

Planning & Capacity Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

9:00 AM- 10:30 AM | APRIL 13, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET, SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 9:00 AM on April 13th, 2023, Sandy Stillwell, the Planning & Capacity Branch lead, convened the Planning & Capacity Branch meeting. The following members were present:

- Sandy Stillwell, Lead
- Eric Peifer
- Matthew Leger
- David Mintz
- Meghan Strayhorn
- Lisa Swinto
- Jennifer Hagan
- Caroline Briones (On behalf of  in Henderson)

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Terry Mazany, Collaboratory
- Tessa LeSage, Collaboratory
- Harrison Newton, Hagerty Consulting
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions, RTF Updates, Problem-Solving Process

Branch members introduced themselves. Terry Mazany, the Branch facilitator, began the presentation.

Recovery Task Force (RTF) Updates and Problem-Solving Process

Mr. Mazany reviewed the RTF and Branches in the recovery and resilience planning process and reviewed the unmet needs committee and the separate group. Robert Heere reviewed the RTF's work since the last meeting, including the community engagement plan priorities and information regarding the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program.

Tessa LeSage outlined the work of this meeting and provided a review of the branch problem-solving process in identifying solutions and recommendations for the Recovery & Resilience (R&R) planning process.

Research and Data Presentation and Discussion

Harrison Newton presented the key challenges and findings for the three Branch identified priorities regarding Planning & Capacity and reviewed the experience to gain a shared understanding of solutions to explore in the process of creating recommendations.

Priority 1 Key Challenges and Findings

Mr. Newton presented the key challenges and findings of the first priority: Planning for improved short-term recovery response (post-disaster).

Mr. Newton discussed the differences between jurisdictions and their planning documents. He explained that exercises are set up for training and need to be inclusive of outside providers who step up and become frontline. Mr. Mazany used the example of the Collaboratory serving as a location with cots and meals for 2-3 weeks. They would need to be included in any communication to be able to succeed and keep everyone on the frontline aware of the operations. Prioritizing the experience of plans and the lens that you would be applying and want to reflect that.

Also discussed for awareness were the mitigation projects and projects that could be prioritized with a resilience lens.

The following was discussed by the Branch members:

- There is a need-to-know what infrastructure, power infrastructure, and electrical connections are above flood levels.
- There is a need to know more about building codes and lessons learned regarding rebuilding, specifically learning about building above storm surge levels, fire codes, building codes, and comprehensive amendments to the Sanibel Plan.

- Interest to hear of any case studies or examples of large county recovery, but not Bay County, due to their population size difference.
 - Mr. Newton agreed that there is value in looking at other communities.
- There is a need to have stockpiles of resources and materials and understand those resources.
- There is a need to understand and know what emergency agreements with intergovernmental coordination and outside partners to prepare prior and to respond are in place when disasters happen.
- Interest in knowing the places that are hit hardest in the community.
- New flood insurance maps and base flood elevations are needed.
- Need to outline long-term resiliency needs and short-term recovery needs.
- Need workforce housing examples and a long-term vision.
 - Discussed what requirements are needed, what kind of workforce housing can be built, building heights, and locations. There is also a need to understand where housing can be built and where it should be built.
 - A Branch member brought up that the Horizon Council did a presentation on workforce and housing. They discussed the context of housing prior to the hurricane and what the Council has found.
- Suggestion to have Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from:
 - Florida Power & Light (FPL)
 - Lee County Electric Cooperative (LCEC)
 - United Way to present on Alice report

Priority 2 Key Challenges and Key Findings

Mr. Newton presented the key challenges and findings of the second priority: Planning for long-term resiliency.

Mr. Newton discussed that county and municipal plans were reviewed, and one common theme found was housing. Central plans discussed zoning and distribution of housing in the region. Mr. Newton asked the branch to consider how to understand how to interact with all of that.

The following was discussed by the Branch members:

- There is a need to discuss other municipalities addressing density and codes are not following that growth.
- Community character was identified as an issue.
- There is an interest to know what the community considers to be the long-term priorities and be able to understand and prioritize those priorities.

- Mr. Mazany summarized that there is a need to identify the deficiencies in plans and a vision for how the communities can thrive more coherently.
- Suggestion to have Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from:
 - Expert on SB 102.

Priority 3 Key Findings and Challenges

Mr. Newton presented the key challenges and findings of the third priority: Propose planning community priorities based on those hardest hit. The question was brought up for the Branch members to consider how best to use the momentum of the most recent hurricane to build cohesiveness moving forward.

The following was discussed by the Branch members:

- It was discussed that Lee Health has community health needs and the Department of Health has its own needs. There must be a way to strategize how they work and address how they are designated. These plans are updated every 3-5 years. It would be interesting to data source climate solutions Southwest Florida has released.
- It would be helpful to analyze the areas of the community and planning districts that were hit the hardest. Using maps and objective analysis to attain a set of priorities moving forward.
- There is a need for housing and incomes must be adjusted to attract workers. Suggestion to use the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) income designations.
- Suggestion for resilient by design presentation on building designs.
- Suggestion to use aerial photographs to determine flow ways and how the plan evolved around nature in retaining water flow ways.
- Suggestion to push the community to be able to shelter in place, because storm surge was not an issue.
- A Branch member informed the group that the energy code is more stringent than the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.
- Suggestion for hardened infrastructure for the photovoltaic array. There is redundancy with gas and batteries to have power in storms.
- Suggestion that the minimum build level and utilities and water be built higher than residences.
- Suggestion for intentional design in road planning with height.
- Suggestion to use the ability to pump down lakes in the event of a storm to increase storage compacity.
- Overall, the message is that Florida building code works: Code plus for housing and training builders and fortified insurance for non-profits and engineers. Suggestion for

guidance to reinform weak points that guarantee insurance coverage. When anything is replaced, building with resiliency in mind is key.

Next Steps

The schedule of meetings was shared with the Branch members with the acknowledgment that meeting invites will be sent soon. Meetings will occur as needed in the second phase of this group.

Discussion and Questions

Mr. Peifer asked for community input data.

Public Comment

Jim Shcwartel commented that there were major failures in communications. There is a need for redundancy in communications.

Steve Veldman, from the City of Fort Myers, commented on available resources and provided input.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Ms. LeSage nked the members for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 10:26 AM.