

## **SUMMARY NOTES OF THE MAY 31, 2023 MEETING OF THE RACINE COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN LOCAL PLANNING TEAM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The May 31, 2023 meeting of the Racine County Hazard Mitigation Plan Local Planning Team (LPT) was convened at the Ives Grove Auditorium at 4:07 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Alex Freeman, Interim Director of Racine County's Division of Emergency Management. Attendance was taken by circulating a sign-in sheet.

In attendance at the meeting were the following individuals:

#### Local Planning Team Members

Alex Freeman, Chair	Interim Emergency Management Director, Racine County
Brian Beiley	DPW Supervisor, Village of Wind Point
Jeff Berard	Director, Journey Disaster Response Team
Aaron Bixby	Chief, SC Johnson Emergency Response Brigade
Kim Christman	Real Property Lister/GIS Manager, Racine County
Keith Hendricks	Environmental Health Manager, Racine County Public Health
Jeff Henningfeld	Chief, Caledonia Fire Department
Tom Kramer	Administrator, Town of Norway
Jeremy Krusemark	Burlington Police Department, City of Burlington
Cody Pearce	Epidemiologist, City of Racine Health Department
Richard Piette	Director of Public Works, Village of Union Grove
Peter Riggs	Director of Public Works, City of Burlington
Chad Sampson	Conservationist, Racine County
Peter Wagner	Development Director, Village of Caledonia
Linsey Weber	Deputy Director of Public Works, Village of Mt. Pleasant

In addition, the following attendees (representing the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission) were present:

Joel Dietl	Chief Land Use Planner, SEWRPC
Laura Herrick	Chief Environmental Engineer, SEWRPC
Miranda Page	Planner, SEWRPC
Bryan Walter	Planner, SEWRPC

Mr. Freeman welcomed the attendees to the meeting and thanked them for their participation. He emphasized the importance of this work for the long-term health and safety of the County and its communities.

### **OVERVIEW OF AGENDA AND THE HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING PROCESS**

Mr. Freeman briefly introduced hazard mitigation planning and reminded the attendees that this plan would only cover natural hazards, whereas prior versions of the plan had also included man-made hazards. Mr. Freeman introduced Joel Dietl, Chief Land Use Planner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and Laura Herrick, Chief Environmental Engineer, SEWRPC. Mr. Dietl reviewed the meeting's agenda and asked if there were any comments on the summary notes of the April 13, 2022, kickoff meeting. No comments were made. Mr. Dietl noted that the timeline for the Racine County Hazard Mitigation plan had been accelerated due to funding opportunities for local projects in two communities and proceeded to present (PowerPoint) an overview of the draft updates to the Racine County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

## **OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS IN THE CURRENT DRAFT OF THE RACINE COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE**

Mr. Dietl provided a brief background on hazard mitigation planning as discussed in Chapter 1 of the draft plan. An adopted plan is mandated by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 to be eligible for federal funding. The draft plan focuses on natural rather than man-made hazards as a practical consideration to achieve funding eligibility. Mr. Dietl explained that every city and village must be involved in the planning process and that the County is responsible for including towns. He also provided a summary of the recent hazard mitigation activities and recent outreach activities undertaken by Racine County and the local communities. The LPT did not have any questions or comments.

Mr. Dietl next presented an overview of Chapter 2, which discusses the study area inventory and analysis. This chapter of the draft plan addresses civil divisions, demographic and economic characteristics, land use, and emergency services and critical facilities in Racine County. It also includes an expanded section on climate change, consistent with updated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines. Resulting from the consideration of climate change and the geography of Racine County, the plan is especially focused on specific hazards such as flooding and lake shore erosion. Mr. Dietl explained that both average temperature and average precipitation have been increasing, especially in the winter and early spring. This has led to an increase in the frequency and severity of storms and has a substantial impact on farmers and agriculture in the County. The LPT did not have any questions or comments related to Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 of the draft plan provides an analysis of specific hazard conditions. In the interest of brevity, Mr. Dietl explained that these would not be covered in detail during this presentation. The LPT had identified tornadoes, inland flooding, ice storms, high straight-line wind, heavy snowstorms, dam failure, and drought as potential vulnerabilities. Drought was noted as one of the most significantly increased perceived vulnerabilities since the previous plan update. Members of the LPT asked clarifying questions regarding the flooded structures map. Ms. Herrick explained that this map identifies taxable structures, not including auxiliary structures such as garages or sheds, which are located within floodplains. This survey of structures is conducted by SEWRPC staff using assessor's data and large-scale aerial orthophotography. Ms. Herrick noted that the estimated flood damages are based on a hypothetical county-wide 100-year flood, and not any actual historical event. The LPT did not request any changes to the text or content of this chapter following these clarifications.

Ms. Herrick continued the presentation with a brief overview of the plan goals as described in Chapter 4 of the draft plan. These goals are unchanged from the previous update of Racine County's hazard mitigation plan. There were no comments or questions from the LPT.

Regarding Chapter 5, Ms. Herrick noted that there were very few changes from the previous update of the plan due to the compressed schedule. Inland flooding, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, extreme high or low temperatures, coastal hazards, severe winter storms, and drought are covered in detail by this chapter. Ms. Herrick highlighted Table 5.8, which provides a cost/benefit analysis of mitigation strategies. She presented flooding as an example of the content in this chapter, specifically discussion of preservation of open space, voluntary purchase and demolition, channel cleaning, stream rehabilitation, stormwater management, and prairie and wetland restoration as possible mitigation strategies. There were no comments or questions from the LPT regarding Chapter 5.

Ms. Herrick proceeded with an overview of Chapter 6 and the draft plan's Appendices. She noted that the LPT should review the tables in Appendices B and C for critical facilities. There were no comments or questions from the LPT regarding Chapter 6 or the Appendices.

## **NEXT STEPS IN THE HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING PROCESS**

Ms. Herrick reviewed the next steps in the hazard mitigation planning process and requested that any comments or requests for changes be provided by no later than June 16, 2023. One member of the LPT asked a clarifying question about the maps in the draft plan and whether there were any plans to update SEWRPC's planned land use map. Mr. Dietl replied that there were currently no plans to do so, that the current 2050 planned land use map was based upon a combination (at the regional level) of SEWRPC's land use designations and those from the future land use maps from the local comprehensive plans, and that work on the next regional land use plan will likely begin in a few years. There were no further questions or comments from the LPT. Ms. Herrick concluded by reminding the LPT that a public meeting would follow at 6:00pm and thanked the LPT for their attendance and participation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

## **AFTER MEETING DISCUSSIONS**

Following Ms. Herrick's presentation, Peter Riggs, representing the City of Burlington, requested that the plan include more details on the Echo Lake dam, possibly in the project table. Mr. Riggs plans to seek BRIC funding for the work and stated that he would provide more details on the project to Ms. Herrick. He indicated that the project is necessary to address a significant hazard rating due to inadequate spillway capacity of the Echo Lake dam per NR 333. The project will include three components: spillway modifications, park improvements, and impoundment dredging. The spillway work includes the removal of one gate and adding a three bay gate system and a berm in the park. The City of Burlington intends to issue an RFP this summer for construction to be completed in 2025. The City conducted significant outreach work that could be added to the table in Chapter 1.

Tom Kramer, representing the Town of Norway, indicated to Mr. Dietl that there were two corrections needed on Map 2.4. The location of one of the fire stations in the Town is currently incorrect, and Mr. Kramer identified the correct location. Mr. Kramer also noted that the fire department service area boundaries in the Town of Waterford may be incorrect and suggested that SEWRPC staff obtain clarification on these boundaries from Town of Waterford staff. He also identified that the Tichigan Volunteer Fire Department now has its own rescue squad.

Peter Wagner, representing the Village of Caledonia, asked Mr. Dietl about possible comprehensive plan updates for Mt. Pleasant, Caledonia, Racine County, and other communities.

Jeff Henningfield, representing the Caledonia Fire Department, provided some feedback to Mr. Freeman. Mr. Henningfield identified that the fire station at 9433 Northwestern Avenue is a joint station with shared costs and should be indicated as both South Shore Fire Station 10 and Caledonia Fire Station 10. A line should be added to Table B.1 listing it under the Caledonia Fire Department's locations. No changes are required on Map 2.4 as fire department location details are not included on that map. It was also noted that the members of the Racine County Hazard Mitigation Local Planning Team should be updated prior to publishing. Past members may be documented in the summary notes for the 2022 LPT meeting and the main list on page 3 should be updated with current membership. Mr. Freeman indicated that he will complete these updates and provide them to SEWRPC staff. Finally, one of the presentation slides mentioned Ready Badger, now defunct, however this has already been removed from the draft plan text.

## **PUBLIC MEETING**

Mr. Dietl, Mr. Freeman, and Ms. Herrick remained for a public meeting which was convened at 6:00 p.m. No members of the public attended the public meeting. The meeting was closed at 7:00 p.m.

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