

MINUTES OF THE COLLIER COUNTY  
FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Naples, Florida, August 8, 2023

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Collier County Floodplain Management Planning Committee (FMPC) in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 9:00 A.M. in REGULAR SESSION at the Collier County Growth Management Community Development Department, Conference Room #609/610, 2800 N. Horseshoe Drive, Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

Chairman: Eric Johnson, County LDC Planning Mgr. (excused)  
Co-Chairman: William Lang, Community Planning & Resiliency  
Robert Borta, City of Naples  
Kelli DeFedericis, City of Marco Island  
Terry Smallwood, Everglades City (excused)  
Stan Chrzanowski, public  
Duke Vasey, public  
Amy Ernst, public  
Ned Miller, public  
Jennifer Schmidt, Community Planning & Resiliency  
Linda Orlich, public  
Paul Shea, public  
Kenneth Bills, public (excused)

ALSO PRESENT:

Howard Critchfield, Resiliency Engineering Manager, Community Planning & Resiliency

*Any persons in need of the verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the audio recording from the Collier County Growth Management Department.*

**Call to Order - Chairman**

**Co-Chairman Lang** called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. A quorum consisting of 10 members was present.

***Co-Chairman Lang introduced himself and told the committee:***

- Eric Johnson, LDC Planning Manager is the chairman, and he (William Lang) is currently co-chair.
- In mid-June, he moved from Emergency Management to Growth Management, where he worked for about six years, from 2012 to 2018, in Floodplain Management. After that, he spent a little over five years in Collier County Emergency Management.
- He's now back in a newly formed division, Community Planning & Resiliency Division, under director Chris Mason.
- Chris Mason was the staff liaison for FMPC for several years and the CRS coordinator.
- The Community Planning & Resiliency Division is under Comp Planning and is on the east side of this building.
- This advisory committee works under the direction of the County Manager's Office, which is unique.
- He (William Lang) was the chairman for the Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group, which is a different subset. (He provided handouts on that group.) He also was the only Emergency Management FMPC Staff Liaison due to the prior EM FMPC Alternate Staff Liaison, Rick Zyvoloski, retiring this past March.
- He (William Lang) has asked the County Manager's Office for guidance on him holding the FMPC co-chair role while also holding the EM-FMPC staff liaison position. The issue is that the resolution for this committee says the chair and co-chair will be county staff, so he's looking for guidance on whether that's allowed. Apart from changing the resolution, he hopes they can come to an agreement with the County Manager's Office to allow someone from one of the municipalities to hold the co-chair position in the future or be an alternate.
- We held a meeting on July 21 for the Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group and he nominated Kelly DeFedericis as co-chair for the LMS Working Group.

**Co-Chairman Lang** conducted the roll call and members introduced themselves.

**Mr. Vasey** said he's been a member since 2006, is the committee parliamentarian, an ecologist and wetlands specialist.

**Mr. Chrzanowski** said that in 2006, then-County Manager Jim Mudd told him he had to be on this committee, which he left for a while and then returned.

**Ms. Orlich** said she's a Grayhawk (at the Golf Club of the Everglades) HOA board member and represents the public on the FMPC.

**Ms. DeFedericis** said she's the City of Marco Island floodplain coordinator and has been with the city for almost eight years.

**Mr. Dorta** said he's the City of Naples floodplain coordinator.

**Ms. Schmidt** said she just started as a new coordinator with Collier County Emergency Management.

**Mr. Miller** said he's been a member for about five years and represents the public.

**Ms. Ernst** said she's newly appointed, moved to Naples four years ago and is currently on the Royal Palm Gulf Estates HOA board.

**Mr. Shea** said he's a new member, has been a full-time resident for 10 years and is a member of the County Planning Commission. He took Stan's slot when he retired.

**1. Approval of Minutes  
May 2, 2023**

*Mr. Vasey made a motion to approve the May 2, 2023, meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Chrzanowski. The motion passed unanimously, 10-0.*

**2. Approval of new FMPC members**  
**a. William Lang, FMPC Staff Liaison**  
**b. Amy Ernst**  
**c. Paul Shea**  
**d. Dan Summers, CCEM Primary**  
**e. Jennifer Schmidt, CCEM alternate**  
**f. Robert Dorta, City of Naples**

**Co-Chairman Lang** said he'll get clarification on his co-chair role. He would vote for Jennifer Schmidt to be co-chair, but she's new, so she's taking in a lot of information. She did site visits yesterday with operations lead Mike Shaw at Emergency Management and they were looking at a lot of the damaged areas from hurricanes Irma and Ian, so she's getting acclimated. He's currently holding both positions as FMPC Co-Chair and FMPC Staff Liaison. Dan Summers is being nominated as the EM FMPC Liaison (primary) and Jennifer Schmidt is being nominated as the alternate EM FMPC Liaison.

*William Lang moved to continue to hold both the FMPC co-chair and FMPC staff liaison positions until further guidance is provided by the County Manager's Office. Mr. Vasey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 10-0.*

*Mr. Vasey moved to formally accept the Board of County Commissioners' appointments of Amy Ernst, Paul Shea, Robert Dorta, Dan Summers as the CCEM primary and Jennifer Schmidt as CCEM alternate. Second by Mr. Miller. The motion passed unanimously 10-0.*

**3. Hurricane Ian Recovery & Status Update (FEMAA/FDEM Direct Housing)**

*Co-Chairman Lang detailed a PowerPoint presentation and provided an update as of July 27:*

- Our biweekly meeting with FEMA and Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) is later this week.
- 38 households were approved for direct housing.
- FEMA and FDEM are running a non-congregate sheltering mission simultaneously for travel trailers and authorized lots.
- There are different programs under FEMA, not just travel trailers.
- We have a direct lease with group sites and a multi-lease repair program pertaining to Mr. Dorta's jurisdiction in the City of Naples. Two apartment complexes, Jade at Olde Naples and Stillwater Cove, are going through that now. They had storm-surge inundation on the first floor, and they moved residents out to repair them. Residents are slowly returning as they're repaired.
- We contracted four mobile home units.
- Par Four is the only group site in unincorporated Collier County and it's close to the City of Naples. That site is the only one that's been filled.
- FDEM non-congregate sheltering totals 29 issued countywide, two pending, five replacements in progress, 22 trailers installed, and 23 licensed.
- 17 people withdrew overall.

- The primary focus is 22 or 23.
- Out of 258 that started in the state program, 220 canceled, a significant number. They may have found housing alternatives through FEMA or a temporary boarding room.
- The state program is shorter than FEMA's program. They're going to stop overall state operations in early 2024. In mid-2024, FEMA's mission will wrap up.
- The state finished all available applications and shut that down. They were looking at having everyone pending with a valid application placed by July 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Two mobile home park commercial locations have temporary units, Harmony Shores and Palm River Village, which have the same owner. Harmony Shores wasn't feasible, but Palm River secured units. They have 26 total lots available and only six have been licensed, with 20 still open, so they still have some availability.

**Ms. Defedericis** asked if he was going to get data on the determination for those to provide residents with guidance in the future about what qualified in the past, or is this data protected? Can you provide information on why one person qualified and another didn't?

***Co-Chairman Lang responded and told the FMPC:***

- He believes they would not but had the same discussion with the Disaster Recovery Center when they were here, but it was related to Group Flood Insurance policies, not housing.
- Group Flood Insurance Policies are provided to disaster survivors who get money from FEMA and then need a flood insurance policy in perpetuity on that structure.
- For the first three years after money is provided, FEMA will provide a discounted flood policy code of Group Flood Insurance Policy, with a caveat that you must obtain flood insurance after that. If you don't, that structure is no longer eligible for Disaster Assistance moving forward.
- There were a lot of people after Hurricane Irma who didn't renew flood insurance policies or sold their property. They didn't disclose that or didn't understand the process and when people applied for Disaster Assistance, they were denied because they didn't have an active flood insurance policy under those rules.
- We need to know where those properties are so we can get ahead of that before another event. He requested that information from FEMA's regional office in Atlanta. FEMA said they'd love to provide it, but FEMA headquarters doesn't give it to them. That's alarming.
- He discussed this with a flood insurance specialist at the Disaster Recovery Center and he said the county can do a Freedom of Information Act request for everyone who received Individual Assistance through Hurricane Ian.
- That won't specifically provide that information but would give us a starting point. However, FOIA requests take a long time, maybe 1-3 years, depending on the amount of data and you won't get a clean file.

**Mr. Vasey** asked for his recommendation.

**Ms. Defedericis** noted that there were only 24-26 lots that were secure, so they could ask what made those 26 lots secure. Why did those applicants get chosen? Was it because of age or a disability? We'd know if someone came in to ask us. We could create a checklist to show why others qualified, to compare and contrast.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

- Those sites are hard to find because Florida is a property-owner state.
- A decision is often made before FEMA hits the ground. FEMA comes in right after the county and cities do a damage assessment. FEMA starts its DSA, Disaster Survivor

Assistance teams, which canvas on foot. They try to provide resources in the field because residents are in a calamity. That's the extent of FEMA.

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers arrives before FEMA to look for empty sites with existing lots. The reason why varies. It's often for mobile home or travel trailer locations because property management companies rotate in and out of locations. Most want to revamp a park, so there are ongoing issues.
- They want to determine what lots are available and what parks are willing to do, such as a contract with the state and feds.
- It would be nice to see how many are willing to enter pre-season agreements. There's usually a competing interest for them to make a profit, so they don't want to commit to anything and say they don't have anything available.
- It would be good to find predesignated dumping spots and create a checklist.
- The county can look into historical challenges with FEMA and how to improve them.
- The county allows units on damaged property for a disaster survivor, but FEMA wrongly permitted one in Naples Park, so the county is dealing with that.
- Adding a temporary unit involves hooking up to plumbing and electric, etc.
- Lee County seems to require more than Collier County for temporary housing.
- Could the county use Paradise Coast Sports Complex or other sites as temporary housing sites after a hurricane? There are a lot of existing agreements for staging there.

**Mr. Shea** asked what the group's charter is and noted that he hadn't seen much of this written anywhere.

**Co-Chairman Lang** said FMPC's overall intent is to update the Floodplain Management Plan, which is a requirement due to the number of Collier County's repetitive loss and severe Repetitive Loss Properties, at least in unincorporated Collier County and the cities. They are directly correlated to the county's participation in the National Flood Insurance program, Community Rating System (CRS) and our overall discount rating.

*A discussion ensued and the following points were made:*

- This committee has Community Rating Standards, a fairly large book, and we provide many functions, including where credits come from for the insurance rating.
- The issue might not be in the CRS manual and is outside the FMPC, but it could recommend that a structure be created and that the county look at this issue.
- Kelly Defedericis, Bob Dorta and (Resiliency Engineering Manager Howard) Critchfield participate in a Southwest Community Rating System user group and sometimes write white papers to make recommendations.
- The end result is mitigation for Repetitive Loss Properties.
- The five mission areas of emergency management are: prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.

#### **4. 07/07/2023 Release of New 2022 Edition FEMA Elevation Certificate**

**Co-Chairman Lang detailed a PowerPoint presentation and reported that:**

- This is technically not a FEMA document. It belongs to the federal Office of Management & Budget (OMB).
- This is the document that is completed by land surveyors to indicate the elevations of a structure, either at conceptual phase, under construction and finished construction.
- A large majority of the county is in the special Flood Hazard Area, so we process more than 2,000 yearly.

- Most communities don't produce, review or approve that many, but we receive updates on this document. The last time we received updates was in 2015 and 2019.
- FEMA and OMB don't provide a grace period. They spring it on us. The difference between this one and other updates in the last 10 years is that FEMA would say you don't have a grace period and we would say we do. We're still going to do a local grace period for our land surveying community so they can get acclimated to the new fields and values and some of the requirements for this document.

**Ms. DeFedericis** noted that's because we may have to go out and get information we don't have.

***Co-Chairman Lang continued his PowerPoint presentation and reported that:***

- What happened differently this time is we have an auditor that works on behalf of FEMA who audits our CRS (Community Rating System) program. That auditor was ISO (International Organization for Standardization) verified.
- They released this on July 7, so he, Kelli and Bob were discussing a grace period, but after that meeting, we received an e-mail from ISO saying that if we didn't implement this immediately, we'd be out of compliance on our audit, so we had to scramble to notify the surveying community.
- We told the surveying community that if they'd submitted any finished construction elevation certificates in the old format on or after July 7th, they'd have to resubmit via the new Elevation Certificate Form
- They've been compliant, but this document has a lot of issues.
- Section B includes flood map information.
- B12 covers if the building is located in a Coastal Barrier Resource Area (CBRA) or other protected area. Those two areas are from acts that took into effect in 1982 CBRA and the OPA Act of 1990, which says these are environmentally sensitive areas that we discourage development on. If you develop in these areas, you will not be eligible for FEMA flood insurance or FEMA disaster assistance.
- There are many of these areas on coastal portions of the county, including Isles of Capri, areas of Keewaydin Island and northern portions of north Naples.
- The Isles of Collier Preserve is developing south of U.S. 41 and west of 951. We just had insurance agents tell us these areas were removed from the Special Flood Hazard Area due to a Letter of Map Change and they can't write flood policies. No one can write policies in those zones. We looked up the lots in the CBRA zone to find property owners and insurance agents that private flood insurance is the only option.
- We don't currently have a LiMWA (Limit of Moderate Wave Action) in our community on our countywide flood map, including Marco Island or the City of Naples, but we will in our preliminary flood map product that was released in 2019.
- We had map meetings in 2020 and then COVID happened.
- We have six months after our Letter of Final Determination to adopt our Coastal Flood Map. We're supposed to get notification today. Once that's in effect, there will be a delineation area between the VE Zone and the AE Zone.
- VE Zones are where wave heights are expected to be 3 feet or more.
- An AE Zone is the opposite, where wave heights are expected to be less than 3 feet high. It's subject to flooding by the base or 1% annual chance (100-year) flood.
- In VE Zones, you cannot build anything below Base-Flood Elevation without breakaway walls. You cannot have utilities below base flood elevation. You usually see a home with breakaway walls with flood openings if it's in a VE zone, if it's new construction or it's

got some type of lattice underneath. All the utilities, if it's in compliance, are elevated for the first living floor.

- In AE Zones, it's the opposite. You can have an enclosed area below Base-Flood Elevation. You just need flood openings, and you can have full foundation walls. You can't have utilities below Base-Flood Elevation, but you can't enclose those areas with flood openings.
- Once LiMWA takes effect, any AE structure that's within that LiMWA boundary between VE and AE has to build to the VE standard, so that will be a surprise to many.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

- There's a Florida Building Code exception. Bonita Springs is in the process of doing that and Marco Island is considering it.
- You can get flood insurance and the structure will still be treated as an AE structure, but it has to be built differently if it doesn't have that exemption.
- The Base-Flood Elevation is established through the local digital Flood Insurance Rate Map, but the provisions for construction are in the Florida Building Code, which detail what the Coastal High Hazard Area provisions require.
- You can download the CBRS Mapper to view OPA and COBRA information. The viewer is a U.S. Fish & Wildlife product.
- The new Elevation Certificate instructions are attached to the pages, so it's 19 pages.
- It's submitted electronically and must be signed digitally; it's required for any structure within the Flood Hazard Area.
- This document is used for regulation purposes and historically was a guiding document to write a flood insurance policy through the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Now the elevation certificate is not required for a flood insurance quote, but it helps across-the-board. Premiums tend to go down.
- If you buy a house, there are boundary surveys, plot plans, spot surveys and as-built surveys. Many of these surveys are aerials drawn by a surveyor, and may reference a structure's elevations, but the Elevation Certificate is the only survey document that is accepted by an insurance company for the purposes of writing a flood insurance policy.
- This is the official document for the building permit requirement at the end of construction.
- Ms. Defedericis said she requires elevation certificates when applying for a permit and for plan reviews. That's been required since 1979. The finished floor doesn't change. Improvements can be added. It was two pages and now it's 19.
- Most of Collier County is a flood area, unlike other counties.
- Ms. Defedericis has to submit all 139 that she received last year from FEMA.
- She believes FEMA was wrong. Anything small will reduce the audit score. She strives for a 100 score but got 99; Collier got 100.
- The county submits 2,000+ if they have a CRS elevation certificate and FEMA samples 200.
- It's an important document.

**5. Collier County Local Mitigation Strategy Update**

***Co-Chairman Lang detailed a PowerPoint presentation and reported that:***

- This is a mechanism to mitigate Repetitive Loss Properties. It isn't friendly but can be done.
- The Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) plan was formulated around 2006 in Collier County.
- In the mid-2000s, FEMA said if they were going to provide grant opportunities to communities, they needed a group that reviews all projects before they go to the state level. That was the birth of the LMS Working Groups (LMSWG).

- He's the chairman and Chris Mason is the co-chair. We look at three types of grants in two categories. The disaster grant is called the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMPG). That's a large amount of money given to a community due to a specific disaster in a very short period of time.
- The notice of funding availability for the grants is generally open for 90 days. For Hurricane Ian, we got \$36 million. Charlotte County initially got about \$88 million, and Lee County received \$200- \$250 million, but that amount has risen.
- The other grants that we look at are non-disaster grants, which are annual competitive grants. That includes building resiliency, infrastructure, community grant or BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) fund grants.
- For Repetitive Loss Properties, FEMA offers FMA (Flood Mitigation Assistance) annual competitive grants with a 75% federal, 25% local cost match. For FMA, if it's a Repetitive Loss Property, it's a 90/10 cost split with the federal government. You only have to contribute 10%. If it involves a severe Repetitive Loss Property, it's a zero/100 cost split with the federal government, so you don't technically have to pay anything.
- But all these grants are reimbursable, so you must pay the money up front to get reimbursed for the grant deliverables.
- The notice of funding availability for HMGP (Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) for Hurricane Ian was announced in late February and was to be open until May, but they extended the deadline to August 29, so it will close in a couple of weeks.
- Five initial projects arrived. We categorized these with an "early bird discount" and we locked these in place. When someone comes to the LMS Group, they present a project, we approve it, or we kick it back with some questions. If they're approved, we put them on the county's Project Priority List (PPL) and we rank them. We have about 56 properties on the PPL, but we continually rank them until we get to an end point, which is the end of the Notice of Funding Availability deadline in August.
- Two projects marked in red. The City of Marco Island had a utilities project, but the LCEC immediately rectified its cooperatives infrastructure. The city of Naples' utilities building was damaged by storm surge. At the LMSG meeting, we said if they moved forward, they'd have to address wind mitigation, as well as flood mitigation. Naples discussed it with the state and the state asked for their flood mitigation measures. We determined that it was not going to be feasible based on the level of damage to the building, so it was removed from the list.
- Up until the last project, the LCEC Carnestown looping transmission project, we are in the positive at \$9 million. We had a meeting on July 21 and there's an opportunity to have a special meeting before the end of August if we have some projects that are interested.
- Once we move forward and this is the finalized list, LCEC will put us into the negative and then all the remaining money in the state that went to all the other counties that doesn't get used goes into a big pot of money and LCEC should be able to tap into that for additional monies.
- When LCEC came to us and said we have a \$27 million project, we said they'd have to be last on the list because they can't take all of our \$36 million and they agreed. That was very gracious of them.

**Mr. Shea** said it would be helpful to have a list of acronyms.

**Co-Chairman Lang** apologized and said to ask if he says something he doesn't know.



**Ms. Ernst** asked about mobile generators for lift stations.

**Ms. Defedericis** said Marco qualified for HMPG (Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) grants and bought generators.

**Co-Chairman Lang** noted generators are usually part of a larger project, most are stationary and mobile generators usually support lift stations. Collier County purchased about 58 through grants but a caveat was that they must store them in a non-flood zone when they're not in use. Most have to be included in part of a wind or flood mitigation action.

**Ms. Ernst** said her community has a lift station and had to hire outside contractors to come in after the hurricane. Does a community have to contract out for that?

*A discussion ensued and the following points were made:*

- Mr. Shea said his community has seven and the county maintains them.
- Ms. Ernst said her HOA maintains theirs. The community was just turned over to homeowners.
- Co-Chairman Lang said the mobile generators on that list are Port of the Isles, which is a Community Improvement District (CID). It received mobile generators and qualified through the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program, which helps qualified non-profits.
- State or local government, or a qualified non-profit, or an Indian tribal territory. Port of the Isles is a Community Improvement District (CID). They provide their own utilities and maintain a list of assets in their community. They also had to adopt our Local Mitigation Strategy. That held them up.
- To determine if you're a private non-profit, you must be a 501(c) 3, d or e through the IRS. That's the initial qualifier as a nonprofit. After that, you must undergo the arduous task of justifying that you have a qualified facility within your boundaries that would qualify you as a private nonprofit.
- The county used to automatically want all lift stations, but then realized that dead-end lift stations had no advantage to being accepted. The ones that are in line, lift stations or repump facilities, are all county because they figure that people upstream need service, so the county took them over. If you're in an area that's less than 30 years old it's a dead-end, it's probably a private lift station.
- Public Utilities has a list of lift stations on telemetry, but private lift stations are all oral under contract and are overseen by the Stormwater Division.
- The most efficient way to handle lift stations is to pay attention to maintenance.
- Ian damage is not included on this list. Numbers will come from Florida division of Emergency Management Mitigation Bureau.
- The City of Marco Island Fire Chief has mastered HMGP and is very good at getting funding for the island.

## 6. Mitigation Actions Update

*Co-Chairman Lang detailed the status of the actions:*

- **Action ID 1.2.** Review the Land Development Code and the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to propose improvements regarding floodplain management. In early September 2022, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM)/State Floodplain Management Office (SFMO) Ordinance Consultant, Rebecca Quinn, worked with staff to update flood provisions in the county Land Development Code and Code of Ordinances. She determined we had repetitive items in our LDC that already were in Chapter 62, our local flood ordinance. The intent is to remove outdated or repetitive language. We're working with the chair of this group, LDC Manager Eric Johnson to get items stricken if they no longer need to be there. If anything needs to be consolidated into Chapter 62, we're

working on that. That will need to go to the Planning Commission and once we have a finalized version of the changes, it will go to the BCC for approval.

- **Action ID 4.1.** Coordinate with local real estate boards to hold all educational meetings about flood insurance. He will conduct a virtual flood symposium on August 22 with Gulfshore Insurance and Wright Flood. Outreach will be provided to NABOR and will be centered on Flood Insurance, FEMA's 50% rule, Preliminary Flood Maps and what homeowners should know about the NFIP prior to purchasing a property. They'll also have flood insurance experts there and will talk about different rating items under the new FEMA rating methodology, Risk Rating 2.0. We'll also talk about our regulatory items, including the FEMA 50% rule, how the structure value is calculated, the increased cost of compliance within a flood policy and how the Building Department can supplement that through substantial damage determinations, etc. Staff already provided in-person outreach to NABOR on June 9. Topics discussed included FEMA's Risk Rating 2.0, Preliminary Coastal Map Revision, Elevation Certificate basics, LOMCs, the 50% Rule and CRS. He noted that Ashley Tharp, who works for Wright Flood, is a wealth of knowledge and consults with on of our committees on the Florida Floodplain Managers Association. She's been really helpful in this transition period to FEMA's new writing methodology.

*[Mr. Shea asked if he could attend the meeting and Co-Chairman Lang said he'd ask.]*

- **Action ID 4.2.** Maintain active participation and communication with federal/state/local organizations and agencies to identify flood-hazard information and enhance flood hazard awareness, including building construction requirements. This involves our Coastal map update. Staff were notified that the Letter of Final Determination (LFD) is scheduled for August 8. That would say it's our final map product. FEMA mails the LFD to the Chief Executive Officer of a community to say a new or updated Flood Insurance Rate Map will be effective in six months. If the date is confirmed, the county will need to adopt the maps in early February 2024. Once that goes into effect, we'll have some changes on the coastline.

**Co-Chairman Lang** said once they're final, they need to go through local steps to authorize and adopt them.

**Ms. Defedericis** said Marco Island appealed the maps and FEMA didn't accept them because its engineer disagreed with Marco's engineer. There was nothing saying how the engineering should be done. They were sent to a third party within FEMA. That engineer found additional information that was incorrect, so they corrected our Coastal A Zone on the map so it will be different from when they were originally issued, but they didn't accept our appeal because of an engineering discrepancy. That's what the holdup has been since 2019. We don't agree with the maps, but we're getting them anyway.

**Co-Chairman Lang** said if today had been the day, the county would adopt the maps in early February 2024. If it comes soon, it will be around that time. With everything that's occurring, it's becoming Frankenstein map, especially with the coastal product coming in. We still have another physical map revision for the inland portions of the county. We're going to have another map meeting if we have to do those inland portions and it will go through a similar process.

## 7. Other Items/Committee Correspondence

**Co-Chairman Lang told the FMPC:**

- Historically, he oversaw damage assessment for the county, just like Bob and Kelli.
- The intent of damage assessment is to give the state and the feds a picture of where we are in a disaster and if we need a state declaration or a presidential declaration because

we're trying to get federal assistance – Individual Assistance (IA) for households and Public Assistance (PA) or public infrastructure. When you get those declarations, what usually follows is the Small Business Administration (SBA). IA will generally have SBA attached to it.

- Different organizations have different missions, such as providing loans.
- When a disaster occurs, it's our job in the county Building Department, the cities of Naples and Marco Island, to train and deploy teams for initial damage assistance funding. We're lucky that we all use the same software to do damage assessment, Crisis Track (Damage Assessment Software). It's rare that all communities are on the same page.
- That was instrumental during Hurricane Ian because we were able to get our numbers together to present to Emergency Management Director Dan Summers and county leadership during the hurricane.
- Initial estimates for Hurricane Ian damages totaled \$2.2 billion.
- After Hurricane Irma, the Trump administration knew it would be a catastrophe and declared it a disaster.
- The same occurred with the Biden administration and Hurricane Ian. They made IA and Public Assistance (PA) declarations.
- For fast-breaking events, we need to have everything together and deploy quickly.
- In January 2022, there were tornadoes that hit the county, some ESF (Emergency Support Function) zeroes. Two were ESF 1 or 2 that hit Lee County and destroyed a mobile home park.
- For fast-breaking events, you need to have everything together because you need to deploy out and justify damages for a state and federal declaration. Lee County wasn't able to get a federal declaration, but got state resources to help displaced homeowners.
- Traditionally, FEMA gets in a car with a subject matter expert in the area and we drive them around to the worst-hit areas to give them a good picture of why we needed that declaration.
- The joint PDAs (Preliminary Damage Assessments) have come a long way. They're often done virtually now. You must paint a picture to show the level of damage and are there associated photos.
- The Incident Action Plan is a very important document in the emergency management world. It includes numerous ICS forms, starting with 201, which he began working on in June.
- An Incident Briefing Form (ICS Form 201) details damages and is very important. The technical team, administrative employees and operating team were not on the same page, but ultimately got this room organized, which is where we report to for deployment.
- The 203 organizational assessment assignment list is very important and shows all the leadership, branches and divisions. We've identified a Crisis Track Administration Group, Crisis Track Operations and our EOC (Emergency Operations Center) support branch, which will be the staff that will represent Growth Management at the EOC during an event.
- Code Enforcement is a shelter group. They supplement shelter operations and that's their primary role. They support the shelter coordinator, Danny Fillmore, at the Emergency Operations Center.
- Every branch or division has an ICS Form 204, a work assignment document, which tells them what they need to focus on.
- The building director didn't want to use Crisis Track and wanted to use paper forms, thousands of forms collected in the field. That's OK for a backup as a contingency. He was able to go to then-deputy department head Jamie French and show him the IAP, which was briefed to them right before landfall on Friday. Hurricane Irma hit on Sunday

and they knew their roles and responsibilities. Jamie thanked him and told the building director to follow what I (Lang) say.

- He'll meet next week with the Building Department leadership to go over their roles and responsibilities. Division directors in this building will allocate staff for him to train in the Crisis Track program and to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- We'll be ready in mid-September. If we had a disaster tomorrow, he could pull use this document and they could do their jobs.

**Ms. Orlich** noted that there was a lot more damage where she lives after Hurricane Irma versus Hurricane Ian. Do we need to compile damage information about our community and transmit it to the county? We were developer owned by now we're homeowner owned and have backup systems to clear debris. Do we report that somewhere so you can have an assessment for the county?

***Co-Chairman Lang responded and reported that:***

- There's a difference between common spaces and residential units.
- Debris can be reported to Public Utilities' Solid Waste Division, which operates the landfill. Kari Ann Hodgson, an engineer, is the director. They have contracts in place with Tetra Tech for monitoring and Ash Britt Environmental, which handles debris collection.
- Gated communities must provide gate codes for access, a right of access form. The county is trying to identify every subdivision with a guard shack or that requires a gate code. That's the top priority, getting an agreement.
- He recommends getting that codified for future construction.
- There are rules about what you can and can't do with hurricane debris. Public Utilities can guide residents.
- Structural damages go through the building permit process. Residents or contractors can come in for a permit and the structure is flagged in the system.
- If the damage is 50% or greater than the value of the structure, that will be considered substantial damage.
- Self-reporting is not the best policy. If you do that, you have to come into full compliance and show your numbers.
- During Irma, the county did substantial determinations and we're still paying for it because a lot of properties wouldn't grant us access.
- FEMA is still asking us about substantial damage involving Hurricane Irma. It's been five or six years and we couldn't get access. It's not feasible.

**Ms. Defedericis** noted that FEMA can enter properties and expects the cities and county to, but we can't. We can see wind damage but can't see flood damage (internal).

**Mr. Chrzanowski** noted that licensed professional engineers and their representatives have the right to go on properties in pursuit of their duties.

***Co-Chairman Lang reported that:***

- He agreed professional engineers could enter properties, but there was a lot of hesitation by county leadership.
- We found once we did the calculations for substantial damage, many were under the 50% Rule.
- We're not going to go out on a witch hunt if we can't get into properties or no one is there.
- He went to many properties, including Plantation Island, an old fishing village from the 1970s that was flooded and is all mobile homes. We were threatened in that community, which is a very tight-knit community. Many were under 50%.

- When homeowners returned, their houses were full of mold. We said they needed to mitigate immediately, but we can't determine if the damage was from the storm or neglect from not being there immediately after the hurricane.
- The Everglades City Post Office flooded so there are no records for Post Office Boxes or addresses and they couldn't send notices to homeowners who weren't there. They came back as undeliverable.
- A lot of homeowners didn't initially want us on their properties but many were not there. Homeowners later learned what mitigation is and asked us to come back two or three years later. We told them we couldn't make that determination and they'd have to get a third party.

**Mr. Chrzanowski** said in the past he worked with engineering companies that had police accompany them to job sites.

**Co-Chairman Lang told the FMPC:**

- FEMA regulations say we can do one of two things, the building permit process or go out and do physical substantial damage determinations.
- We were short staffed when we did those and he got threatened many times.
- Even if you go out and do determinations, you're still going to give homeowners the right to come in and prove their numbers.
- We flag those in our software program and when they walk in, we tell them if they're pulling any cumulative permits, they're being analyzed against 50% of your structure value.

**Mr. Vasey** said the county tracking system, CTS, is designed to hold that information.

**Co-Chairman Lang** said there's a new system called the National Violation Tracker that we were just made aware of.

**8. Adjourn – Future Meeting Dates**  
10 a.m.-12 p.m. November 7

*Mr. Vasey moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Mr. Chrzanowski. The motion passed unanimously 10-0.*

**There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chair at 10:39 a.m.**

**COLLIER COUNTY FLOODPLAIN  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**William Lang, Co-Chairman**

These minutes were approved by the board/co-chairman on 11/07/2023, (select one) as presented , or as amended \_\_\_\_\_.