**City of Myrtle Beach Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Hazard Mitigation Committee Meeting #1: Kickoff and Hazards**

**May 27, 2:00PM to 4:00PM**

**Virtual WebEx**

Emily Hardee, Floodplain Manager for the City of Myrtle Beach welcomed everyone and then turned the meeting over to the project consultant, Atkins. Two members of the Atkins’ team, Margaret Walton and Ryan Wiedenman, were leading the WebEx meeting.

Margaret Walton, Project Manager from Atkins, shared the agenda and addressed the two documents of the public participation survey and capability assessment that were sent out prior to the meeting. She then introduced herself and colleague and reacquainted with members of the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee that had worked together previously.

Ms. Walton then began providing a mitigation overview on exactly what the word mitigation means and what funding resources are available with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. She also provided a few examples of mitigation and explained how Federal legislation requires local governments to have a hazard mitigation plan in place to remain eligible for federal mitigation grants such as the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program so there is funding to implement some of the actions that this plan may identify. Ms. Walton then laid out all of the major steps of the mitigation plan update, including the planning process, the risk assessment, the capability assessment, and the mitigation strategy. She further explained at a high-level what tasks would be carried out to complete each major step.

Ms. Walton then discussed the key objectives of the project of updating the plan, maintaining mitigation funding and grant eligibility, identifying potential projects, increasing public education and awareness, maintaining state and federal requirements along with maintaining the City’s current CRS status. She also shared the listing of the members of the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee. Following that, Ms. Walton took the time to explain the Community Rating System (CRS) and how it benefits the City. She discussed how this plan merges the mitigation strategy and floodplain management and continued to where the potential opportunities are for the City to gain more points within the CRS program. The meeting schedule was also shared.

Ms. Walton then described each part of the process and what it entailed. The planning process is intended to convene the Planning Committee, assist in data collection and analysis, foster public participation and outreach and prepare the plan for submission.

The discussion on the risk assessment was opened with outline of the components of the risk assessment and a reminder of the hazards that are addressed in the current version of the Parish’s hazard mitigation plan. Attendees were asked to review the list of existing hazards and ensure that all of the hazards were still applicable and to be sure that none had been missed that should be included in the current update of the plan. Ms. Walton noted that pandemic or infectious disease might be included in the man-made hazards but was not required. Generally, all committee members agreed that given the current global situation that it should be included. Committee Member, Matt Tumbleson of Grand Strand Regional Hospital, stated that he had a regional hazard vulnerability assessment that he could share with the project team. Mass casualty and large gatherings were also noted as potential hazards. A member of the committee, Allison Hardin, also pointed out that the hazard of nor’easter might be less of a risk now given that there have not been any recent occurrences.

Next on the list of project tasks was the capability assessment which Ms. Walton described and explained. She then moved into an activity to review the current capability assessment collectively with the Committee and gain any updates. It was determined that the City now has a Flood Response Plan as well as Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). It was also noted that the City has been evaluating the process of developing a Threat and Hazards Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA). Another committee member mentioned that the City received a grant to work on a recovery planning effort as well for the City to flesh out the Recovery Support Functions (RSF).

Ms. Walton moved onto the mitigation strategy portion of the project and outlined the mitigation categories and share some of the mitigation actions in the current version of the plan. She continued by discussed the requirements of plan maintenance and documentation.

Ms. Walton then explained how public comment and participation are a required part of this process. A public survey was developed that the City has placed on the City’s website, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Next Door. It will also be posted hazard mitigation plan update 2020 website. The link can be shared electronically, and the attendees were asked to post the link and encourage participation.

Ms. Walton then turned the meeting over to Mr. Wiedenman to guide the committee through an activity which involved identifying locations of existing and future flooding. Attendees were asked to examine a City map that was presented and provide information on the locations where flooding has been an issue or may become an issue in the future. Various questions were shared on the presentation for the Committee members to think through while identifying the locations:

* Has the area experienced past flooding or is it an area of future risk or is it both?
* How often does it flood?
* How severe is the flooding?
* What is the source?
* What is the cause?
* Is it an area where flooding is likely to get worse due to floodplain development, watershed development, or sea level rise?
* Are there dams/levees in the community that would cause flooding if they failed?
* Are there existing studies or other information available on these problem areas?

The Public Works Department committee member, John Johnson, then shared that their department had already identified some specific locations and were working on the mitigation of them. Two other committee members shared that the City had gone through an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assessment in 2017 of which they did a mapping effort of flooding locations as well as public engagement and outreach to gain valuable input on the mapping and identification of the flooding sites.

Ms. Allison Hardin from the Planning Department stated that she had all the materials from that assessment and would make them available to the project team.

Finally, Mr. Wiedenman discussed the roles and responsibilities of all the parties involved as well as the next steps for the process. He identified the date of the next meeting which was the public meeting to be held virtually on June 3 and asked the attendees to push out information on public involvement to the public.

Mr. Wiedenman then adjourned the meeting.