

RECOVERY TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

March 5, 2025 – 8:30 AM

Commission Chambers

PRESENT: Frances Robustelli, City Manager
Luke Curtis, Building Official
David Hubbard, Planning Board Chair
Dan Rothenberger, Beach Stewardship Committee Chair
Bill Loughery, Historic Preservation Board Chair
Lisa Reich, Coastal Wildlife Advocacy Group
Herminio Afanador, Corey Ave Business Owner

STAFF PRESENT: Camden Mills, Public Services Director; Laura Canary, Community Development Director; Ariana Wilson-Romo, Admin. Assistant Clerk's Office; Kathleen Murray, Management Analyst - City Manager's Office

City Manager Robustelli called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

1. Update: City Facilities and Infrastructure

Camden Mills, Public Services Director reviewed a presentation which is made part of the record. He stated the City Commission prioritized the Wastewater and Stormwater Systems, as these are critical facilities. He announced the City currently remains in phase two of seven which includes conducting site inspections. Fire Station 22, the shuffleboard shack, Lift stations & Pump Stations, and the roadway on Gulf Way, have all been inspected. Other City-owned buildings are scheduled for inspections through March.

His presentation reviewed the following:

Storm Recovery Project Priorities -

- Wastewater System
 - Damage estimate: \$7.6M
 - Next steps: Cleaning & inspection, lift station rehabilitation
- Stormwater System
 - Damage estimate: \$750K
 - Next steps: Cleaning & inspection, structure repairs
- Critical Facilities
 - Fire Station 22
 - New build estimate: \$12M
 - Demolition estimates: \$36K
 - Next steps: Complete design, advertise a request for proposals for construction manager services, secure funding
 - Public Services
 - Roof repairs, building reconstruction, elevator estimate: \$398K
 - Insurance: Helene \$138K, Milton \$55K
 - Next steps: Finalize contractor cost estimates
 - Rec. Center
 - Building reconstruction: \$750K
 - Insurance: Helene \$134K, Milton \$110K
 - Next steps: Finalize contractor cost estimates
- Pass-A-Grille Way Seawall
 - Seawall and sidewalk replacement: \$5M

- Geotechnical investigation: Ground penetrating radar
- Next steps: Advertise a request for proposals for design-build
- Gulf Way Roadway & Beach wall
 - Roadway reconstruction and wall replacement: \$2.3M
 - Next steps: Advertise a request for proposals for design-build, temporary protective measures

City Manager Robustelli announced that the City is in the final stages of issuing Significant Damage letters with 600 properties remaining. Once completed, the City will move into a new phase of taking data provided by FEMA that includes who in the City has filed a claim and the amount received. To date, the City has received a total of \$150M for repairs and reconstruction. Any properties that have made a claim but have not started the permitting process for recovery will receive a letter from the City encouraging them to start the process.

Discussion ensued regarding concerns with inspections, non-permitted work, and the FEMA reimbursement process. Luke Curtis, Building Official, spoke about the Florida Building Code and Electric Code and what these inspections could look like for non-permitted completed work.

Member Reich stated she is concerned about the negative feedback the City will face if the general public is not properly informed. She encouraged City Manager Robustelli to explain what's to come at the next City Commission meeting so the public is not caught off-guard.

2. After Action SWOT – Community Perspective

City Manager Robustelli announced she wanted Committee Members to reflect on Helene and Milton and identify the city's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strengths: What went well?

- Communications went well
- Staff was able to respond well with the limited available resources
- Community spirit & support
- Resources were brought in for the community quickly such as portable bathrooms/showers, water, and MREs
- Duke Energy responded quickly
- Quick problem-solving, quick response overall
- Communications were very clear on how clean-up efforts would be unfolding
- Dune system worked well in many locations
- Sandbag service

Weaknesses: What were we lacking?

- Communications – The City posted information everywhere but it was not consistent on all platforms, which led to miscommunications in the community.
- Cleanup – Months of debris sitting due to claw machines breaking down continuously which delayed the cleanup process. This also led residents to spend their own money for quicker clean-ups.
- Lack of resources to take care of the damage; however, the response was fast with what the City had.

Opportunities: What are quick wins before the next hurricane season?

- Statewide emergency response team for large-scale disaster management

- Comprehensive plan is 14 years old and needs updating.
- Improve/reduce dependency on physical resources – staff lost vital equipment for the recovery process.
- Take advantage of partnerships & funding opportunities.
- Raise equipment/ relocate equipment
- Implement/improve technology to streamline inspections and permitting

Threats: What could go wrong in the future?

- Lack of dune systems – It takes years to have an established dune, acquire mature plants that will speed up the establishment of the dunes.
- Loss of sand
- Lack of habitat for wildlife, specifically sea turtles and birds.
- Stormwater drain cleanouts
- Labor shortages
- Data received from the companies we are relying on

City Manager Robustelli announced that the City will be advertising a request for proposals, to obtain a substantial damage team.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2nd, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.