

Plainfield Hazard Mitigation Committee Minutes
October 19, 2017

Present: Dan Gadd, Susan Grimaldi, Bram Towbin, Teresa Bienz, Amos Meacham. Guests: Carl Etnier, David Ferland, John Lawrence.

1. Discussion of the minutes – correct Dave Ferland’s name... motion from Dan, second from Susan – passed unanimously.

Introduction of Participants

2. Discussion of Community Radio and Ham Operators in the event of a community emergency or disaster – David, Carl and John speak.

- What is “ham radio”? David and the others explain.
- RACES – Radio Amateurs Emergency Radio Services
- Not allowed to do continuous broadcasts, as well as can’t overlap with existing commercial stations. Ham operators can communicate very far distances.
- WDEV is partnered with WGDR, which has its own backup and got an increase of broadcast power (now including Hardwick, Greensboro, Walden, Woodbury).
- We sort of know who the ham operators are in this town. Invite RACES to coordinate with us during drills and to provide services. Could include David Hale, Sasha Thayer, David Ferland, Carl Etnier (expired).
- Retail scanners can be set to listen to ham operators in order to listen.

IDEAS for Community Disasters/Preparedness Communications

- 1 Carl has done live feeds via telephone. We could initiate via the state a connection with local ham operators, and set up a link (live) into the station.
- 2 Get involved people on WGCR interview shows – make connections with disaster preparedness personnel (including local first responders), get disaster preparedness experts on the air so that listeners can learn how to prepare. Carl’s or Joseph’s shows could be a forum for raising awareness about the personal response to disasters.

(Dan says why not get local ham operators in Cabot, Plainfield, E. Montpelier, Marshfield all together, as a response team, also for a show)

- 3 Send WGDR meeting & preparedness announcements – at least a week in advance wgdr-psa@goddard.edu – can be passed on to the programmers.
- 4 make our own PSAs – “Smokey Bear” (examples) – prepare custom PSAs at the station. WGDR can do event-related PSAs for anything which has to do with community preparedness (or they will train us how to do it). Michael knows how and has taught others how to do radio production esp. PSAs.

- 5 Specific disaster-specific scripts to be read on-air, for specific emergencies ie. flooding, spreading fires, HazMat spills after reported to the station by first responders or emergency management personnel.
- 6 Goddard may agree to have a staff member trained as a Public Information Officer, so WGDR could directly take in calls from Fire Chiefs and Emergency management persons, and send out alerts etc. to the receiving towns. Carl talked about KMUD (from Oregon) as source to figure out the way to provide key communications in the event of earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.
- 6 Carl mentions that community “news” is coordinated by him for broadcast. For such content he could do short-form interviews.
- 7 David is ready to help bridge to RACES, and to be a coordinator for a conversation.

Recap: As far as WGDR is concerned – if you think of a person who has a story to tell about emergency preparedness, call the station. Carl will be the contact person for interviews. They are prepared to step up during disaster situations, and are looking for resources to get sustainable power. (Michael adds that if the station gets someone trained as a Public Information Officer, their key position for community disaster response could make WGDR more focal to regional communications, and help allocate funds for that purpose.)

- John Lawrence says that FEMA has been helpful on the West Coast and may have resources to tap into for community-based disaster response.

3. DAM SAFETY – Questions to be posed to Green Mountain Power on October 25th were distributed to members who intend to go to the question session.

Everyone agrees that focus at the public meeting should be upon what GMP can actually do and to get them to put specific actions and dates forward as commitments. (Their focus so far has been on good public relations and a lot of vague promises.)

MEETING ADJOURNED – 8:10 p.m.