Minutes of Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group Meeting
03/27/09

Call to order – 10:00 AM The meeting was called to order by Sally Bishop, Pinellas County Directory of Emergency Management and LMS Chairman

Introductions – Attendees introduced themselves.

Sally provided background on the status of our current project list as a preface to the presentation about a system in use in Miami-Dade that establishes the priority of projects submitted to the state by the LMS Working Group.

Presentation – Ed McKenzie, Pinellas County Emergency Management Coordinator and LMS Vice Chairman.
Our LMS has a system for prioritizing projects that we aren't using. The State has informed us that a project list that isn't prioritized gets no action. Historically, each jurisdiction has been putting its own projects in priority order but the LMS working group hasn't ranked them all together. We're looking to improve on that by having a better system that is objective and considers a small project in one jurisdiction the same way as a large project in another jurisdiction.
We're looking at a new priority ranking system that Miami-Dade has been using very successfully. Each jurisdiction will continue to put scores on its own projects by assigning numbers to a variety of variables under three separate categories, Suitability, Risk Reduction and Cost factors.
Suitability is 30% of the total score with five separate parameters, each with a score based on defined criteria.
Risk Reduction is 45% of the total score with six separate parameters, each with a score based on defined criteria.
Cost is 25% of the total score with five separate parameters, each with a score based on defined criteria. One of the parameters, Estimated Cost, is broken down into Initial Cost and Maintenance/Operating Costs.
The Excel® file will be posted at the LMS Website with these minutes.

Discussion –
One issue to be verified was whether changing the priority ranking system, which is contained in an annex to the LMS plan, will require going back to each City Council for adoption, since there is a change to the plan. The general feeling was that this is not necessary but this will have to be verified. Last month the Working Group voted to change the bylaws so that PC Emergency Management was given a vote in Working Group matters. This did not result in City Councils having to take action to re-adopt the LMS although the result of the vote was a fundamental change in how the LMS Working Group functions. The change we are proposing is simply a modification in how projects are assigned a priority. We already have a system, we are just agreeing, as a group, on one we feel will be better. Note – the 2009 update to the LMS will have to be adopted by each municipality.
Another issue was how to assure that each municipality would not simply assign the highest scores possible to each parameter to insure that their project was high on the priority list. Initial discussion seemed to indicate that, if we assume the scores are assigned to the variables honestly, the detailed nature of the parameters would prevent this.
A question was raised about how to handle a tie score. Of course, the final decision on this issue will be up to the working group itself, at the point where a tie score occurs. That said, a tie seems unlikely with 3 variables, 16 individual criteria, and a total of 1500 points that can be awarded to each project. Nevertheless, should that occur, we will need to establish a method, which we could address at our next meeting.

Action Item –The fastest and most logical way to address both the question about inflated scores and handling a tie would seem to be to go ahead and use it and see how it works.

First, each jurisdiction should use the draft priority system to evaluate its pending projects. Send in the spreadsheet and the scores will be put on the list and the projects prioritized. This will tell us what sort of risk we have for tie scores.
Then, to address the inflation issue, we will post the scores on the website for any working group member to see. The sunshine of public scrutiny should provide a reasonable assurance of fairness. At some point, we may feel a need to devise a method for one jurisdiction to protest the scores of some other jurisdiction, but lets wait on that till there is a need.
For this exercise of the system, we will put wait till two weeks before the next LMS meeting to post the scores. This way, each project sponsor will be able to assign scores without any influence from what other scores have been assigned to other projects. If you have any questions, call Ed McKenzie 464-3813.

Presentation - Jeffrey Dow, Dunedin Planner.
Jeffrey made a presentation on how Dunedin got 119 points for its CRS (Community Rating System) score. This is a flood plain management system which results in discounts in flood insurance premiums for communities with high scores. The LMS provides 15 points. In the resolution adopting the LMS, Dunedin added a discussion of mitigation strategies as well as an Action Plan showing how the City would implement the strategies. Additionally, the City held a Public Meeting in advance of the Public Hearing at which the resolution was adopted. This resulted in the higher number of points.

Presentation - Betti Johnson, Principal Planner, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council.
We have the 5 year update to the LMS due in 2009. We are waiting for the LIDAR (Laser Infrared Detection and Ranging) scan of coastal areas to do our update. They have flown all of Pinellas County. We are doing a critical facility update right now. Repetitive loss properties are kept by individual municipalities but we have to do an update of that list. Repetitive loss areas is an issue as well as individual properties. We need to update local policies on handling repetitive loss areas and properties. We also need to update the COMP plan. We are coming to you with a list of critical facilities to add to or modify.

Discussion – When we identify repetitive loss properties, we try to encourage owners to improve their properties through elevation, hardening, or something else to reduce the repetition of the loss. Lynn Rosetti, from Treasure Island had an example of taxes being raised from $1500 to $12,000 if the owner improved or hardened the property so they wouldn't suffer repetitive loss. Faced with this repeating cost, in addition to the cost of the hardening itself, most homeowners would choose not to do it. Is there a way to encourage municipalities not to raise taxes when an owner hardens their property?

New Business:
Discussion - Sally
Working through Betti and PC Planning Dept. we are making plans for what to do after the wind stops blowing and until we get into long term recovery with disaster/temporary/short term housing. Questions we are addressing include: how long before we transition to something else? What is the something else to transition to? One thing is to change city ordinances to allow travel trailers on people's property while they rebuild their homes. What requirements need to be in place for inspection, water, sewer, power, etc? Available housing is an unknown based upon what existing housing will still be available to rent. Manufactured home parks are ideal for replacing the destroyed homes with temporary trailers.
EM has info from FEMA regarding housing operations that will be sent to the working group.

Discussion: Treasure Island adopted a temporary housing ordinance. They are willing to share with others. It will be included with the minutes. Pretty good short term plan, working on long term. Reed Silverboard, City Manager.