

RHODE ISLAND FLOOD MITIGATION ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES
Independent Insurance Agents of Rhode Island
2400 Post Road, Warwick, RI

I. Date: June 20, 2007 at 9:30 am.
(Next Meeting: To be determined)

II. Attendees:

Carissa Lord, RIEMA
Janet Freedman, CRMC
Dennis Charland, IIARI
Victor Hom, NWS-Northeast River Forecast Center
Wayne Barnes, City of East Providence
Nicole Belk, NWS
Ron Miner, CDM
Buvana Ramaswamy, CDM

III. Call to Order:

Carissa Lord administered in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair and called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM.

IV. Topics of Discussion:

A. 2007 RIFMA Annual Conference and Membership Meeting breakdown

- All agreed that the conference went exceedingly well and congratulations were offered to main organizers, particularly to Carissa, who was present.
- The desire to see more of the afternoon sessions was common among the Board and the Conference attendees. It was noted that concurrent sessions of high interest are a sign of a very good event.
- The vendor set-up was discussed.
 1. Concern was noted about the space that the vendors occupied, in particular that it was cramped and well away from where the food was during breaks. Proximity to food and resulting attendee traffic was a concern of vendors as well.
 2. Next year's vendor set-up should be better positioned with more space, especially if there are more vendors than this year. This year there were seven paid vendors.
 3. Our vendor fee is very low for this type of event. One vendor noted that if he got one call as a resulting from the conference, the conference would pay for itself.
- A few attendees were "sneaking in" by claiming that they were "invited". It was noted that there were also people who paid and didn't show up, which helped to balance off this problem.

- Staffing of the registration table was discussed with respect to how long it needed to be staffed for.
- Food was located in one of the three meeting rooms as opposed to being in a central area.
- It would be nice to have a “runner” designated to deal with immediate small issues, like climate control, ambient music, and anything that the moderators may need.
- Session lengths varied considerably and some presenters ran much longer than others.

B. General Items

- Hurricane Awareness Seminar for 2007
 1. Nicole can provide this through NOAA, and will tailor it to southern New England. A tentative date is August 8. Timing would be after work, maybe 4:00 to 6:00 pm. It would be free of charge.
 2. Event would be sponsored by RIFMA, perhaps co-sponsored by RIEMA. RIFMA, RIEMA personnel, and local emergency managers could be invited.
 3. RSVP is suggested.
 4. Carissa noted that it would be preferable to have this event in a private rather than public space if it were RIFMA-sponsored. If it were in a public space, it would have to be open to the public. Nicole mentioned that if there were significant public interest was generated, another could be held.
 5. Dennis offered the IIARI meeting room which has a capacity of about 60 people with tables, 105 without tables, and is handicapped-accessible.
- Legislative monitoring.
 1. It was determined that it is too late to track this year’s pertinent legislation as the 2007 session is ending, but that there would be opportunities to do so next year.
 2. Seeing that RIFMA does not have a policy committee, it was suggested that issues could be identified by the Outreach Committee and the Research/Technical Committee could pull together resources on those issues.
 3. It would be helpful if everyone from the group could suggest important issues.
- Outreach
 1. Carissa noted that Pam has written an op-ed piece on behalf of RIFMA regarding the purchase of flood insurance.
 2. West Warwick and Cranston have shown interest in a one- to two-hour NFIP workshop
 3. Pam has offered to lead an NFIP workshop for insurance agents. It was suggested that there may be interest in a similar workshop for lenders and realtors.

4. FEMA is offering a course on managing floodplain development through NFIP in Connecticut over the summer, which would offer continuing education credits.

C. RIFMA Website Update and Discussion

- Victor noted that logos of corporate Conference sponsors had been considered to display as a way link to their respective websites, but the logos differ in size, so the corporate names will probably be used for this purpose.
- If companies are contributors, this should be indicated as not all are paid corporate members.
- All presentations from the Conference except for Gardner Bent's are available to be PDF'd into the website.
- PDF's may be set up as "read-only" for security purposes.
- It was suggested that a note added to some presentations to the effect that they not be reproduced. This cannot be done with presentations from Federal agencies as these are public domain.
- Due to the amount of material involved, we cannot have more than three annual conferences on the website at once. It was not felt that this was a problem.
- A few conference pictures will be added.
- Website protocol has been set up for future conferences.
- Victor noted that he will be transferring to NWS Headquarters in Maryland, but that he will remain a member and would still be available to maintain the website, and will be willing to speak at a future conference.
- Victor was congratulated and thanked for all of his work on behalf of RIFMA.

D. RIEMA News

- Disaster Declaration
 1. Newport County has received Federal Disaster Declaration as a result of flooding from the April nor'easter. This makes hazard mitigation grant funding available to communities throughout New England for training and outreach. Towns need approved local hazard mitigation plans to receive funding. Eleven towns in RI do not have such a plan, of those four submitted plans that were sent back for revision. Pam has met with Sue Stenhouse who wants to get more local communities to adopt hazard mitigation plans.
 2. Janet inquired as to discrepancies in what constitutes loss of public infrastructure. Beach replenishment seems to be done in MA but not in RI. Suggestion is made that RI should keep trying for funding for this purpose even if it has not been done successfully here to this point.
 3. FEMA money can be used by other towns in Newport County even if those towns do not have an approved hazard mitigation plan.
- Map Modification
 1. Digital maps for Bristol County, RI were completed in November of 2006.

2. In Providence, the flood potential area behind the hurricane barrier is now Shaded Zone X.
3. Along the Blackstone River, at least eleven panels have been re-engineered.
4. Two of RI's five counties have been re-mapped.
5. FEMA has approval to map all five counties, which will probably be available by 2010.
6. It was noted that flood mapping is a key for the insurance industry and should be a component of any workshop for insurance agents.
7. Digitized maps for many areas are outdated – these will be done in the next round of MapMod.
8. Community coordination meeting are coming up. They are tentatively scheduled to start in late July.
9. LIDAR data (coastal areas and tidal rivers) should be delivered in August.

V. ASFPM National Conference

- The conference was attended by Ron and Nicole among those present today.
- The Region 1 representative is Scott Choquette. We will ask him to attend our meetings.
- There were around 1200 participants and hundreds of presentations.

VI. Treasurer's Report

- We have \$5,620 in the bank. Current IOU's add up to \$4,980.
- RIEMA picked up \$1,700 of the costs associated with the Conference and several hotel rooms for long-distance attendees/speakers were comped.

VII. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

Motion: Janet. Second: Dennis

Next Meeting: To be determined.