomas shared that he has spoken with attorneys for a number of tribal nations and will continue hammering on that but the Lowland Center does already include a number of native Americans – who are particularly under-represented because they are not federally recognized tribes.

**SOCIAL MEDIA: Nicole Bernard:** Nicole Bernard reported that earlier this week she distributed the CTP documents on the NHMA website. They will also go up on the RNN website and went out on Facebook and got a really good response, as well as on linked in – almost 2,000 people saw them. She is going to separately link each of the three documents to reinforce that outreach and make them available for people to take their time and look at them. She reports that this has been going very well. She will be updating the RNN website with whatever content the RNN Community would like to see and invites everyone to send material to her so she can put it up. She describes another idea she has for the RNN Community which is to start a monthly blog to spotlight one community per month with information about what they are up to and how they are using RNN and NHMA and disaster reduction activities. She will also be posting the proceedings from the Symposium last year with biographies, links to videos and slideshows, and making sure that everyone knows about them and can get on the website and look at the materials. Ed Thomas suggested that anyone with awards and special announcements get these to Nicole to put up on the websites.

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next RNN meeting will be at the RNN Retreat on 7/15/16 in Broomfield, Colorado.

12:00 (EST) pm – The meeting adjourned.

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## Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network

### 11:00 am EST Friday, April 15, 2016

**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.

#### **11:00 am EST - Call to order and roll call:**

**Present:** Ed Thomas, Nicole Bernard, Social Media Consultant, Board Member Jim Mullen, Daya Dayananda, Bill Robison from Tulsa, Rebecca Joyce from Staunton, Virginia, Mary Kell from Tulsa, Brandon Valle representing Barb Miller, Chuck Wallace.

**MINUTES:** Two corrections were made to the Minutes. A Motion was made to accept the Minutes as revised. Minutes accepted by acclamation. [Revised minutes attached.]

**MATERIALS DONE FOR FEMA - Ed Thomas:** The materials submission to FEMA on March 30th took an enormous effort. Introduces Nicole Bernard as the Social Media Consultant for NHMA. Nicole will be working on the RNN website and uploading the recently submitted FEMA materials to the NHMA website. It is expected that *Living Mosaic* will be very useful at the local level and these documents should be tweaked and revised to make sure they are kept so. Suggestions and comments are invited; there being none, it was requested that ideas for summary documents which the RNN Community feels need to be prepared be submitted so that the NHMA Admin, Nicole Bernard, Jim Murphy, and others can get them out.

**2015 COOPERATIVE TECHNICAL PARTNERS - Ed Thomas:** The Cooperating Technical Partners program is an effort which FEMA has established to help support the National Flood Insurance Program and the concept of “Whole Community Hazard Mitigation”. FEMA has entered into a contractual arrangement with the NHMA to support mitigation efforts in preparing materials and the like. NHMA was awarded funds from FEMA for its cutting edge effort with the Resilient Neighbors Network. NHMA is now in the process of hiring a contractor to assist it in managing this ongoing work as an all-volunteer organization. A number of interested persons from around the country have been heard from, and NHMA will be moving forward with the selection process as quickly as possible. Any input from the RNN Community is welcome and Rebecca Joyce will be involved in the selection of a contractor to the degree her time and schedule permits.

This work includes the whole concept of Disaster Risk Reduction at a higher level as part of the ongoing effort nationwide and world-wide on Resilience. The importance of promoting NHMA's niche in the world of resiliency efforts to make sure that Disaster Risk Reduction is always included when somebody thinks of Resilience is highlighted. The concept of Resilience is seen as an enormous idea, that is a ‘moving target’ in many minds which includes climate change, demographics change, the demand for housing and end of life changes, etc. NHMA's role (and the

RNN Community's role) in the realm of hazard mitigation is to make sure that Disaster Risk Reduction is *always* included in any discussion of Resilience.

Suggestions and comments on this year's work are invited. Ed Thomas asks Bill Robison if Mary Kell has seen the SOW for this year's CTP effort; Mary responds that she doesn't seem to have it, and Bill promises to forward it to her.

**Ed Thomas** invites Mary to call him at any time to walk through the SOW. A very pertinent part of this effort is the Resilient Neighbors Network Retreat, which it is hoped Mary will be able to attend.

**RNN RETREAT - Rebecca Joyce:** There is a need for the entire RNN group and each community to try and commit themselves to help with the planning of the Retreat, to divide some of the work up over the next couple of calls, in order to lighten the workload and take some of it off of just one person's plate.

**FEMA GRANT - Ed Thomas:** Two very important points. First, FEMA will be once more renewing the Grant to NHMA with respect to CTP. This is designed to support whole community initiatives with an emphasis on flood insurance, higher standards, all things already in the wheelhouse of NHMA. Second, FEMA would very much like to listen to NHMA's and the RNN Community's requests for special projects. One of the special projects they have funded in the past was the development of a detailed effort to help with post-Irene recovery; another was NHMA's Hide From the Wind report.

New members are invited to visit the NHMA website to examine the Hide From the Wind report. It details the triumphs that have emerged from Oklahoma in transforming the way people view the risk of tornados, and the actions individual persons are willing to take toward hazard mitigation.

**IDEAS FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS From the RNN Community** should be directed to Rebecca Joyce or Jim Mullen.

**Rebecca Joyce** has agreed to be part of the thought process with regard to direction for the CTP program and the effort to monitor this year's work. It is hoped that she will be a tie-in for the RNN Community members who may not attend meetings directly but do have ideas on how to do things differently. *Everything which NHMA does and thinks should in some way be designed to support people at the local level, whether they're officials, or homeowners, or grassroots people, or engineers, or architects, who are trying to do things differently and better for a safer, more prosperous future for our nation and the world.*

**A paper** is being developed with regard to messaging the ideas of Resilience to people when talking about hazard mitigation in Oklahoma. It amplifies the need to change peoples' thinking to get them to understand what actions need to be taken in terms of Resiliency. This paper would be an excellent fit to include with regard to what's going on in Oklahoma and would add to the discussion.

Ed suggests weaving these thoughts into the Curriculum which already contains material on the successes in Grays Harbor with regard to the first-in-the-nation Tsunami shelter. Ed and Chuck Wallace would welcome this contribution. Having its author and other people from Grays Harbor at the Symposium to talk about the successes that have been achieved and how they were accomplished would be very powerful.

#### **RESILIENT NEIGHBORS NETWORK VISIONING RETREAT & NHMA INTERNATIONAL**

**HAZARD MITIGATION PRACTITIONER'S SYMPOSIUM – Ed Thomas:** The original draft agenda was prepared by Tom Hughes and Heidi Carlin and shows what we would like to discuss at the Symposium. One tweak was made on timing with regard to Wednesday evening, as NHMA is committed to the joint Reception with the Researchers that night. A dinner on Wednesday evening for a very small group of people in the RNN Community is suggested.

**Rebecca Joyce:** Tom Hughes developed the basic agenda and Ed added a session for the RNN community in the afternoon. It is suggested that the morning session on July 14<sup>th</sup> be the NHMA Symposium followed by the RNN retreat to take advantage of having all the communities together and focused on opportunities to move the RNN forward. This also fulfills part of the FEMA requirements for the CTP. Rebecca further suggests dividing the afternoon into two sessions and

invites comments. The first part of the afternoon is devoted to a quick analysis of the communities already involved, their strengths as a group, and what weaknesses, if any, may be present in the mentoring process as it stands.

The second part of the afternoon is an envisioning session looking into the future of the RNN. Everyone is welcome to participate in planning this session. Barb Miller has offered to assist with structuring an agenda. The importance of the RNN Community counting on each other to keep meetings running smoothly and focused on actions and items that need to be done, and identifying responsibilities each are willing to take on, is expressed. A discussion of what future communities to include in the RNN in the near-term is suggested. Having other communities involved, either as member communities or just as a community seeking resources or calling in with questions they have is also recommended. Existing RNN Community members who have an issue, or know of another community which may not be part of the group but has some information to share with the group, should be invited into the call.

**Ed Thomas:** It should be decided as soon as possible who to invite to the Symposium/Retreat as international experts, potential communities to participate in an advisory capacity, or even become another Resilient Neighbors Network Community. Ed has been working with the Kresge Community Resilience Project and some folks at various Rockefellers' Resilience Communities, and has spoken with Jennifer Jerardo from Southeast Florida and Jim Murley, the Emergency Manager in Miami. He suggests letting him or Rebecca know as soon as possible, as there are funds available to bring in all the Resilient Network Neighbors Communities and selected national experts – people like Jim Mullen, Heidi Carlin, and some others.

**Mary Kell asks a question about the dates of the Symposium.** It is scheduled for Wednesday evening July 13<sup>th</sup> and all day on the 14<sup>th</sup>. She is invited to attend an invitation-only meeting at the 36<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Natural Hazards Workshop in Broomfield, Colorado, which takes place just prior to the NHMA Symposium. This will be held the whole week starting on Sunday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. NHMA would not be able to fund her participation / stay for that event out of the CTP money; however, she is encouraged to attend and it is suggested she may find it a valuable place to meet people in the mitigation field and be exposed to ideas on resilience, primarily from the viewpoint of national and technological disaster risk reduction.

Ed Thomas and Jim Mullen will follow up with sending Mary Kell an invitation to this event. Everyone else on the call will be getting an invitation because they've participated before.

**Rebecca Joyce:** The agenda is a 'living' document and anyone with ideas, changes or suggestions is invited to talk to her. It is a starting point with plenty of room for everyone's input in order to make it a good meeting.

**Proposed Public Assistance Deductible - Ed Thomas:** A proposal has been put forward by FEMA to implement a system for a specific deductible threshold – like a deductible on an insurance plan – that a hazard mitigation case would have to reach before it would trigger the Stafford Act. This seeks to accomplish two things that support what NHMA is trying to do: First, to support efforts in risk reduction by giving communities rewards for actions which reduce disaster risk. This would expand concepts that would benefit hazard mitigation and climate adaptation. Second, it encourages the states to set up a system to cover the costs of small disasters that are devastating to an individual community (such as at Harper's Ferry and a many other disasters) that do not meet the federal threshold. The Stafford Act is supposed to be triggered by a situation which is beyond state and local capacity, and some states do have systems in place to help local communities, but many states do not. This proposed plan would help with some of the situations that were put in by NHMA on the FEMA proposal. It is important to get the RNN Network more involved in NHMA and its communication so that we can say this better.

**NEMA MIDYEAR FORUM - Jim Mullen:** Per his recollection of comments made in hallways and sidebar discussions about the Proposed Public Assistance Deductible, there appear to be a few problems with it. First, it appears that the opinion of the White House and Congressional personnel are that there are too many disasters, and the assumption that was frequently voiced was that governors just 'make stuff up' and 'it's not as bad as it could be'. The second problem may be that

the very Senior House of Representatives leadership represents a district that has not been hit with major disasters, and so does not appear to understand or be sensitive to the demands on local and state governments who must deal with the effects of a major disaster or unanticipated event that disrupts society. They focus on the 'green eye-shade numbers' and conclude that public assistance is too expensive. Further: Some large states believe they would never have received any of the last 18 or 20 declarations they received if a disaster deductible approach was in place, and so are likely to be in opposition to it. Other states are likely to be in favor of it, thinking that they'll get some money. Smaller states, which may have the same problem as the larger states, are concerned that they will have to go back and explain to their legislature that greater state contributions to disaster assistance funds will be required in order to buy down the deductible for their state. The concern is that legislatures won't be prepared to do that because there are lots of concerns about state budgets right now. Finally, Jim shares his take on what he thinks is going to happen: This is regarded by a number of state people not as an encouragement to do something positive, but as a bludgeon. I don't think NEMA's going to take a position on it because if we don't reach a pretty large consensus, we typically defer to individual states to represent their own interests. Craig made it clear that the status quo is going to change in this Congress; that the Administration is going to have to do something, and this is the best shot that they have to try to move the ball forward a little bit. It's very likely, based on my reading of this, knowing how things go when feds write rules – that the proposal is so controversial that a result won't emerge until after the election. Then I think it will just be pushed right back down the black hole of rule writing. I think it's noteworthy that Craig and Roy both asked for comments from individuals & states to try to give them as much input as they can; they also supported the present Administration's position, but it's very unusual that they came out so early and have been so candid about the concerns that they have, and the concerns that are driving this. The proposal is really being driven by cost issues, not by a sense of support for mitigation, in my judgment. So I won't disagree that it's an opportunity; however, I think it may be viewed as a slam at the states that will cost states money they don't have; and while I believe states should contribute more day to day to emergency management, it's going to be a very tough lift to get all those states that aren't currently contributing to a disaster assistance fund to buy into this and embrace it as a good idea. I think it's likely to die a slow death, but those who care about mitigation need to be thinking about what is the best way to present the need for state and local investment in mitigation down the road.

**Ed Thomas thanks Jim for a brilliant report.** He mentions that this meeting is being recorded, and he hopes this material can be turned into a document that, with Jim's permission, could go up on social media. Ed himself was just tasked with the National Fund Transfer Act which, in his opinion is one of mitigation's most cost-effective efforts designed to save states money as well; particularly for lenders, but also could impact NMA.

**RNN WEBSITE - Ed Thomas:** The website is outdated and in need of fresh material. The goal is to get up material on recent awards as well as articles and other pertinent information to the RNN Community. All members of the RNN Community are invited to submit material for the website directly to Nicole Bernard, himself, or the NHMA Admin.

**Nicole Bernard** reiterates Ed's comments, that anything the RNN Community wants to get out on the website or social media, just send her way or send to Ed and she will start getting some activity online.

#### **GENERAL TOPICS: Request for a letter of support.**

**Rebecca Joyce:** A request for a letter of support was received to help Chief Albert's Tribe with their National Disaster Resilience Competition Award. This was awarded by HUD to relocate the tribe due to sea level rise. They are trying to solidify the importance of the project as it was proposed with the state and are requesting letters of support in favor of the project to make sure things stay on track. The request asks if the RNN Community as a group would be willing to send a letter of support to Chief Albert's Tribe in favor of the project. Rebecca offered to draft a letter and send it around for everyone's approval, if so, and forward it on to them.

**Ed Thomas** shares how important this opportunity is. He offers to take this request to the NHMA Board to see if they may support it as well, and possibly push it further in other ways. The Isle Des Jean Charles, a group of native Americans, Chief Albert and others, realized that because of rising sea levels, and their land being starved of sediment due to navigation on the Mississippi River preventing mud from being replenished, the sea is rising, and the Tribe is losing their land and want to relocate. HUD awarded them a grant to do that. It is likely that there will be other places around the nation near the coastal areas, that may be similarly impacted. He expresses that this is wonderful leadership and encourages Rebecca to draft it up and get it around see if the RNN Community and NHMA can support this effort.

**Ed Thomas** calls on Daya Dayananda for his report.

**Daya Dayananda reports** that today is the deadline for the application for the BP Oil Spill Mitigation Grant which he has been working on for a couple of weeks.

**Ed Thomas** wishes Daya good luck with the application and again welcome's Mary to the group. He reminds everyone to feel free to give him a call at any time. NHMA & the RNN Community really do exist to help people like her improve decision making at the local level.

**Bill Robison reports** that Tulsa has decided to kick off the fortified housing program and Habitat for Humanity received a grant for \$25,000 from State Farm, he believes, to build a model home using fortified construction methods. That announcement, press release and presentation came the day after an F1 tornado hit Tulsa, so the timing was perfect. Next month Bill hopes to talk about the EMI class that he and Mary and Barb recently attended. He assures everyone that it was an excellent class.

**Ed Thomas invites** Bill to write something up on the class so it can go up on the RNN website to demonstrate use of the infrastructure. It would be a win for FEMA, for RNN, and for mitigation as a whole. Bill promises do so and will get comments from Mary and Barb and then forward it to Ed or Nicole to post on the website.

**Ed thanks everyone for the time they've devoted to RNN**, and reminds them to get CTP and/or retreat ideas to him or Rebecca.

**Next meeting:** The next RNN meeting will be at 11 AM EST on 5/20/16

12:00 (EST) pm – The meeting adjourned.

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## **Meeting Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**

### **11:00 am EST Friday, March 18, 2016 (as Amended)**

**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.

#### **11:00 am EST - Call to order and roll call:**

**Present:** Bill Robison, Jim Mullen, Rebecca Joyce, Barb Miller, Daya Dayananda, Christina Finch from FEMA, Heidi Carlin, Tom Hughes, Marcy Leach, Jeff Allen, Laura Hendrix and Ed Thomas

**MINUTES:** A Motion was made to accept the Minutes by Barb Miller; seconded by Rebecca Joyce. Voted: Minutes accepted.

**SYMPOSIUM/RETREAT:** **Ed Thomas** began the discussion by explaining plans for the Symposium and RNN Retreat in July. There will be at least two webinars for follow-on presentations during the course of the event. The first webinar will relate to events in Grays Harbor County, Washington, and the *Hide From the Wind Report*, putting forth successfully applied concepts as a way to change people's ideas about disaster preparedness and get them to move toward positive action within their communities. The webinar will highlight successful strategies such as safe rooms, tsunami shelters, etc. Also planned is a webinar entitled "Levees, Land Use and Liability", to be expanded upon by Jim Murphy, Ed Thomas and folks from FEMA. This presentation will contrast the extremely low standards of current American levee construction to the extremely high standards applied elsewhere in the world, such as the Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, and other civilized nations, and the importance of applying higher standards with regard to potential liabilities for everyone that touches the levee.

**The main event of the Symposium** is the RNN Retreat and the opportunity it presents to talk about the RNN community and how to expand it. The goal is to use peer-to-peer networking to move the knowledge of the RNN community members out into the broader national community by sharing learned techniques, strategies and successes with other folks around the country and open this up to other people coming in and sharing their problems, ideas, and solutions. A great model of this was collectively accomplished in respect to non-federally declared disasters such as Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, where the RNN Community, with the assistance of some nationally recognized experts, provided information that enabled the community to do their maximum best in dealing with the conditions of a non-declared but still very real disaster situation. Ed Thomas suggested that this event be written up and published to be made available as an excellent example of disaster resilience.

**July 14<sup>th</sup>** will be dedicated to the RNN Retreat. The afternoon/evening of July 13<sup>th</sup> is intended to include a group dinner, maybe an informal presentation. Heidi Carlin, Tom Hughes, Ed Thomas, and Rebecca Joyce are the Planning Committee for the Retreat and Symposium. Ed Thomas invited Christina Finch and any other interested persons from FEMA to attend the Retreat and guide the discussion and benefit from exposure to what the RNN communities are thinking and doing with respect to resilience initiatives.

**Rebecca Joyce** reiterated that the Retreat will be an invaluable opportunity to explore and expand the RNN community. She invited everyone to give her their input so she can pass ideas on to the Committee, especially noting the value of the members' experiences at conferences, strategic planning sessions, retreats and other venues which have great potential to make this event extremely valuable for a lasting, beneficial impact for all. There being no other questions or comments, Ed Thomas recommended that planning continue and that anyone with ideas they really wish to cover in a webinar-type format to please forward them to Rebecca or himself. He included Christina Finch from FEMA in this invitation if she should feel there is anything this group could contribute to a national discussion.

**FY2015 & FY2016 CTP work.** Ed Thomas explained that NHMA is hoping to hire a contractor for program management for the current year very, very soon, and mentioned that this was Item C on the Agenda that will be put out in the form of a Request for Proposal. He encouraged the RNN Community (or a consortium of RNN Communities) to consider directly contracting for some of this work as it is an ideal opportunity for the RNN Communities to do some of the work on the CTP and receive funding for it through NHMA. He invited an off-line or on-line discussion and offered, though everyone has seen the Statement of Work, to send a copy of it around again for anyone who may not have easy access to their copy.

It was shared that the DHS just sent out an opportunity for what they call a Challenge Grant Funding for Infrastructure Resilience. It is a short 3-page proposal. Individuals can request a grant for development of an idea, tool or plan that they want to work on for infrastructure resiliency. The grant is for \$350,000.00 from the DHS, gives points of contact and provides a sample of what a project might look like. Ed Thomas asked that this be forwarded to him for distribution to the RNN Community and made available to the NHMA membership.

**Christina Finch added** that though she had no other comments at this time, she will think about the RNN Retreat and start brainstorming who she and Ed might want to extend this invitation to within FEMA. She and Ed will talk more about this next week.

**Discussion turned to the work products of last year's CTP.** Ed Thomas opened the floor to any comments about the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum which was recently sent to everyone for final comments/review. These included the *Lessons Learned* document which is a summary of the interviews, and *The Living Mosaic*, which is the successor document to *A Patchwork Quilt*. He stressed that these are in their final, final, almost totally scrubbed and complete versions, just about ready to be forwarded on to Christina Finch at FEMA and that several people were very involved in this final push. He explained that in addition to hiring a contractor to coordinate production of FY15 and FY16 materials, that NHMA will be starting a series of webinars and encouraged the RNN Community to be involved in those as well. It is definitely desired to include Tim Trautman and Charlotte Mecklenburg in this, and have something about Tulsa's incredible successes, and that these should also be included in the Bloomfield Retreat.

**Laura Hendrix shared** that she recently read the entire *Living Mosaic* document and praised the excellent work of everyone involved. Rebecca Joyce agreed. Ed Thomas explained a little more of the history of these documents and how valuable the end result will be to any hazard mitigation officer confronted with a disaster that truly endangers people.

**Bill Robison shared** that Tulsa has now hired a Chief Resiliency Officer for the Resilient Cities Program through the Rockefellers Foundation. That person is Mary Kelly and he hopes to involve her in all things related to resilient communities. Ed Thomas asked that she be added to our email list for future invitations to our meetings. Bill said she will be at the Disaster Resilience Class and the Resilience Planning Class in EMI next week, along with Barb Miller. Ed Thomas invited them to share their report on that in the next meeting.

There was some discussion about the impediments to hazard mitigation climate adaptation, usually coming down to economics and economic development. Memories of disasters tend to fade over time and the urgency connected to them shrinks. Bill shared that Mary, in connection with Tim and Tulsa Partners, had the State Department of Homeland Security come out to give a workshop recently on the Map Your Neighborhood Program. This is more of a neighbor helping neighbor initiative, the kind of thing that can be relied upon in the case of a true disaster – when calling 911, for example, would not work.

**Bill Robison** shared that he must leave the call early in order to attend a meeting with the legal department at City Hall. They are dealing with a developer who is complaining that he can't go ahead and develop his lots which are coming out of the flood plain because part of his development process is to storm sewer all the flow from this area down to the river, but since his storm sewer system is not yet approved and in place, he is not allowed to develop the property until that is done. This developer is now threatening to sue the City over it, hence Bill's needing to leave to meet with their legal department.

**Barb Miller** asked if Roger, Bill Robison's Emergency Manager, will also attend the training next week; Bill explained that due to a personal health matter he will not, but that Jaimie Ott, his Assistant Director and also the President of the Local Emergency Planning Committee which deals with hazardous waste issues, might.

**Barb Miller then gave her report.** Both she and Bill Robison were very excited about going to the Disaster Resilience Class and the Resilience Planning Class next week. She explained that in West Virginia, they hold area meetings between the local emergency management agency and the state emergency management departments. She has talked to a number of persons involved in those about going with her to these classes. One person is a fire chief in another area who is very interested in learning more about the resiliency role so Barb is excited to have her attend with them. In addition to that, Barb reported that her department just received the news last night that Jefferson County is now in its second undeclared disaster within six months. As everyone is aware, they had the Harpers Ferry issue back in July, and just recently had the snowstorm where Jefferson County was the big winner as far as getting the most snowfall is concerned. Jefferson County, however, met their threshold and exceeded it greatly but the rest of the state did not, so she and her department are getting a whole lot of staff money, but stressed that they still took care of the people which is the right thing to do, but it definitely was painful on an already stretched budget. Barb explained that it was everything that she and her staff did leading up to these storms that helped them to get through, since it is the discussions one has to have with their local commissioners about yes, you do need a rainy day fund because you're not always going to get that money back, etc., that ended up saving a lot of people: There were contracts in place prior to the storm. She shared a great story illustrating this about how the Department of Highways lost their ability to pump gas out of the ground at the height of the snowstorm. They had a fuel master that pumped their fuel that quit working, and everybody in her department expected they would stop plowing at this point. But Barb had an MOU in her back pocket with the school system, and they were immediately able to open their pumps and allow the plows to begin getting fuel. Just at this time, the National Guard showed up with the expectation of filling their vehicles at the local Department of Highways. So the school system ended up pumping fuel for both of these crews, and at about 3:00 in the afternoon the Schools came to her and said they were going to run out of fuel about 6:00 that night. At this point, Barb instructed her staff to get ahold of the Casino because their other MOU for fuel was with them. So success was all about those friends that you make when the sun's shining and the sky is blue, and though they were disappointed that they weren't getting a national disaster declaration, it was okay.

**Ed Thomas** commended Barb on a great report. Barb explained that knowing one's geography is also important. In her case, their whole County is situated in the far eastern

panhandle of the state, between Maryland and Virginia, so the weather that they get is quite different sometimes than the rest of the state. She also warned that it is often failure to document one's expenses during a storm that can cause problems as well, but concluded that these are all examples of everything the RNN Community has been saying and doing for years, that it is partnerships in mitigation and talks with elected officials that will get one through these events.

**Daya Dayananda** shared that he has been working on the storm on the Texas coast. There has been a huge push on applying for a grant from the BP Mitigation to protect the Gulf Coast. He has been working with the coastal communities trying to prepare a proposal for that grant.

**Rebecca Joyce** shared a very exciting article she saw from the Hazards Center called "Disaster News That You Can Use", about Chief Albert's Nation and his community in the Gulf Coast of Louisiana who attended our meeting in Bloomfield two summers ago. NHMA had talked about having them come on board as an RNN Community. The article stated that their community received a grant through HUD, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, for between \$48 and \$52 million dollars via the National Disaster Resilience Competition. This award was to be used to relocate their entire community off the coastal island they were on which keeps getting encroached by sea level rise.

**Ed Thomas agreed** that this news was very exciting. They are said to be the first community in the United States to actually make an effort to relocate due to climate change and sea level rise.

**Rebecca Joyce** shared that this seemed to be very significant in light of the native community's history of relocation, as several members of their tribe had already been forced to move off the island due to loss of land. This new community will have a new community center and be able to reunite with the people in their tribe that had to leave. It's a very exciting demonstration of a private resilience move and also a cultural preservation move and perhaps even a rural community move, because they are a rural community.

Ed Thomas agreed that this is an incredible story and shows the tremendous leadership of Chief Albert and the rest of his people. The Tribe now lives on the Isle Des Jean Charles. They are not a federally recognized tribe but did get this grant, and they are trying to develop an absolute, carbon neutral model community that is based upon their Native American values. Ed shared that Khris Peterson and Dick Krajieski and Sherly Laska have been helping them, but it is a Native American led effort funded by HUD. We have been inviting them to be part of this call, part of the Resilient Neighbors Network.

**A question was asked** about where the Tribe is located and if there is a point of contact for them, as there are some flood studies being planned in that area and the planners should try to have them participate if they are interested. Ed Thomas replied they are located on the coastal islands south of New Orleans, basically near the Homa area. **Ed Thomas** clarified that the publication Rebecca was talking about was the *Disaster Research News* which is subtitled "News that You Can Use". It comes out every month or so and is free. He offered to get all this out to person(s) on the call, and with regard to contacting the Tribe, suggested Khris Peterson as the best person to talk to, as well as Shirley Laska and Reverend Dick Krajieski; also, of course, Chief Albert.

**Marcy Leach** reported that she wasn't able to be on the last call but had a couple of different things on a positive note for her report. They have been giving some presentations, and just gave one to the Illinois Water and Environmental Association and Government Affairs Committee, on their MS4 Permit and their interactions with the Department of Justice and US DPA. She shared that these came off very well, better than

she ever thought they would. These presentations have tied them into the City of Rockford receiving a Storm Water Manager Program Review Reward from the Illinois Association of Flood Plain and Storm Water Management. They are very pleased to receive this recognition for the work they have put in over the last five years. The City is looking at doing a major educational component program with the school district. In Rockford, she and her team are now part of a pilot program to begin storm water awareness in their elementary schools on up. She shared that private schools will be doing the same thing so the storm water drainage engineering curriculum in the schools will give the community a much better understanding as a result of this educational effort. Children will be learning at a young age about these things instead of suddenly being confronted in their thirties when a disaster hits.

**Ed Thomas asked** if she can send a press release or something on the award they received so we can put it on the NHMA website and the RNN Community subsite. Marcy promised to get that out to him. Ed Thomas thanked Marcy and congratulated her on their award and recognition.

**Ed Thomas summarized** the need to move forward on the work of the FEMA CTP now that materials from last year are approaching completion. He reiterated on the call so that Christina Finch could hear the enormous thanks and gratitude of NHMA and the RNN Community to her for her patience through the process of getting an incredibly ambitious program launched.

**Bill Robison** moved to adjourn the meeting; Marcy Leach seconded. Meeting was adjourned.

**Next meeting:**

It was decided that the next RNN meeting will be at 11 AM EST on 4/15/16

12:00 (EST) pm – The meeting adjourned.

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**Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**  
**11:00 am EST Friday, February 19, 2016**

**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.

**11:00 am EST - Call to order and roll call:**

Present: Bill Robinson, Rebecca Joyce, Barb Miller (by proxy), Daya Dayananda, David Mallory, Christina Finch, Jim Mullen, Jim Murphy, Laura Hendrix(?), Chuck Wallace, and Ed Thomas

**Presentation of FIMA (Federal Insurance Mitigation Association) Organizational Overview** was given by Christina Finch from FEMA. Ed Thomas introduced her and mentioned an Org Chart and Statement of FIMA's Common Purpose which was distributed in advance of the call. Christina gave a very thorough explanation of changes in the organizational structure of FIMA and the philosophies driving its change. The main purpose of the changes is to improve integration and collaboration both within Divisions and Directorates of FIMA and across the Agency. There has been a lot of focus on improving the customer experience, including identifying who the customers are, how they engage with the Agency, the different touch points they have with the Agency from a regional and a federal level, and how their experience can become more streamlined and customer-centric. Finally, the purpose is to improve the organizational health at FIMA. A page in the Org Chart outlined five common FIMA purposes: First: To bring data and analytics to inform and motivate individuals to take risk reduction action they are not inclined to take, thus reducing future risk. Second: To help people, communities and the Agency prepare for events that we hope will never happen. Third: To aid survivors by effectively and efficiently delivering on the Agency's policy contracts and avoid frustration and confusion. Fourth: To deliver benefits to the taxpayer, the policyholder and the Nation based upon sound business practices and trust. Fifth: To improve the health of the organization to enable excellence in the delivery of its programs. To accomplish this, the Agency is bulking up its senior leadership: Christina then gave a thorough overview of each Directorate and its leadership positions with the names of the persons who have been chosen to fill them.

**Ed Thomas** asked if it is contemplated that there will be Regional Office realignment to mirror the changes in the FIMA headquarters realignment. Christina explained that for right now, there isn't any plan to reorganize the Regional Branches. She explained that many of the changes are expected to more closely mirror what some of the Regional Offices and Field Offices are already doing and how they are structured. She expanded on how the Customer Experience will be integrated more thoroughly into touch points with

the Agency. There were no further questions for Christina. Ed asked if she would stick with them through the rest of the call and she agreed.

**Katie Skakel** asked if moving actuarial folks into the office will address the affordability issue that was raised on the Biggert-Waters discussion, and will there be a new reform coming up toward that end? Christina said that the Actuarial and Catastrophic Modelling Groups are no longer addressing the affordability study.

**The group next discussed the RNN Retreat/NHMA Symposium** which will be held late afternoon/evening on July 13<sup>th</sup> and all day on July 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be a NHMA Board Retreat prior to the Symposium and RNN Community Retreat to try to get all members better aligned to the customers we have with respect to the operations of NHMA. A priority is to focus on what the RNN Community wants in the Symposium. Ed mentioned an idea put forward by Chuck Wallace to look at the whole idea of community-developed Tsunami shelters as one example; also, the subject of land use, flooding and liability, and weave into that the discussion of how to expand the RNN Community to make it a vibrant activity of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Association.

**Ed Thomas** then asked for volunteers to serve on the group that will be pulling together the RNN retreat/Symposium. He mentioned that it will be professionally facilitated; it will be held at the NWH Deluxe Facility right in Broomfield across the parking lot from the Omni; there is a cap of 70 participants at that facility; everyone in the RNN Community is invited and NHMA will be bringing in some National experts. He is hopeful that the Flood Control District will be represented and possibly some other folks that are doing real interesting stuff on disaster risk reduction and resilience around the country. Ed mentioned the possibility of Jennifer Gerard to come up from Southeast Florida and Christian Baja from Baltimore.

**Rebecca Joyce** said the NHMA Flyer for the Symposium and all that Ed mentioned sounded very exciting to her and felt that the RNN Community and NHMA were at the point of shoring up where they were and reaching out to other communities. She shared an example of receiving a call from someone at an organization called Resilient Virginia to come and speak at a March conference in Richmond; she used that opportunity to network and tell others about NHMA. Rebecca offered to help in any way with the Symposium.

**Ed Thomas** asked Rebecca if she would like to be on the Retreat & Symposium Planning Committee. Rebecca accepted.

**Ed Thomas** next addressed Chuck Wallace and spoke about Chuck's idea of the Tsunami shelters, encouraging he and Jim Mullen to try to expand on that in terms of how do you get something done at the local level focusing in on solving a problem about a problem. He mentioned the Hide From the Wind Report and its major importance nationally as an example of how to solve problems at the local level by finding solutions on terms that people with opposing ideals can embrace.

**Chuck Wallace** spoke about the origin of the Tornado Safe Room concept and how it was the basis for Project Safe Haven. He described how he was contacted by a former

colleague from CMI, now an Emergency Manager in Florida, who is interested in how we use the grant-through effort with the public to incorporate a way to move buildings further away from the sea level rise. He connected them with the people at Project Safe Haven and now something is in motion on the East Coast. He concurred with Rebecca that one just has to wait for the opportunities to come to connect organizations and ideas. Ed agreed and thanked Chuck and Rebecca for their example of sharing their incredible knowledge in such a tremendous, prompt and efficient way to help in getting stuff done around the Nation and around the world.

**Ed** next suggested that Rebecca might want to work on featuring some of the folks at Charlotte-Mecklenburg or the folks in Urban Drainage on higher standards and some of the things they have done which are really cutting-edge nationally. He suggested finding a way to approach community leaders to get them on board with that approach. He asked her and Tim Trautman who was not on the call today, to consider how to make that a part of the Symposium as well. **Rebecca** then asked Ed if Tim might have mentioned that he has a presentation of this kind or has talked about it before and might he be willing to use it at some point? **Ed** replied that he thought it was a little more tentative than that, but maybe with some prodding between the two of them and some other folks on the line he might agree to do so.

**Ed** next addressed the idea of doing some Webinars following the Retreat/Symposium or even before the Symposium to get some of these ideas out in the marketplace. He said there are some incredibly good ideas that local folks are coming up with and we need to come up with a way to get those spread out through our grass roots network throughout the nation and because some of these ideas are perfectly well adapted to international issues; this approach of doing things differently and better is incredibly well received in places even outside the United States. He said he has gotten a lot of emails from some folks in Mexico who are very interested in some of the publications that NHMA as put out about disaster risk reduction.

**Ed concluded** by reminding everyone that they are all welcome to attend the Natural Hazards Workshop and that it is a separate event from the RNN Retreat. He urged everyone to plan on the afternoon of July 13<sup>th</sup> and all day on the 14<sup>th</sup> and then possibly some may want to stick around for the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>, where there will be a really important session to pull all of this together. There is also the NHMA Board Retreat at which he would love to have a representative from the RNN Community on the Board and/or will open the door for the RNNC Community to be part of the NHMA Board Retreat which will take place pretty much all day on the 13<sup>th</sup>. He stressed that everything that NHMA does, thinks, says, or otherwise touches in any way has got to be for the benefit of the people who are doing the work in the RNN Community. He invited Christina to participate and hoped that he could help induce FEMA participation of her and perhaps some other people there to participate at the Symposium and RNN Retreat in July.

**Christina** said she would talk with Ed and see if they could think of some specific things or people that we might be interested in reaching out to.

**Ed** thanked Christina and reminded everyone that he is just an email away and/or a phone call away and that he would love to speak with everyone.



**Discussion next moved to the status of the 2015 FEMA material.** Ed invited Katie Skakel to chime in with any comments on this, as well as some other folks in the room on the delivery material which has been made enormously better based upon comments from Christina and a number of other folks; thanks to everyone's efforts the material is very nearly ready to go out and Katie has been at the final, final stretch of pulling it all together; some folks are helping her to get some minutes and some agendas from past meetings. We absolutely have to do it by the end of March, but would love to get it done by the end of February or early March. Said everyone will be very excited by the curriculum with the results of the interviews and the revision to the Patchwork Quilt which is now called Living Mosaic. Ed invited Katie to comment.

**Katie Skakel** had no comments.

**Ed** then asked for any questions about the final products from last Fiscal Year and clarified that that was FY15 work funded with FY14 money.

**There being no questions or comments, the group then moved into General Discussion.** Tom Hughes re-joined the call. Ed mentioned that Rebecca had agreed to join the RNN Symposium planning committee. Tom welcomed her warmly.

**Ed Thomas** asked for any changes or objections to the next meeting date of March 18, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

**There being no objections,** the Meeting was so scheduled.

**Ed** thanked Christina Finch for taking the time from her very busy new job to do an incredible and well-thought out briefing.

**Christina** thanked everyone for the opportunity to join the call and give an update, and promised to follow up. Ed asked her if March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 might be a day she could join our call; Christina said yes, she was available.

**Next meeting:**

It was decided that the next meeting RNN will be at 11 AM EST on 3/18/16

11 (CST) am – The meeting adjourned.

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## NOTES of RNN MEETING CALL of January 15, 2016

**From:** Barbara Miller

**Sent:** Friday, January 15, 2016 10:48 AM

**To:** Ed Thomas

**Cc:** Marci Leach; Robison, Bill; Rebecca Joyce; Daya Dayananda; Wallace, Chuck; 'Terri Turner'

**Subject:** Notes from today's RNN call

Today was the scheduled day for the RNN call. Only Rebecca, Bill, Marcy and I were on the call, but we had some great discussion!!

Bill followed up on Tulsa's 100 Resilient Cities journey. 3 cities qualified, including Tulsa, they were interviewed and are awaiting the results. He also spoke about a letter that he is writing regarding bringing Hazard Mitigation into Resiliency. And he spoke about the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine that are also working on a resiliency program and includes Seattle and Boulder. They are based in Washington, DC. Lauren Alexander-Augustine from that group was at the Tulsa stormwater board meeting. Maybe we should Google them to find out more?

Marcy reported that although there had been flooding all around them, they escaped it this time! Their recovery planning meeting, they discussed the revised FIRM maps that go into effect on February 17<sup>th</sup>. They have done a lot of outreach on this, but have not received a lot of comments about it. She spoke about Colin Reese (not sure I have that name correct) from the University of Illinois. He is working on surveys for floodmap stuff. He wants to approach FEMA with the idea of having homeowners commit to being bought out after the next disaster happens, but they have to agree to put their homeowners insurance towards the purchase of the property. There were questions about what would happen if the homeowners changed their minds or didn't honor the commitment.

Rebecca was approached last week by the Geography department at James Madison University. They are working on learning about mitigation and preparedness, looking at mitigation plans and operations plans. She will be going to speak to their students.

Barb spoke about the new CRS/ISO person that they are working with through the recertification process. She also asked if everyone received the email she sent out about a new pilot course called E-426, Implementing Whole Community Resilience and Citizen Corps Programs, March 21-24 at EMI. Everyone on the call expressed interest in attending and will start the process to enroll. Hopefully, other RNN representatives will enroll, as well.

We are assuming that our calls will continue to be on the third Friday of the month. Ed, will you please send out another recurring calendar for 2016 for the calls?

The Broomfield Natural Hazards Conference was discussed briefly.

Also, Rebecca emailed out her notes from the last meeting. Please consider this email the notes from this one. Ed, will you please forward this email out to the whole group? I'm sure that I am missing some. Thanks!!

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Miller

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## **Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**

### **10 am CT Friday, December 18, 2015**

**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.

10 am CT - Call to order and roll call:

Present: Tim Trautman, Daya, Ned, Gene, Katie, Rebecca, Barbara, Marcie

- **Review of notes** from November meeting, **if available**  
[The notes were not available due to a death in Rebecca's family. We expressed condolences to Rebecca and family. The notes will be available soon.]
  
- **Update** on review/reporting for 2014-2015 NHMA CTP (Ed Thomas)  
Ed indicated that FEMA and NHMA had comments on the draft materials developed for last FY CTP. Those materials are still in Draft and further changes can be made. Ed asked that any suggestions from the RNN communities be broken down into two categories: a) changes which can be made quickly; b) changes absolutely needed no matter the level of difficulty in making the changes; and c) changes we can make during this current FY to further improve these documents. Ed indicated that the submission is a huge amount of material, which we believe will be of great value to the nation when it is put in final form.  
Katie sent the materials to the RNN communities for comment and consideration.  
It was noted that any discussion of "Climate Change" in our materials would produce political backlash. Other concepts such as "climate uncertainty", and similar locally acceptable phrases are much more effective in inducing the changes in needed local actions including higher standards etc.
  
- **Review of 2015-2016 NHMA CTP Grant SOW** (Ed Thomas/David Mallory) David was unable to be on the call.  
Due to the delay in final NHMA and FEMA approval of last FY CTP work, we are going to have to negotiate changes in this FY effort since this year's effort is built on the last year materials. This fact gives us an opportunity to renegotiate our SOW for this current FY with FEMA. RNN comments on the SOW, and potential changes to the SOW are most welcome.
  
- **Draft RNN Community Charter**  
We discussed the revised draft RNN Charter. In addition to the previous comments from Bill Robison and Ned, several additional comments were made including: formal adoption by local elected officials was a laborious process involving the community's Attorneys; and would be quite difficult in this year and election year. We seem to be moving towards a recognition that formal community adoption is not likely any time soon. We will keep the current draft as an open, under discussion draft for guiding us. [See below as to volunteer discussion about actual RNN actions]

- **2015-2016 RNN Activities: Request for Volunteers** (Ed Thomas)  
Ed explained that at present NHMA is almost an entirely volunteer organization. The RNN communities are most welcome to volunteer for work on the NHMA Committees, to volunteer to serve on the NHMA Board, or to participate in efforts such as NHMA review/submission of comments on major policy documents. Gene Henry indicated that he hoped to have Florida State Intern(s) available to assist him in such efforts next Spring. Tim offered to review the DRR-A Curriculum to determine how he could help in review; and possibly serve as an Instructor. Several folks expressed willingness to review the draft CTP materials from last FY.
- **RNN Expansion (ALL)**  
It was suggested that we need to develop an RNN Strategic Plan of action as soon as possible. Such an action is fully in accord with this year's SOW; and would provide a platform to use to invite other community folks to join our group.
- **Other Items? (ALL)**
- **NHMA Membership drive (Ed Thomas)**  
Ed mentioned the NHMA hope that all RNN members will renew their NHMA membership, and consider a donation; especially since we are trying to find the funds to hire a part-time Executive Director
- **Brief community updates**—one problem or one success you would like to share (and perhaps include in future meeting for more detailed discussion/webinar )  
No such items were reported this month. Ed asked that folks consider writing a brief report on any items that would like to share.
- **Next meeting (?)**:  
It was decided that the next meeting RNN will be at 11 AM EST on 1/15/16
- 11 (CST) am – Adjourn  
We did adjourn promptly at 12 EST; 11 AM CST!

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## **Minutes – Resilient Neighbors Network**

### **10 am CT Friday, November 20, 2015**

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

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10 am CT - Call to order and roll call:

Present: Daya Dayananda, Laura Hendrix, Rebecca Joyce, Barb Miller, Bill Robinson, Ned Swanberg, Ed Thomas, and Chuck Wallace

- **Discussion of Disaster Risk Reduction as an element of Resilience** was discussed by the group. Ed Thomas mentioned that while there were many definitions of resilience there were not including the concept of disaster risk reduction. The question of how we could include DRR was raised. The question was also brought to the group as to how much are RNN members willing to be spokespersons for DRR concepts. Barb Miller stated that it would be difficult for her to travel throughout the country, she could talk within her state about DRR. Barb also brought up the idea of a “Train-the-Trainer” program where RNN members could step in for each other. Ned Swanberg mentioned that it was important to keep DRR anchored in All Hazard Mitigation Plans at the state and local levels and then carried to the federal level.
- The group next discussed the **DRR Curriculum**. Ed mentioned that work needs to be done to the curriculum and could suggest having communities to adopt higher standards beyond minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. Bill Robinson suggested using institutional mechanisms to get conversations started. Chuck Wallace stated that leadership at the local level doesn’t want to hear about climate change. They also don’t want to hear things by only one group or organization. Ed mentioned that the curriculum needs to be centered around change in behavior not necessarily the causes such as climate change since that turns officials away from the topic. Ned asked if a company had ever been hired to analyze the DRR concept. He suggested that maybe an objective survey needed to be taken to ask people what is most important to them including the economic piece and putting nature back into their lives. Bill mentioned that citizens have the attitude that things will never happen to them but DRR can be marketed as increasing the safety and livability of a community.
- **Community Updates** were given by the RNN members:
  - Bill said that Tulsa is in the process of interviewing for a Chief Resilience Office for the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities program.

- Laura stated that the 100 Resilient Cities program is flexible and that Tulsa can change their priorities as they change.
  - Chuck informed everyone that the school that was built to provide vertical evacuation will be dedicated at the first of the New Year.
  - Barb told the group that the Drinking Water Partnership had a regional exercise and meeting. She also stated that the River coalition is looking at several different methods of public outreach.
  - Ned said that new data on the Flood-ready Atlas has been posted. He also mentioned that FEMA is wrapping up D-Firm for the State.
- Ed thanked everyone for all the information and help.
- **Next meeting:**  
It was decided that the next meeting RNN will be at 11 AM EST on 12/18/15
- 11 (CST) am – The meeting adjourned.

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## Minutes for Resilient Neighbors Network conference call October 23, 2015

**Call Participants: Ed Thomas, Katie Skakel, Tim Trautman, Marci Leach, Bill Robison. Laura Hendrix, Rebecca Joyce, Daya Dayananda.**

*The goals of this conference call are to update progress on creating a peer-to-peer sharing network among grassroots communities working on resilience.*

11 am EST - Call to order and roll call.

11:05 – Review of RNN group evening meeting at Tulsa Pilot Workshop by Katie Skakel with input from RNN. As a group, we discussed the Tulsa pilot workshop. Ed Thomas commented that RNN is helping to design a curriculum in a changing world. That grassroots people know how to do this stuff. Bill Robinson said he was sorry for technical difficulties at workshop. Discussed video of Mayor Young. Overall it was thought that workshop went very well but that we could do more interactive workshops. Ed Thomas mentioned the room and light were challenging. That as speakers tried to do something for wrong audience. Small breakout sessions were excellent and opportunity for questions. Felt it as presented in an orderly way but that as Tim Trautman stated people want to hear more about their own state - whereas RNN is polar opposite in that the idea is to share and learn as peer to peer. This was exemplified in meeting and shows how it will relate to them and connects them to workshop. Ed Thomas discussed that workshop really laid out what lessons as far as message of saferooms in Oklahoma. He stated that it's important to go into good examples of community's work.

11:15 - Brief Report on NHMA Board meeting of October 19, 2015. New committee has been created to develop and write business/organizational plan. Tom Hughes, Penn Office of Emergency Management and NHMA Board member will be making calls about Committees and reporting back to NHMA Board. Question for RNN – Do one or two RNN members want to volunteer to talk with Tom about the peer- to -peer sharing network? Ed has recommended that we ask an RNN member to co-chair a combined RNN/education/grassroots Committee. Any reaction?? How can we ensure maximum RNN involvement with the development/implementation of the DRR curriculum and training in DRR? By Ed Thomas and Katie Skakel.

Ed Thomas reiterated that curriculum needs to be orderly. Tim Trautman believes interaction of local folks is key. Taping Terry Young– can take that elsewhere. Daya mentioned learning about Tulsa's buy out process and commented on how great to learn about it. We discussed RNN member serving on NHMA Board and the criticalness of what RNN offers that we need to hear local voice for NHMA. By combining two committees as we move forward, want to incorporate RNN and driving factors to NHMA. We discussed NHMA leadership role and RNN involvement. Marci stated that to Rockford community education is key. Barb said she is willing to talk with Tom Hughes about committee but unable to serve on committee. Ed outlined that not about folding RNN into education but education into RNN. Katie Skakel stated that Tom Hughes offered to follow-up with doodle poll to determine when maximum number of people can be on RNN call. That it is hoped that Tom could have a discussion with RNN and NHMA Board in November.

11:30 - Review of activities in CTP 2015 [FY 2016 work]. The growing of RNN peer to peer Network. What needs to be in place to support a well- developed peer-to- peer network? Discussion on growing RNN by Ed Thomas and Katie Skakel with thoughts from RNN. Ed Thomas discussed that upcoming work is intended to lead towards DRR certification. Need transferrable message- RNN and education committee.

11:45 - Brief community updates—one problem or one success you would like to share (and perhaps include in future meeting for more detailed discussion/webinar). Marci gave an account of 20 years of working with non-compliance and EPA over storm water program. She outlined the decree and stated what City of Rockford has done to implement a stellar program. Marci's account of Rockford transformation and the presentation and write up of a good ending for the decree and process was very compelling and interesting to all on call. Tim Trautman said it was one of the most impressive stories he has heard. That it is great to hear of plan and how storm water is taken more seriously. Committee investment in storm water utility showed how community gaining resilience. It was stated that a ½ day hands on workshop that outlines this kind of program can be incredible beneficial.

It was stated that these types of issues are different – when FEMA goes away / don't have program vs. we did this locally. Linkage of flood, future conditions, and part of curriculum. This is how we have to do it – this is how we structure storm water going forward. Bill Robison stated that storm water and different problem areas important to highlight.

11:55 - Question on meeting structure, time, survey. Katie Skakel would like to get more RNNs onto call and wants to know the best way to do so. Shall I send out a doodle poll? Can someone else in your office fill in for you - if you can not make call? Do we want a different format for meetings? One thought is to provide a brief overview on each call about a curriculum module so that RNNs can be part of the process of DRR curriculum.

We opened conversation on involvement and future curriculum development. Katie Skakel mentioned that we have brochures for NHMA (she emailed copy for RNNs to use). Bill and Laura Hendrix called for ground truthing at local level and offered to attend Silver Jackets meeting. Bill Robison discussed that building to minimal standard is guaranteed flood damage. That Tulsa needed to look at full urban development – assuming that FIS got this right. Ed Thomas said he will let Jennifer Dunn of Army Corps know that Laura, Bill and Jim Mullen interested in attending.

12 pm - Adjourn

**Next meeting November 20, 2015 at 11:00 EST.**

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