



**Northern and Eastern Dutchess County Communities  
Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Project**

**Kickoff Meeting**

**September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.**

**At**

**Martha's Restaurant at Simmons Way Inn, Millerton, NY**

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**Meeting Minutes**

**Attending**

See Attached Sign-in sheets

**Agenda Items Discussed**

- Katie Palmer-House (KPH) of the Town of Dover provided a brief introduction and opening remarks. The purpose of the meeting was to review the scope of the project, as well as the overall need for Hazard Mitigation planning. The Town of Dover will be acting as the "Lead Agency" for the Mitigation Planning Project, but all nine participating municipalities will have equal status within the plan. KPH was pleased to note that all nine towns and villages were represented at the meeting. KPH thanked New York State Senator Vincent Leibell (represented at the meeting by a member of his staff) and members of New York State Emergency Management Office for their efforts in helping to initiate the project. KPH also drew attendees' attention to items distributed on entry to the meeting, including:
  - Copy of the Municipal Agreement that participating jurisdictions have signed up to in order to cooperate in the planning process and share the costs
  - Schedule of anticipated deliverables and meetings
  - Schedule of invoicing
  - CD containing basic reference materials related to the project for input to individual municipalities' websites
  
- KPH handed over to URS Project Manager Anna Foley (AF) and Deputy Project Manager Richard Franks (RF) from URS, the Consultants hired to assist and guide the municipalities toward the successful approval by FEMA of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. AF provided a Powerpoint presentation giving an overview of the purpose and need for the planning project and its importance to each participating municipality. She stressed that a FEMA-approved Plan covering the participating municipalities is required by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 for the municipalities to be eligible to

apply for mitigation project grants. She illustrated the benefits of such plans by pointing out that studies have shown that nationwide, hazard mitigation projects save an average of \$4 for every \$1 spent on them. AF also outlined the organizational structure of the planning team, which can be likened to an inverted pyramid: the top layer includes all representatives of the municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders; below this level is the Core Planning Group, (principally of two-person assessment teams representing each municipality), which interacts with the bottom layer, the project consultants (URS).

Continuing the presentation, RF outlined the key steps of the planning process, illustrating the process with a brief discussion of the natural hazards to be considered, and examples of the detailed hazard mapping that the URS team has provided for similar studies for other clients. RF mentioned that the Risk Assessment aspect of the plan would also aim to estimate potential future dollar losses for various hazards, where appropriate and possible, and that a key section of the plan would include mitigation actions developed by the municipalities, with the guidance of URS. RF also stressed the value placed by URS on the input of local knowledge, and gave examples of specific points in the process at which this input would be required.

AF continued the presentation by describing the FEMA approval process and clarifying that approval of the overall plan does not depend on 100% municipal participation: the final plan will be approved for any municipality meeting all the participation criteria. AF described the key deliverables which URS will provide, and the anticipated timeline. AF then presented the draft project fact sheet, for use by municipalities in public outreach activities, and invited the municipalities to provide additional photos showing a variety of hazards occurring throughout the project area, for inclusion in the final version of the fact sheet. Photos can be submitted through September 19, 2008, after which point the fact sheet will be finalized and distributed to all Core Planning Group members via KPH. AF also mentioned the "Wish List" of useful data and documents that has been distributed to the municipalities, with a deadline for return of information of October 13, 2008. AF concluded the meeting by drawing attendees' attention to Guidance Memorandum #1, and the accompanying Outreach Log, which municipalities are urged to use to document all actions they take to educate and encourage support for the plan among the public and other stakeholders.

- An open question and answer session followed the presentation. The principal issues raised were as follows:

- KPH requested that the anticipated dates of questionnaire distribution and deadlines for return could be distributed separately.
  - Ed Hoxsie of Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District suggested that municipalities should fully involve local fire advisory boards, highways superintendents, and school districts, and said that DCSWCD would be willing to share any relevant information for the planning process.
  - A question was asked regarding FEMA's response to municipal non-participation in the plan. AF and Nadine Macura of NYSEMO replied that failure to participate fully in the plan would result in that municipality not being eligible for future FEMA mitigation project funding, and that the municipality's eligibility for certain post-disaster FEMA funds may also be affected.
  - KPH drew attention to the in-kind match forms that have been distributed to each municipality, and encouraged attendees to fully document all activities and time spent contributing to the plan.
  - Roz Cimino of the Town of Dover asked if the enhanced provision of GIS capabilities for emergency management in individual municipalities could be included as a mitigation action. AF suggested that, in her opinion, it may be hard to make a case that GIS enhancements are true "mitigation" activities in FEMA's eyes (as opposed to improved response). She suggested that local municipalities may wish to contact FEMA directly for more information/clarification. If municipalities choose to include this type of action as a component of their mitigation strategy, she recommended that it not be the sole identified action item, and that municipalities would be best served by including in their mitigation strategies some actions typically eligible under the FEMA mitigation grant programs for which the plan enables them.
  - One attendee raised the issue of man-made hazards, specifically the possibility of transport accidents involving hazardous materials. AF confirmed that mitigation of man-made hazards was not a current FEMA requirement, and would not be included in the current plan, but mentioned that the municipalities could incorporate it in future plan updates if they felt it necessary.
- KPH thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was adjourned.