

Environmental Restoration Work Group for the Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan MINUTES

Date: October 27, 2010

Time: 2:00 pm.

Location: Pinellas County Public Works Conference Room

Attendees: Joe Fernandez, PC Utilities, Teri Hasbrouck, PC Community Development, Peter Hessling, PC Air Quality, Steve Harper, PC Environmental, Brooker Creek, Suzanne Cooper, TBRPC, Mike Cooksey, PC EMS/Fire, Public Safety, Ed Sherwood, TBEP, Steve Lang, United States Coast Guard, Doug Meyer, PC Emergency Management, Gayle Guidash, Department of Health, Randy Runnels, Department of Environmental Protection, Andy Squires, PC Environmental, Bob Powell, PC Utilities, Terrie Weeks, Seacoast Sierra Club, Kelli H. Levy, PC Environmental, Brian Smith, Dir, PC Planning, Ann Paul, Audubon Society, Liz Freeman, PC Planning, Ryan Brinson, PC Planning, Betti Johnson, TBRPC

I. Welcome and Introductions – Brian Smith, with the Pinellas County Planning Department chaired the meeting and welcomed all to the first Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP) Environmental Work Group. Introductions from those in attendance followed.

II. Overview of the PDRP – Mr. Smith provide a short overview of the PDRP project, and then the video “Building Back- Stronger, Safer, Better” was shown which highlighted the overall purpose/intent of the Plan, and each work group’s individual role in developing comprehensive long term strategies. After the video was shown, a brief description of the website (<http://www.postdisasterplan.org>) was discussed where the video, meeting notes, agendas, future activities, and additional information can be viewed that relate to long term post disaster planning. It was also pointed out that the website can be accessed from the Pinellas County Planning Department’s website. Betti Johnson, with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, provided a status report regarding the other seven PDRP sub-work groups that are involved and discussed future coordination efforts, as there may be some overlapping of issues and other linkages between work groups. The seven other work groups are: Land Use and Housing, Infrastructure Restoration, Health and Human Services, Construction and Permitting, Economic Redevelopment, Financial Management, and Public Information.

III. Table-top Exercise – Ms. Johnson pointed out that the development of PDRP has a two-year project timeframe. The content of the PDRP needs to be scalable and adaptive, intended to be used in minor and major emergencies and catastrophic events. Next, she discussed the components of the Disaster Cycle and described the 3 main phases of emergency management. The first phase, emergency response, includes search and rescue, immediate roadway debris clearance, and establishing supply distribution facilities. The next phase, short term recovery, includes damage assessment, infrastructure utility restoration (power, potable/waste-water), debris management, and setting up disaster recovery centers and emergency permitting stations. The last phase, long term recovery, includes three major components: reconstruction, holistic long-term recovery, and community enhancement.

The meeting then transitioned into the SWOT Analysis/Exercise which was an open discussion on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the County's existing infrastructure. For a list of the items identified in the exercise, please visit the website under Environmental Restoration SWOT Analysis. Discussion ensued about similarities between neighboring County PDRPs.

Brady Smith, with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, presented two large color maps of the County depicting the potential storm surge inundation areas and environmental lands. The first map identified important environmental resources including managed lands, seagrass and mangroves and parks over an aerial view. The second presented those lands and storm surge vulnerability. The data for this map was provided by the Pinellas County Planning Department using the TBRPC storm tide atlas.

A table top exercise/ discussion began using the Project Phoenix, a catastrophic category 5 Hurricane scenario, to begin to identify the major environmental issues that Pinellas County would face. Each issue was discussed using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis. Major resource gaps were identified as the discussion progressed. A copy of the SWOT Analysis is attached. Additional comments are listed below:

- There are basically two focus areas: (1) Public Health and (2) Environmental restoration “green issues”
- Strategies or Actions would involve ordinances and permitting procedures as well as policy issues.
- If the goal is ultimately a “countywide” plan then coordination with all municipalities is essential and a challenge.
- Current removal of coastal vegetation is a threat. Now, as well as in the post-environmental environment, more public education is necessary to explain the role of mangroves and coastal vegetation.
- Marina Placement/ Replacement – Pinellas County has the highest rate of “Cleanest Marinas”. We need to encourage this voluntary program which includes disaster training
- Need more education on small quantity generators
- Need to work with DEP regarding fuel storage (above and below ground tanks) to prevent further contaminated sites.
- Need to review the Debris Management Plan and address both removal and disposal.
- Need to identify what needs to be done first and fast and then what needs to follow.
- Pre-testing and post-testing for contamination
- Dr. Randy Runnels suggested members view a 2006 PBS Special “Still in Harm’s Way”, a 20 minute episode which highlighted the reconstruction following devastating Hurricane Ivan in the Florida Panhandle.

Ms. Johnson stated that the meeting minutes, the video (Still in Harm’s Way) and draft goals/strategies will be on the website by November 5th. The next meeting will be scheduled after the Thanksgiving Holidays.

IV. Next Steps – Ms. Johnson concluded the meeting by identifying the next four tasks that need to be completed. At the next meeting the group will: prioritize the SWOT Analysis/Exercise issues, discuss what group/agency is assigned to address the issues, establish a timeframe to address/complete the issues, and set group or agency milestones of achievement.

V.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.