

Nevada Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (NHMPC)
Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, August 13, 2013
Location: Great Basin Science Sample and Records Library
2nd Floor Conference Room, 2175 Raggio Lane, Reno, NV

1. Call To Order, introductions and establish quorum

Craig dePolo opened the meeting at 8:30. He thanked Karen and Elizabeth for organizing the meeting. Introductions were made of those present.

MEMBERS:

Craig dePolo, NBMG
Ed Atwell, WCEM
Ron Lynn, NESC
Rob Fellows, Carson City, Flood Mgmt
Jenna Damon, NDWR
Terri Garside, Member of Public
Rick Diebold, City of Las Vegas
Rick Trelease, Clark County Flood Control
Jim Walker, NDOT
Jim Reagan, NV Energy

STAFF/OTHER

Elizabeth Ashby, NDEM
Henna Rasul, AG
Mimi Fujii-Strickler, TRFMA
Kimble Corbridge, WCPW, Floodplain manager
Stephanie Hicks, RO Anderson
Karen Johnson, NDEM
DD LaPointe, NBMG
Janell Woodward, NDEM
Aaron Kenneston, WCEM

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Joe Curtis

2. Public Comment

Craig dePolo, Chairman, opened the meeting for comments from the public; there were none.

3. Approval of meeting minutes from May 7, 2013

An incorrect copy of the minutes was inadvertently printed out for meeting copies. It was felt that they were correct except for the ending public comments sections on the last page. Craig dePolo called for a motion to accept the minutes with the corrections to the last page. _____ moved and _____ seconded. The motion was passed.

4. Report for the MyPlan website – Gary Johnson

Gary Johnson from NBMG gave a short presentation on the MyPlan website explaining what it showed and how it worked. There was some trouble with the internet connection and he was unable to access information on the site. MyPlan is for those who do not have GIS skills and deals with Fire, Flood and Earthquakes with links to USGS. Gary mentioned that all the funding for MyPlan was soft money and wanted the committee to be aware of this fact in regard to long-term maintenance of the website. Questions were asked regarding access to the site. It is a password-protected site and anyone from the committee or otherwise interested in accessing the site should contact Elizabeth Ashby for the proper credentials to access the site. Several communities have requested access to the site. MyPlan contains some confidential information and this is the reason it is a secure site. Gary stated he would

like to provide a public-facing site also. Craig made a recommendation to Ron Lynn and NESC to reassess the categories for URM.

5. Planning subcommittee report – Jim Walker

The plan needs to be updated and approved to send to FEMA by the end of August. Jim Walker thanked Elizabeth Ashby and DD LaPointe for all of their hard work on the project. It is basically complete but they are still waiting for the subcommittee to complete the STAPLE-E ranking of strategies. There will be a special meeting on August 29 to complete this process. Jim stated they are looking for the planning committee to approve the plan as a whole pending some minor edits so that it can be sent forward to FEMA for their approval. The plan has been posted on the NHMPC website. The incomplete sections include items such as the meeting minutes and the ranking. Craig dePolo entertained a motion to approve the subcommittee's work to produce the Nevada Hazard Mitigation Plan with the portions to be completed at the judgment of the chair. Jim Walker moved to accept. Ed Atwell seconded. The motion was passed. The process will begin again immediately, once the current plan is approved, to update the plan for the next update cycle. We are one of 10 states with a completed hazard mitigation plan. Ron Lynn asked about press regarding this fact and Elizabeth Ashby stated she could obtain a press release for this.

6. Earthquake Hazard in Washoe County presentation – Craig dePolo

Craig dePolo gave a presentation on earthquake hazards in Washoe County. Washoe County is fairly sophisticated with regard to earthquakes compared to some of the smaller communities. Most people think it is unacceptable to be unprepared after an earthquake happens. In discussing earthquake threat, Craig stated we discuss earthquakes themselves, the faults on which they occur, and the loading mechanisms. There is no part of the state that does not have earthquakes though money has allowed for instrumentation to measure earthquakes in more of the eastern portions of the state. We have gone quite a while, since 1960, without many larger earthquakes. This makes it easy to forget that we live in earthquake country. An overview of the history of Nevada earthquakes going back to the 1850s was given. Mitigation for earthquakes can have more than a one-time benefit. Strike-slip faults cause far more damage. HAZUS runs have been utilized to estimate risk. The more recent Well's earthquake is often utilized for comparison. Craig also covered unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings. There are about 23,000 URM buildings in Nevada. The largest URM problem in Nevada is in Washoe County. He called this a Salt Lake City problem that needs Salt Lake City response. Finally, Craig stated that he would not be surprised if the next large earthquake happened right here in Washoe County.

7. Irrigation Ditches in Reno presentation – Craig dePolo

Craig dePolo stated they are halfway through the study of the irrigation ditches in Reno. Desert Research Institute (DRI) is working on the project with them. There have been historical ditch failures and there is more urban buildup. The study is asking where some of the most hazardous irrigation ditches are and how can we mitigate against them and beginning with the Steamboat ditch. Washoe County and City of Reno are helping with the study. Another question being asked is how many inches per hour of precipitation it takes to overwhelm a ditch and what can be done to mitigate this problem?

8. Washoe County presentations regarding the demographics, government, economic, social profile, future development and hazard mitigation plan status/other hazards in Washoe County presentation – Aaron Kenneston

Aaron Kenneston, Washoe County Emergency Manager, gave a dual presentation covering both the Washoe County Hazard Mitigation Plan as well as his pitch for grant money to help cover costs of updating their plan which is due in 2015.

The Washoe County Hazard Mitigation Plan was presented. The plan was last updated in 2010 and they are looking to begin their update for 2015. They are partnered with two cities and two tribes including Reno, Sparks, the Pyramid Lake Tribe, and the Reno-Sparks Indian Tribe. The 2010 update was their first attempt at doing one collaborative plan. They had nine total declarations with two of them for snow which were back-to-back. They have utilized University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) resources in historical hazard determination along with the standard process of mitigation. The 2008 economic downturn affected the values indicated in the 2010 plan and changed the stats. These values will most likely change for the 2015 plan update. They are working more closely with the private and charter schools and other healthcare facilities. Washoe County would like to work toward having more current risk and vulnerability information for the 2015 plan.

Aaron addressed a need to stop utilizing the 100-year and 500-year terminology as this leads the public to underestimate the risk of flood. Elizabeth Ashby interjected that the flood area would be a great place to add to their grant application. The application is asking to spend time with DRI and get a better idea of what can be done for drought and water issues in the area along with looking at building plans regarding where to build and where not to build with regard to flood risk. Most of the dam failure threats are for dams that are not in our area.

Nevada is the third most seismically active state in the US. Also covered was the hazardous material transportation through the area. They would like to spend time with the experts at UNR and DRI with this 2015 update to ensure that they have the most current information regarding the various hazards. Karen Johnson reminded Aaron that they need to wait until they get the award before they spend money they would like to have covered. Elizabeth stated it is hoped they would receive award money by June 2014. They asked for an award total of \$80,000 with \$20,000 in-kind match.

9. Flood Hazard in Washoe County presentation – Kimble Corbridge

Kimble Corbridge gave a presentation on the flood hazard in Washoe County. He stated flood was the main hazard in this area. The presentation included the flood history of the area with pictures from the various floods over the last 100 years. Debris that occurs during and after a flood is quite significant. Equipment is required to remove all of this debris to keep water flowing. The Truckee River runs through town and the Truckee Meadows is where the water ponds up. People have a misconception regarding the risk of flood and Kimble stated there is really a 100% chance of flooding.

In 2008, they joined the community rating system (CRS) and received a rating class 7. All the flood insurance premiums for the unincorporated areas receive a 15% discount. This saves a collective \$100,000 a year on premiums for the unincorporated areas. There is a requirement to recertify every year. Every five years they require re-verification. They have over 80 flood maps in the Truckee Meadows. There are 140 maps in Washoe County and all have been digitized. These maps are available on their website.

10. Truckee River Flood Project Status presentation – Mimi Fujii-Strickler

Mimi Fujii-Strickler gave a presentation on the Truckee River Flood Project status. The Truckee River is a closed system going from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake. The original plan for the Truckee River Flood Project was to go from downtown Reno all the way to Pyramid Lake. Economic and political changes have caused the program to be scaled back. Currently the plan is to go to Wadsworth. The flood project says they are the definition of insanity. They keep doing the same thing over and over again. The flood results have been the same. Mimi stated flooding is not always on the river. There can be different types of events that can cause other types of flooding. They are studying what can be done to restore at Vista narrows to help with some of the head cutting and restore vegetation to this area. Mimi stated people tend to develop flood amnesia and forget the previous flood event.

The official name of the project is the Truckee River Flood Management Authority (TRFMA). They were originally under Washoe County. Reno, Sparks and Washoe County came together to make up the committee for the Truckee River Flood Project. Last year they became an independent entity which allowed them to charge a flood rate (rather than calling it a tax). It was necessary for them to become their own authority in order to charge a rate. They received permission from the Legislature to charge this rate. They are now a smaller group and all votes must be unanimous. This works well when it works and for the most part they are able to work together. Their primary goal is flood damage reduction features including levees, flood walls, etc. Second priority includes eco systems and restoration.

Completed projects include the Reno Sparks Indian Colony flood wall and levee. They partnered with the State of Nevada, Walmart, Flood Project and the City of Reno. They received Project of the Year for this project from American Public Works Association (APWA).

Current and future projects include Tracy and the Virginia Street Bridge. This is the worst-rated bridge in Nevada. The bridge replacement cost is \$20 million. This is a pony truss design. Washoe County is up for five bridge replacements, each with a cost of \$20 million.

The cost for the entire project is quite high but everyone benefits from the project being completed. Whether or not someone has flooding in their immediate area, they receive benefit if they work or shop in an area that floods. They are looking to start construction in 2017. It is unclear whether this is realistic or not.

Finally, she spoke about land acquisition and the changes that will eventually occur there. Of note, the grant was begun in 2009 and they are finally got funding in 2011 and the rest was completed in 2013.

Elizabeth Ashby asked Mimi to discuss the project in Hidden Valley for the elevation of homes. TRFMA has begun a home elevation program. This is more cost effective and will take these homes out of the floodplain. About 60 homeowners have applied. There is an IRS ruling that is preventing this from going forward and they are working with Senator Reid's office to facilitate changing this. This IRS requires the public to reflect any money for this type of project to be claimed as income for tax purposes. The other option is to get the money from FEMA and then the IRS treats this money differently.

11. Presentation of completed hazard mitigation assistance grant applications

Emergency Management did not ask Clark County to present again as most everyone has already heard their presentation. Their project is placement of seismic valves in Clark County School System. The grant is being split into two projects because of the cost cap.

Stephanie Hicks presented on the Douglas County State Route 88 project. This is an Flood Management Assistance (FMA) funding project. This is a regional flood control problem. The goal is to create concrete culverts below State Route 88. The partners have continued to commit their match. They are hoping to keep the project alive while they continue to have these match commitments. One of the main problems is that the highway was elevated when it was created and acts as a levee on the east side of Hwy 88 holding the water in that area. The bridge is of insufficient size. They have looked at various options for this problem.

Craig dePolo stated NHMPC ranked three projects last year. The two other projects being considered are Washoe County projects.

12. Presentation of proposed hazard mitigation assistance grant applications

FEMA has changed how they are allocating grant funds. Every state is limited to five projects with a \$250,000 cap for each project. Tahoe Fuels Reduction Project has received funds and the Caliente Youth Center environmental review is nearly complete. Six Mile Canyon is hoped to be funded early next year.

13. Nevada Earthquake Safety Council Report – Ron Lynn

Ron Lynn gave an overview with a tentative agenda for the upcoming joint meeting for NESC with some of the neighboring states to be held November 13, 2013 in Las Vegas. This will involve Colorado, Idaho, and Utah. Arizona has been invited but there has been little response at this point. This will be a landmark meeting. There is a NESC quarterly meeting tomorrow, August 14.

Craig dePolo stated they are making an appeal to USGS that would significantly raise the risk of earthquakes in the Las Vegas area.

14. Report on the status of open pre-disaster mitigation and hazard mitigation grant program allocated Nevada grants

Karen Johnson stated 1629 is in the process of being closed. As far as 1738, the City of Reno is going to deobligate the Dant Wash funds as they work cannot be completed for the amount awarded as well as other contributing factors.

FEMA just funded the 2009 PDM funding for Tahoe Douglas. For 2010, the Nye County plan was completed and submitted to FEMA for their courtesy review. Gary Johnson traveled to Tonopah to present MyPlan. Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) – Elizabeth and Karen are continuing tabletop exercises. Under 2012, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is going along for the State Public Works Board. With management costs, NDEM gave Division of Forestry a small amount for GIS help with state maps.

15. Announcement of future meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2013 in Mesquite. A tentative meeting is scheduled for February 11 or 12, 2014 meeting with date to be confirmed. A special meeting will be scheduled for the last week of September-beginning of October to complete application ranking and finalization. Ranking information will be distributed when applications are complete for review.

16. Public Comment

Craig dePolo asked for any public comment; there were none.

17. Adjournment

Craig dePolo adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:
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