Local Mitigation Strategy Task Force Regular Meeting  
Santa Rosa County Public Services Conference Room  
October 17, 2019 – 1:30 PM

Minutes

Present:

Eric Seib (Town of Jay)  
Mark Murray (SRC Administration)  
Comm. Dave Piech (SRC BOCC)  
Stephen Furman (SRC Public Works)  
Glenn Bailey (SRC Public Works)  
Thomas Lambert (City of Gulf Breeze)  
Randy Jorgenson (City of Gulf Breeze)  
Tim Milstead (City of Milton)  
Karen Thornhill (SRC Development)  
Connie Owensby (SRC Development)  
Darliene Stanhope (SRC Planning/Zoning)  
Kim Bouler (SRC Emergency Management)  
Heather Hyde (Jacobs Engineering)  
Stephen Greer (UF/IFAS Extension Office)  
Doug Bringmans (SRSO)  
Sheila Fitzgerald (SRC Grants)  
Jared Lowe (SRC Grants)  
Pamela Prestridge (Resident)  
Courtney Winstead (Resident)

1. Call to Order and Introductions. The meeting was called to order by Eric Seib at 1:35 PM, and introductions were made around the table.

2. Approval of Minutes from the July 25, 2019 Regular Meeting. Minutes were approved.

3. Discussion of By-Laws. Sheila Fitzgerald noted it had been about two years since the LMS Task Force Steering Committee reviewed the group’s by-laws. She recommended the committee replace the United Way’s membership with SAFER (Support Alliance for Emergency Readiness) Santa Rosa. It was also noted that six of the twelve voting members listed in the by-laws are from within Santa Rosa County, and some departments have duplicitous representation. Additionally, Mrs. Fitzgerald said the Grants & Special Programs Department may not need voting power since the grants department provides staff support to the LMS. She asked the committee to discuss any entities who may need to be represented on the Steering Committee and to identify any necessary changes to the current membership.
Randy Jorgenson stated he was in favor of removing voting authority from the SRC grants department, while still maintaining their support, and said this would also help address a disproportionate amount of Santa Rosa County representation on the Steering Committee.

Eric Seib asked if the membership outlined in the by-laws is indicative of who has input in bringing forward mitigation initiatives to the LMS Task Force. Mrs. Fitzgerald describe the project initiative ranking process and indicated that it often includes input from various SRC departments, but the entity submitting the project always has representation during the ranking process. Additionally, project initiative scoring/ranking is subject to the LMS Steering Committee’s approval.

Members discussed potentially adding an additional county resident as a voting member of the steering committee, raising the total number of residents to two (2). Mrs. Fitzgerald clarified that support staff would remove “Grants & Special Programs” from the membership listing in the by-laws and add a second HOA. Likewise, the United Way would be replaced by SAFER Santa Rosa. Stephen Furman explained to the task force that SAFER Santa Rosa is a group of churches, nonprofits, and other community stakeholders intended to build resilience and coordinate services following a disaster. This includes outreach and volunteer work.

The discussed changes will be made, and committee approval will be sought during the next regular meeting. Support staff will send a copy of the current by-laws prior to the next regular meeting to collect additional recommendations for needed changes to the by-laws.

4. **Member Information Form, Daniel Hahn.** There was discussion regarding the membership form submitted by Daniel Hahn, representing SAFER Santa Rosa. Daniel Hahn has previously served on the LMS Task Force, has worked for Santa Rosa County Emergency Management, currently works for the school board, and lives in a subdivision which has been subject to flooding.

Randy Jorgenson moved for SAFER Santa Rosa to replace the United Way and the appointment of Daniel Hahn to the LMS Steering Committee. Karen Thornhill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Localized Drainage Concern Reports.** Two packets were provided with information gathered through the LMS initiative intake process. Jared Lowe provided a summary (attached) of the information packets, noting that each contains an overview of the drainage concern issues and communication between various Santa Rosa County employees and the affected residents. The goal of the discussion is to determine whether the LMS finds the proposed projects feasible enough to add to the LMS mitigation initiative list.

Sheila Fitzgerald clarified that, in determining whether to move a proposed project through the mitigation initiative development process, the LMS should consider the feasibility of a solution which would mitigate the issue. Unfortunately, she explained, at this point in the process there is rarely a completely engineered solution. Therefore, the LMS would need to rely on SRC Engineering and Public Works knowledge present on the Task Force to determine a baseline
level of project feasibility. Mrs. Fitzgerald asked SRC Public Works and Engineering staff to identify any additional information they feel may be required to determine feasibility.

*Fox Den / Prytania Circle.* Glenn Bailey explained the Fox Den subdivision had been built prior to 1997 and, consequently, there is a significant lack of infrastructure. The area has a high water-table most of the year, and the infrastructure which does exist consists of small-diameter piping. The piping is easily overwhelmed and drains into a pond which is not county-maintained. Therefore, SRC is limited in what staff can do to prevent the nuisance (and limited structural flooding) at this location.

Stephen Furman added that the pond area is a natural wetland area and it is owned by multiple parties. To have any appreciable effect on flooding around Prytania Circle, Mr. Furman explained that drainage would need to be improved across the property owned by Walmart to the south. Further, obtaining environmental permits to improve the wetland area would pose a significant challenge.

Mrs. Fitzgerald suggested an alternative solution would be acquisition or elevation of the three properties regularly experiencing flooding on Prytania Circle. Unfortunately, none of these properties are currently designated by FEMA as Severe Repetitive Loss properties, and, as such, obtaining grant funding for acquisition or elevation does not seem like a possibility.

Pamela Prestridge, a resident from an affected property on Prytania Circle, added that regular clearing of the limited, existing drainage infrastructure has helped significantly in reducing the amount of time it takes water to recede following a rain event. Ms. Prestridge questioned whether larger drainage pipes could be utilized in the area. Mr. Furman explained that, unfortunately, even larger drainage pipes would be no better than the existing piping because of water backing up from the wetland area. The ultimate solution is working to improve the wetland, but environmental concerns would, again, be difficult to overcome. Mr. Furman stated SRC Public Works would continue to work towards keeping existing stormwater infrastructure clear so it can function as well as possible.

Mr. Furman suggested keeping this project and other, similar projects, on a list for future funding would be beneficial. However, funding has not been available due to unfavorable cost-benefit analyses. Mrs. Fitzgerald clarified that the LMS Task Force can move this project through the scoring and development process, but it will not be highly ranked on the initiative list because we simply lack technical information at this time. She suggested a project like this could perhaps be included in a planning project or engineering study to help determine how to prioritize areas like Fox Den where drainage is certainly an issue, but it does not rise to the level of some higher priority drainage infrastructure projects. There was much discussion about whether a stormwater study would be prudent, given the upfront cost of a study could be put towards funding projects where the feasibility is already understood. Commissioner Piech suggested SRC Engineering and Public Works look at what it would cost to study Fox Den and similar, nearby drainage concern areas. Then, the county can look at either moving forward with
feasibility/engineering studies or determine it’s more economical to continue cleaning and maintaining the existing stormwater infrastructure.

Mrs. Fitzgerald recommended moving forward with the scoring and initiative development process since having a project on the initiative list affords it a measure of higher importance. LMS staff support will begin the review and scoring process and then bring the results to the LMS Task Force for approval and inclusion on the initiative listing.

2270 Duncan Ridge Dr. Glenn Bailey described investigating repetitive yard flooding in the Duncan Ridge Drive area. He reported the area has a high water table, and an adjacent wetland is often full of water draining from the surrounding residences. Mr. Bailey checked culverts and outfalls in surrounding area and determined beaver activity in the wetland area is the most likely source of the drainage and flooding issues.

Mr. Furman stated that SRC Public works has no ability to perform maintenance on the private property where the wetland is currently experiencing drainage issues caused by beaver activity. SRC Public Works has provided affected homeowners with contact information for a beaver trapper. Commissioner Piech said he also met with the homeowners, and the latest he heard was that the owner of the wetland is cooperating with homeowners so a beaver trapper can access the private land and remedy the problem. The impacted properties are elevated appropriately, and SRC Public Works has and will continue to ensure all county-maintained infrastructure in the area is functioning properly.

Since property owners are working on a remedy and SRC can do nothing about flooding issues caused by action or inaction on private property, the Task Force will not be moving forward with this project. Commissioner Piech will provide an update of the situation during the January LMS meeting.

6. **LMS Plan Update Schedule.** Sheila Fitzgerald presented a slideshow (attached) and outlined the Local Mitigation Strategy plan update. The LMS plan needs to be updated every five years and is a requirement to receive federal mitigation grant funding. The current plan expires in 2021, and the 18-month update process will begin in January. The updated plan must go to the Florida Division of Emergency Management six months before expiration for review, and then the plan must be approved by FEMA. The process has historically been led by county staff with input from the LMS Task Force and active participation from each jurisdiction. There will also be participation required from residents, local nonprofits, and non-governmental stakeholders. Special LMS meetings may be required throughout the update process. LMS support staff will provide a more detailed schedule during the January LMS meeting.

7. **2020 LMS Task Force Meeting Schedule.** Meetings will be held in the Public Services conference room at 1:30 PM on the following dates:

   January 23
April 23  
July 23  
October 22  

Special meetings and/or changes will be communicated via email.

8. **Old Business – Resident Steering Committee Member.** The LMS Task Force is still in need of resident representation on the Steering Committee. Members were encouraged to identify residents with knowledge of the county and experience with flooding or hazard mitigation.

9. **Other Business and Public Comments.** Mrs. Fitzgerald gave an update on the Metron Estates drainage project. The Grants and Special Programs Department will recommend the BOCC move forward with the right-of-way acquisition phase, and staff will also be submitting a Flood Mitigation Assistance grant application for the Metron Estates project. Additionally, there will be scope changes for the Ranchettes drainage project, as there are difficulties in acquiring all easements needed to move forward. The Settlers Colony Expansion project was grant additional time for completion and should be finished by late December or early January. The Venetian Way project is on-going and should be completed soon.

Stephen Furman announced that Public Works has sand and sandbag filling equipment available for potential tropical storm impacts in Santa Rosa County.

10. **Next Meeting and Adjournment.** The next meeting will be January 23, 2020 at 1:30 PM. Mr. Seib adjourned the meeting at 2:30 PM.