

Columbia County
All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
Mitigation Action Workshop Meeting Minutes

DATE: September 20, 2016

TIME: 6:00 pm

LOCATION: Summerhill Fire Department
 422 Summerhill Road
 Berwick, PA 18603

The following people were in attendance:

Name	Organization/Affiliation
1) Scott Bower	Berwick Borough
2) Thomas Phillips	Bloomsburg University Police
3) Charles Fritz	Bloomsburg, Town of
4) Ruth Bogart	Briar Creek Township
5) Carl Hess	Briar Creek Township
6) Jim Morris	Briar Creek Township
7) John Zaginaylo	Briar Creek Township
8) David Kovach	Columbia County Commissioners
9) Rich Ridgway	Columbia County Commissioners
10) Jennifer Long	Columbia County EMA
11) Jessica Shoup	Columbia County EMA
12) Eric Stahley	Columbia County Resiliency
13) Jay Challingsworth	Fishing Creek Township
14) Earnest Bogart	Fishing Creek Township
15) Clayton Emery	Jackson Township
16) James Karnes	Locust Township
17) Glenn Titman	Madison Township
18) Rob Bower	Millville Borough
19) Joseph Mullen	Montour Township
20) Lori Ebright	Montour Township
21) Ronald Levan	North Centre Township
22) Neil Shultz	Orangeville Borough
23) Jacob Novitsky	PA Bureau of Forestry
24) Thomas Hughes	PA Emergency Management Agency (HQ)
25) Allen Breach	Roaring Creek Zone EMA
26) Craig Fisher	Summerhill Fire Department
27) Rodney Hess	Summerhill Fire Department

MEETING HANDOUTS: Handouts and forms that were given to each attendee included the following: Meeting Agenda and Columbia County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Comment Form

MEETING OVERVIEW

- **Welcome and Introductions**

Jessica Shoup, Columbia County EMA, started the meeting by introducing herself. Other Columbia County representatives to introduce themselves were Jennifer Long, Eric Stahley, and County Commissioners David Kovach and Rich Ridgway. Commissioners Kovach and Ridgway thanked the group for their participation in the planning process. The attendees were then asked to introduce themselves.

- **Project Overview**

Shoup started by going over the agenda and explaining the hazard mitigation process to date. A definition of hazard mitigation and the purpose of having a hazard mitigation plan was also explained.

- **Draft Plan Findings Review**

Shoup explained the major sections of the plan were the planning process, risk assessment, capability assessment, mitigation strategy, and plan maintenance. It was also explained to the audience that there were many more sections in the plan, but these were the major sections or highlights.

The planning process was the first section that was reviewed. It was explained that the process had started almost a year prior and that at this point 32 of the 33 municipalities had participated in some fashion throughout that time. The planning team was made up of all of the individuals that had participated including municipal officials, private business, and even Bloomsburg University. It was further explained that the University had participated greatly in the plan and that the University Hazard Mitigation Plan was considered and integrated when possible. The meetings throughout the process were briefly reviewed as well.

The risk assessment section was explained to the audience next. It was explained that this was the most time consuming part of the plan. Shoup let the audience know that the hazards that were addressed in the plan were a result of the hazard vulnerability forms that the municipalities had filled out at the beginning of the process. Their responses on those forms were summarized and the hazards considered to be a threat to the county were the ones that were placed in the plan.

Next, the hazard profiles were reviewed. Shoup explained that the location and extent was the geographic area that the hazard may affect. The range of magnitude was explained as the strength of magnitude of impact that could be expected in each area from the hazard. It was further explained that this would be both quantitative and qualitative measures of the strength of a particular hazard. Past occurrence was described as the data on the past events of that particular hazard that had occurred including financial impact, severity and duration of the event. Future occurrence was explained as the frequency of what could be expected in the future for a

given hazard. Shoup told the audience that the vulnerability section was where all of the information collected in the past four sections was applied, allowing a profile to be developed of community assets and thereby summarizing the effects that may be expected by a community. It was further explained that the vulnerability was expressed in terms of populations at risk, percentage damaged, and dollars lost. The vulnerability section helped to prioritize the hazards for a community.

The risk assessment was explained including how the risk factors were calculated. The changes from the 2012 update to the 2017 update were highlighted. The audience was advised that they Environmental Hazards section was moved from a moderate hazard to a high hazard due to the probability that a hazardous materials incident would occur and the duration of an event. The other hazard that was moved was the dam failure. This was moved from a low hazard to a moderate hazard. This was due to the impact the event would have on the affected area.

Shoup explained the top hazard was flooding, flash flooding, and ice jam. A graphic map was shown that depicted the areas that were prone to a 100 year flood. Shoup also explained about the assessed value of the properties that were in the floodplain and the population affected. She stated that there was nearly 154 million dollars' worth of structures in the 100 year flood plain. She also explained the population that would likely be affected was nearly 5000 people and she also explained the figures that were used to calculate that.

The next highest hazard, environmental hazards, was reviewed following the flood hazards. Shoup reminded the audience that environmental hazards was one that had been moved up in the 2017 update due to the duration of the event and the probability of an event occurring. She also explained that this was mostly due to hazardous materials events and not oil/gas well or coal mining related incidents. Some facts and figures on environmental hazards were explained including that the biggest threat lied in the transportation of hazardous materials as opposed to the facilities that used or stored the materials. It was explained that they Atlantic Sunrise Expansion Project was also addressed in the plan and that it posed no more of a threat than any other means of transportation of hazardous materials. Shoup briefly explained the oil/gas wells and coal mining threat hazards as well.

Winter Storm, the third highest ranking hazard, was explained next. Shoup explained that we expect to receive 40 – 50 inches of snow per year in most of the county. She stated that winter storm presented an equal vulnerability across all jurisdictions. It was further explained that mountainous areas may have more problems due to access issues including fuel delivery or emergency services. The age of structures and how that affected the vulnerability of a community was also discussed.

The final high hazard, tornado and windstorm, was explained next. Shoup explained that the high ranking of this was due to the threat of windstorms as opposed to tornados. Some facts about windstorms were reviewed along with a discussion of manufactured homes and their vulnerability to windstorms.

Shoup explained to the audience that all of the moderate and low hazards were not going to be reviewed in detail due to the time it would take and only a few would be highlighted. They were advised if they wanted to see all of the hazards in detail they could review them all at their leisure online in the draft plan. Drought, dam failure, nuclear incidents, levee failure, and wildfire were briefly reviewed. It was explained that the dam failure section was not readily available online and was placed in an appendix due to the sensitive nature of the information. Audience

members were advised that if they wanted to review the dam failure section they could request to see a copy. Shoup also explained the levee failure section received substantial updates this year due to the addition of the Kawneer Floodwall and the Columbia County Flood Risk Management System.

The capability assessment section of the plan was explained next. Shoup advised that this was an assessment of the capability of each municipality including administrative and technical, planning and regulatory, fiscal, and political capabilities. This information was derived from the capability assessment surveys that were submitted by the municipalities at the beginning of the planning process. Some of the specific data that was gathered in this process was briefly reviewed.

The next section of the plan that was reviewed was the mitigation strategy. Shoup explained the mitigation strategy was the overall approach that was taken to avoid long-term vulnerabilities to the identified hazards. The mitigation strategy includes the goals, objective, actions and projects. The 2017 mitigation goals were briefly discussed and it was explained that they had changed very little from the 2012 plan because they remained relevant and were consistent with the current plans for the county. The mitigation action plan was explained as the section where all of the mitigation actions were listed and prioritized. A few of the new mitigation actions were reviewed.

The plan maintenance was the final section that was reviewed. Shoup explained that the plan would be updated every 5 years. She also explained that it would be reviewed yearly and within 30 days after a disaster and amended as necessary. Columbia County EMA and Resiliency offices made up the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee and would lead the maintenance of the plan.

- **Planning Timeline**

The planning timeline was reviewed. Participants were advised the next step was a 30 day public comment period. Following that, the plan would be forwarded to PEMA and FEMA for review. After the plan received approval pending adoption from FEMA it could be adopted by the county and municipalities. Shoup advised the municipalities that they would need to act quickly to adopt the plan when they were instructed that they could because the first municipality to adopt the plan would start the time clock for the 2017 update and all others would be without a hazard mitigation plan until they adopted the 2017 plan.

Shoup advised that both the 2012 and 2017 draft plan were at the front if anyone wanted to see a paper copy.

- **Questions & Answers**

Eric Stahley brought up the connection between the adoption and the hazard mitigation funding. He advised that all needed to complete the adoption process so that they would be eligible for the funding to complete the projects they had submitted for the plan.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.
Meeting notes recorded by Jessica Shoup.