

Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) City of Takoma Park

Thursday, June 23, 2022

7-8.30 pm

AGENDA

Issue/ item	Person	Est. Time/ minutes
Rollcall of members- May meeting notes acceptance	Chris	05
--Takoma Park, Montgomery County & State Reports	Ron Hardy	10

Next Meeting: July 28, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting at 7:00 pm (Held in a hybrid format in Hydrangea Room & Zoom)

Present: *Chair:* Chris Beck

Attendees: Ami Gadhia, Jim Della-Giacoma (Secretary), Troy Jacobs, Ron Hardy (ex officio), Tom Horne (ex officio), and Claudine Schweber.

Excused absences: Mandi Booth, Dianne Cherry, and Patrick Fleming.

A quorum was not initially present, and the meeting started with the chair acknowledging that it would be on an informational basis only. The meeting had a quorum from 19:22.

Next meeting: Thursday, July 28, 2022, 7:00 pm

Hydrangea Room, Takoma Park Community Center, and online via Zoom.

1. May Minutes Approved

The minutes from the EPC meeting of 26 May had been circulated to committee members with no comments and were adopted.

2. Reports on recent developments from the TKPK, County, and State

Mr. Hardy reported the following items:

- MoCo is allocating four trauma kits for Stop the Bleed training to TKPK, and Mr. Hardy is preparing to offer training for City staff on Wednesday from 13 July to 10 August.
- Mr. Hardy is participating in meetings with Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 for public information officers (PIOs) on messaging around significant disasters.
- Mr. Hardy gave training to TKPK recreation staff on emergency preparedness, including CPR, AED use, and dealing with blood-borne pathogens.
- From Saturday (25 June), MoCo will be operating vaccination clinics for children from six months to five years.
- National Night Out is the first Tuesday in August and offers a possible venue for EPC outreach, including helping staff a table providing public information outside PBES.
- Mr. Hardy is starting to plan activities during September for Emergency Preparedness Month.
- Another opportunity will be at the Folklife Festival at TPMS. Mr. Hardy could help prepare materials but expects to be on leave at that time.

3. Communication Strategy

- Ms. Schweber has been taking the lead in compiling information from EPC members about how they communicate with communities and asked committee members to provide information.
- The idea is for the EPC to understand better how to connect to the community and where the gaps are.
- There was discussion about how some, but not all, Council Members had their newsletters, which were promising avenues for communicating with residents.
- Mr. Della-Giacoma suggested that the EPC invite all Council members after being elected in November to ask for their help communicating critical messages to residents about emergency preparedness.
- Mr. Horner described his work with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and how the city could use amateur radio operators in an extreme emergency to keep information flowing between the city and county.
- One issue to consider would be to discuss a space that could be used in the city's offices in times of emergency to operate a radio set. The requirements were access to emergency power and the ability to run a coax cable from the room to the roof for the aerial.
- Mr. Horner also noted that the National Fire Academy Library was a good resource for materials on emergency preparedness.
- Some key messages that needed communication with the community included safe generator use, signing up for Takoma Park Alerts, that cell phones don't work in a storm, the importance of battery backup for internet modems, and the usefulness of maintaining a landline for emergencies.
- In other outreach events, Mr. Della-Giacoma will soon reach out again to WAMU and FOX 5 meteorologist Matthew Cappucci about doing a book event in TKPK in September or October. We will try to fix a date and communicate this to the EPC at the next meeting. He will coordinate this with TKPK Library Director Jessica Jones and Mr. Hardy.

4. Emergency Contact Flyer/Fridge Magnet

- Using the email exchanges amongst EPC members, Mr. Della-Giacoma will prepare the draft text in an MS Word document and circulate this via email. Mr. Hardy will then put him in touch with the city communications team to design a flyer that came be brought back to the EPC for review and approval.
- Among issues to be discussed with the comms team are size, cost, and materials for the flyer/magnet. It must be within the budget the city has and also child safe.

5. After Event Reflection

- In a recent storm, a large tree fell in the front yard of EPC member Mr. Jacobs taking down power lines, blocking Flower Ave, and severely damaging a family vehicle.
- Mr. Jacobs observed that the tree not only took down a nearby power pole but the stress on the wires damaged other poles up and down Flower Ave that were rotten at their bases. The poles damaged were not necessarily adjacent to the site, and Pepco replaced several poles.
- Mr. Horner recounted from his experience that there were some very high voltage powerlines on Carroll Ave, and in the past, when they fell, the accident scene was quite dangerous.
- A key messaging point should be to stay away from downed power lines. He also noted that the new Smart Meters used by Pepco allowed the utility company to see how many residences had lost power quickly. The meters under normal conditions sent periodic messages to the central database. It was becoming redundant that consumers had to phone during outages. Pepco now prioritized areas based on the number of disconnected customers rather than the number of calls they had received.
- Mr. Horner reminded the EPC that downed power lines in trees were also dangerous and that if a tree was steaming, this was a sign that it was electrified and could explode.
- With increased rain, Mr. Beck observed that we could expect this problem to reoccur more frequently as extreme weather saturates the soil and weakens trees.

6. Update CERT and Storm Camp

- The CERT coordinator for the county has said a hybrid CERT course could be held in TKPK if there is sufficient down county interest.
- Mr. Hardy said Storm Camp was willing to do an activity in the Fall, and the Recreation Department would need to be involved with planning this.

7. Items for the next meeting

- Discuss changing the EPC meeting schedule to find a time that might better suit all members.

8. Meeting closed (20:16)

[Minutes drafted by EPC Secretary Jim Della-Giacoma at 10:30 pm on June 23, 2022.]