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Town of Berlin, Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

Public Presentation: November 13, 2017

What is hazard mitigation? What's a mitigation plan?

- Hazard mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of natural disasters
- Mitigation is not disaster response; its goal is to reduce hazard impacts before a disaster occurs
- A mitigation plan identifies natural hazards and the risks they pose to residents, infrastructure, property, and natural resources, and it prioritizes projects, policies, education and procedures for reducing these risks, now and in the future
- Mitigation helps break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage

Why should Berlin complete and adopt this kind of plan?

- Planning establishes a road map for achievable actions that can substantially reduce risks
- Formal approval of a plan by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allows the town to receive non-emergency federal disaster assistance and mitigation funding as mandated under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000
- The plan is primarily funded by a grant from FEMA through MEMA (with a local in-kind match)
- Currently, there exists a regional plan which is due to expire in March 2018

What natural hazards pose the greatest risks to Berlin?

- Flooding (rivers and streams, dams, and flash floods)
- Winter storms, hurricanes/tropical storms, severe thunderstorms, and tornadoes
- Droughts and wildfires
- Earthquakes

Local partners

Local knowledge is essential to the mitigation planning process. Partners in West Boylston to date include:

Chief Paul Zbikowski, Fire Dept.	Chief Tom Galvin, Police Dept.
Mary Arata, Administrative Secretary	Lisa Wysocki, Board of Selectmen
Keith Clemmer, Highway Dept.	

Planning timeline

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Information gathering via mapping, research, and local input | Feb. 2017 to date |
| • Draft plan development | June 2017 |
| ○ Public comments/questions requested by <u>November 29</u> | |
| • Public event #1 | November 2017 |
| • MEMA review | December 2017 |
| • FEMA approval | Winter 2018 |
| • Public event #2 and local adoption | Winter 2018 |
| • 5-year update | 2023 |

Recent/ongoing mitigation activities

- Street sweeping and catch basin cleaning
- Maintained and replaced problem culverts when needed and as funding allows
- Dam monitoring
- Tree trimming program
- Swift Reach

Recommended mitigation activities in DRAFT plan

A. Structure and Infrastructure Projects

- Purchase a Utility Vehicle(UTV) for the purpose of monitoring forested area with limited accessibility.
- Snow fences, install and when necessary replace damaged fencing

B. Preparedness and Response Actions

- Evaluate and repair dams as identified by the Office of Dam Safety
- Coordinate roadway information, snow removal and evacuation plans among local and state officials

C. Education and Awareness Programs

- Conduct outreach/distribute information regarding lightning strikes and wildfires, storm warnings and warning sirens
- Conduct outreach to the community about hazard mitigation, fostering individual responsibility

D. Local Plan Regulations

- Ongoing review and updates of local plans and policies to ensure that new construction will not occur in flood-prone and other hazard areas
- Update Open Space and Recreation Plan (2018) to include hazard mitigation goals
- Inventory shelter supplies and emergency resources
- Create a Road Bylaw, ensuring new development will have roads able to handle emergency vehicles and proper drainage infrastructure is built

The draft plan will be available shortly at <http://www.cmrpc.org/berlin-hazard-mitigation-plan>

Comments and questions should be directed to Adam Menard (amenard@cmrpc.org) or Trish Settles (tsettles@cmrpc.org) at CMRPC no later than November 29, 2017

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