

Chesterfield Emergency Planning Committee

Minutes of the June 29, 2023 Meeting

Present: Larry Holmberg, EMD; Fred Drake, Planning Board; Trish Colson-Montgomery, Select Board; Joe Gazillo, MVP Committee; John Chandler, Board of Health; Jan Gibeau, COA; Matt Smith, Highway Dept.; John Follet, Conservation Commission; Mimi Kaplan, PVPC

Called to order at 18:07 hours

- 1) Minutes of the May 31, 2023 meeting were approved.
- 2) Reviewed the results of the public information session held June 14, 2023. See attached notes. Main concerns and points were:
 - a) Water – drought and power failure, how do residents get and maintain the minimum amount of daily water/person needed.
 - b) Education and communication are vitally important and are related issues
 - i) MVP is having an event in the fall to educate the residents and garner a consensus on several issues including 6 North Rd.
 - ii) Develop a flyer on emergency preparedness – what's commercially available
- 3) Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
 - a) Mitigation Strategies – reviewed and updated the items from the 2016 Plan. Several items were removed. An enhanced education capability was strongly desired.
 - b) Ms. Kaplan will review the capability chart and takeout redundant items
- 4) The next Committee meeting will be on July 27, 2023 at 18:00 hours at the Community Center.

Meeting adjourned at 19:45 hours

Respectfully Submitted,

Larry Holmberg

Approved July 27, 2023

Chesterfield Hazard Mitigation Plan Public Meeting 6/14/23

Comments:

- There are trees down near Scout Pond blocking the streamflow – could be a flooding hazard.
- Flooding should be categorized as higher of a risk than “4” (low) on the Hazard ID and analysis table. There are houses in the floodplain at risk during periods of intense precipitation.
- Damon Pond dam due to be inspected soon (rated as “fair” in 2020 – last inspection). In poor condition and needs to be replaced or removed.
- Wildfire risk – seems like it should be rated higher than a “4” given increasing risk of high temperatures and droughts. Thinking about future risk.
- Wildfire smoke and poor air quality are hazards that need to be considered.
- Droughts can impact people’s wells, especially if they are shallow. Cases of wells having to be re-drilled (not sure of who). Important that residents notify the Town if their well gets too low so there is a record. Impact of drought on agriculture in Town – talk to farmers to find out what the impact has been.
- Access to water – many residents can’t get water from their wells when the power is out. There is no longer access to the spring on North Rd – there needs to be a backup or emergency water supply.
 - Some suggestions/responses:
 - Get a generator (if can afford it). Look into grants to help people purchase generators, or to have generators to loan to residents.
 - Water distribution – “water buffalo” – military trailer that delivers water – borrowed one from Cummington. Purchase one for Town, or share with another town?
 - Public water supply at the school – people can fill up jugs there.
 - The Fire Department working with the COA can bring water to most vulnerable residents.
 - Possible to install a hand pump to get well water – not sure of the cost.
 - Important to get information out to residents about the need to be prepared for power outages by keeping at least 10 gallons of water as an emergency supply.
- No phone service for anyone on broadband if power goes out since it’s dependent on Internet service.
 - CodeRed only works via text so without phone service can’t get emergency messages
 - Generator for the MLP should keep Internet working so people don’t lose broadband service but still working out bugs in the system.
 - MLP is also a vulnerability because the wires can go down, and the Town has to pay to repair it. There is some insurance coverage for this.
 - Micro AM radio station (or low power FM?) for the Town could be used as an alternative form of emergency communication. Would have to purchase, be licensed, maintain equipment.
- Can also lose heat when power goes out. Question about renters – who is responsible for emergency heat, power?
- Important for Police/Fire, COA to have a list of people to check on when power is out. Also have neighbors check on neighbors. Always have the option to go to emergency shelter if people can get there.

- Volunteer Committee (CERT program?) – to contact neighbors/residents in emergencies. There have been efforts to get a CERT team going locally, and a few towns have them. Difficult to find people who want to volunteer for that, or volunteer in general. Can be more effective to get people out to volunteer for a specific task than to sit on a committee or help out regularly with a program since they don't want that level of commitment.
- Have a plan in place for reunification of children with parents after a hazard/emergency event.
- Have a public event to inform about emergency preparedness. To get more people to attend, offer food, have a raffle etc.
- Send a flyer out to every household about what is essential to have on hand in an emergency and to make it through a multi-day power outage.
- Coordinate with MVP Committee on education and outreach – that is the focus of the action grant application.
- Send out a survey to households – what impacts from natural hazards/climate change have you experienced? What are your greatest concerns?