

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Public Meeting, Monday, July 31, 2023, at 6:00 pm
Location: Town Office Meeting Room: 37 High Street Cavendish Vermont
And via Zoom

Present: Stephen Plunkard, Rick Chambers (Town Manager), Jen Leak (Recording Secretary), Cindy Ingersoll (Mount Ascutney Regional Commission) and citizens as listed on the attached sheet.

1. Introduction

Cindy said that FEMA asks towns to update their LHMP every five years. She said that Cavendish's expired about a year ago and needs to be updated to get maximum reimbursement for the recent flood damages. She said that VT Emergency Management has given the Town 30 days to submit a preliminary draft that meets the criteria FEMA requires.

Cindy said that public input is needed which will be gathered by the meeting tonight and through an online survey posted on the town website and community Facebook page.

Stephen said that he didn't understand why planning is done by project rather than for the entire watershed. Cindy agreed and said that FEMA does their planning at the local town level. She added that there have been some Black River Corridor studies.

Abe Gross was present and asked if this plan was only for natural hazards. Cindy said that was correct. She clarified that prior plans did include other types of hazards such as fires and accidents, and that can still be done, but FEMA doesn't look at those and for this draft she wanted to focus on getting the FEMA requirements met.

Margo Caulfield was present and said that she is hearing people wonder if it's worth fixing things between now and hurricane season in case there is flooding again. Cindy said that tonight we could discuss ideas which might help for future hurricane seasons but they will not be in place for the upcoming season.

2. Presentation from MARC

The presenter was not present.

3. Assess Impact of Natural Hazards and Prioritize

Cindy reviewed the climate survey with those present to get their input on the likelihood of natural disasters happening in the future and to prioritize hazards.

4. Status of 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan Strategies

Cindy reviewed the list of strategies that were outlined in the 2016 Plan with those present.

5. **Discuss Existing Capabilities**

6. **Identify Vulnerable Areas and Populations**

7. **Identify Potential New 2023-2028 Mitigation Actions and Strategies**

Cindy reviewed a list of possible actions.

Margo asked who initiated the FEMA buyout process. Malia said that homeowners could find information on that process through VT Emergency Management, and properties were eligible if the cost of repairs were more than 50% of the appraised value on the day before the flood. A discussion ensued about how repair costs are calculated and how appraisal values are verified.

Stephen asked if people whose homes were damaged in Tropical Storm Irene had asked for a decrease in appraised value from the Board of Civil Authority. Margo said that she thought so and some were likely to do so now.

Stephen asked if someone at MARC could look at maps with streams, soil type and erodibility, slopes, etc. to identify potential flood hazard areas. He said that he thought it would be useful for new and current homeowners and potential new construction. Margo suggested that people are afraid to report flood damages due to potential insurance costs or negative impacts on future sales.

Margo said that there is no plan in place for alerting residents to flood danger.

Stephen said again that he believed there needed to be a watershed wide study. Cindy agreed flood hazards needed to be addressed at a watershed level, rather than town level.

8. **Adjournment**

Cindy thanked everyone for coming and the meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.