

City of Bellaire
Flood Hazard Mitigation Task Force
Meeting Notes
October 30, 2017

City Manager, Paul Hofmann called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He explained that where this meeting will deal more with introduction and orientation, future meetings will be much more involved. Mr. Hofmann added that all meetings will be open to the public and will continue to solicit public comment. He mentioned that they most likely will take place in the CenterPoint Energy room, which is located above the swimming pool. Mr. Hofmann recognized that many members of the Task Force were impacted by the recent flood event and voiced his appreciation for their service during a time when their lives have been significantly impacted. He then explained that this is a process that the City is actually behind on, and is required as part of the City's involvement in the Community Rating System (CRS). He added that one of the decisions that will be made in the upcoming months is whether or not the City will continue to be part of the CRS. Mr. Hofmann then asked the members of the Task Force to introduce themselves and to answer the question of **"What are we trying to accomplish?"**

Jonathan Reichek- Mr. Reichek stated that he has resided in Bellaire since 2017 on Lula Street. He added that their home did flood, and that he would like to help Bellaire to mitigate and prevent any future flooding.

Win Frazier- Mr. Frazier stated that he has been a resident of Bellaire since 1981, and has dedicated his service to the City in several different ways, including being a member and Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He added that he wants to be a part of the changes that need to be made.

David Roylance- Mr. Roylance stated that he has been a resident of Bellaire since 1995. He added that he was interested in serving on the Task Force for his own education as well as to insure that there is a robust and clear conversation about what we can do as a city to improve flood mitigation and access what funds may be available.

Robyn Rosenblatt- Ms. Rosenblatt stated that she moved to Bellaire 5 years ago. She added that she worked in public finance for 15 years, and is hoping to bring her Wall Street and government experience to the Task Force. Ms. Rosenblatt explained that she went through Hurricanes Ike and Katrina as an analyst. She stated that Bellaire needs to be somewhere that her and her family can stay.

Brian Sanford- Mr. Sanford stated that he moved to Bellaire in May 31, 2017, and this is his first home to ever own. He added that he has a very vested interest in the future of Bellaire, and what the Task Force does will help to pay dividends for the City Moving forward. He wants to ensure that the Task Force do the best they can.

Yana Kristal- Ms. Kristal stated that she has been a resident since January of 2017. She added that she had shoulder deep water and had to be evacuated by boat. Ms. Kristal said that it was very scary, especially with a toddler and that she never wants to go through an event like that again. She explained that her background in engineering and finance will help to contribute to the Task Force.

Millie Hast-Ms. Hast also stated that her home had flooded and that she had to be evacuated by the fire department. She added that she never wants to have to go through that again. Ms. Hast explained that she has been in Bellaire since 1979, and was a member of City Council from 1996-1999. She stated that she has also been on several other boards and commissions, and currently serves on the Patrons for Bellaire Parks. Ms. Hast stated that she is very dedicated to Bellaire and wants to ensure that Bellaire never has flooding again.

Michael Ling- Mr. Ling explained that he has lived in Bellaire since 2003, and was impacted by Hurricane Harvey. He added that this event was very near and dear to his heart. Mr. Ling stated that he is an engineer for oil and gas company and hopes he can contribute as much as possible. He mentioned that he appreciates the opportunity to serve on the Task Force and does not want to suffer again like the City did during Harvey.

Mr. Hofmann then explained that **Chris Canonico** and **Menny Rosenbaum** were also members of the Task Force, but were not in attendance. He stated that Mr. Canonico is an engineer specializing in the public utility area. He added that he lives in the Southdale area of the City and was flooded as well. He stated that Mr. Rosenbaum is a local builder and has been in the Bellaire area for several years. Mr. Hofmann mentioned that he has been very active in helping the residents of Bellaire to recover after Harvey.

Mr. Hofmann then reviewed the formal purpose of why the Task Force was formed and what the City is hoping to accomplish. He stated that based on the City Council's Resolution that was amended and passed in early October of this year, there are three primary purposes:

1. Identify flood hazards
2. Limit the impact of flood related losses to commercial and residential properties
3. Remain in good standing in the CRS of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Mr. Hofmann explained that questions have recently been asked about what the City has done and what the City will continue to do to mitigate/prevent/control flood events in Bellaire. He mentioned that staff has been organizing their thinking around the "three realms," a regulatory realm, a local realm, and a regional realm. He then reviewed what each of those realms entails and explained what the Task Force's role would be in each. To view the entire presentation by the City Manager, please click [HERE](#).

Mr. Hofmann then asked the Task Force to answer the question of "**Why does flooding happen in Bellaire?**" The following responses were given:

Jonathan Reichek- Brays Bayou is undersized. The improvement of the railroad ditch going from concrete to unimproved could slow the water down. The tracks drain perpendicular to the bayou, making it harder for water to flow in.

Millie Hast- The current design standard for the storm sewer system in Bellaire is undersized. The impact of commercial development, is the City doing an adequate job in preventing downstream impacts.

Win Frazier- The flat topography of the area.

Michael Ling-The lack of control that the City has over the flow of upstream to downstream.

Yana Kristal-The Baldwin Street improvements need to be looked at in greater detail, is the water now higher after project, did it make things worse?

The following responses to “Why does flooding happen in Bellaire” were given by the public:

- The railroad track serves as a damn.
- The development on South Rice & the 59 feeder (Wal-Mart, Sams) was completed very rapidly. Was adequate detention designed by the City of Houston?
- The Cypress Ditch (controlled by City of Houston) is also undersized, and more development within the City of Houston pushes more water into the Cypress Ditch.
- The zoning code leads to more lot coverage and gutters drain directly into the street, filling them up faster.
- New sources of water are being routed into Brays Bayou.
- Water is coming out of Brays Bayou and going into the railroad ditch, which is acting as a tributary to the bayou. The City needs a backflow preventer.
- The increase of development upstream, west of Bellaire, and the possibility of more detention.
- Lack of information on the relationship between the reservoirs (Addick's, Barker, etc.) and Brays Bayou.
- The City's lack of success with mitigation grants, FEMA grants. Overstating Project Brays as a solution when the benefit of the completed project will only be minimal to the City of Bellaire.
- Drainage across from Westpark, was it developed sufficiently?

A member of the public then asked if there is a map of the flooded areas?

Mr. Hofmann explained that there are maps of where the flooding was most intense, and the report will be brought forward in the future.

Mr. Hofmann then introduced the members of the Council Liaison Team, Staff Advisory Team, and Consultant Advisory Teams and reviewed the roles and responsibilities that each of the groups, including the Task Force, are specifically charged with. He mentioned that one of the most important parts of the Mitigation Plan is public involvement and engagement.

A member of the public that used to be a floodplain manager for Harris County asked if the City will use different design criteria for storm water systems moving forward. Will more than the 100 year flood be taken into consideration?

Mr. Hofmann explained that this will ultimately be up to the City Council and the Task Force's recommendation. He added that for the most part the City's design criteria has been built around the 2 year storm event. Mr. Hofmann mentioned that the 2016 report, which was completed by the City Engineer, suggested a more aggressive design approach that would include underground detention in certain areas of the City, designed for the 100 year event.

Mr. Hofmann then reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings, stating that the next meeting is tentatively being held on November 14th, with the heart of the agenda being a report from the City on the first draft of the risk assessment and mitigation strategy. He added that the City is currently envisioning a public hearing on Monday, January 29th, with the final action plan going before Council on

Monday, March 19th. Mr. Hofmann added that the start time of the meetings have not been nailed down yet. He mentioned that a separate site will be added to the City's webpage devoted to the work of the Task Force and reviewed what types of information will be made available on that site.

Public Comments:

Sonya Regee: Ms. Regee stated that she is very familiar with the benefits of participating in the CRS & NFIP, and wanted to know why the City's participation is under review.

Mr. Hofmann explained that the City's participation in the CRS is under review in order to determine if the benefits are worth the regulatory overreach of the City. He added that the people who were recently handed a Substantial Damage Declaration for their home are not going to be satisfied with the explanation that the City must do this in order to participate in the system and have lower insurance rates. He stated that he is not suggesting that the City no longer participate, just that it is something that needs to be evaluated.

Jana Badian: She asked if planning for the City's responders would be in the Task Force's purview. She also asked how funding would be allocated if and when a report is completed.

Mr. Hofmann explained that funding would be part of the risk assessment/ action plan. He added that the City's responders should be taken into consideration as part of the emergency response efforts and included in the plan.

Lynn McBee: Ms. McBee stated that she would like for the City to provide a list to the Task Force of all damages to the City buildings and equipment. She also suggested that the City buy a boat. Ms. McBee mentioned that a past Task Force said that the City would create its own drainage criteria and never has. She stated that it is about time that Bellaire took on that load. Ms. McBee also mentioned that the City has not seriously considered a location of land for Bellaire detention facilities, and that she would like to see the Task Force address that. She also stated that the media needs to be specifically invited to the meetings and given background material in advance. Ms. McBee also urged the City to invest in microphones for the CenterPoint room if future meetings are to be held there.

Sean Hansen: He encouraged the City to collect data from Harvey on how deep the water got at various locations.

Robert Riquelmy: Mr. Riquelmy asked how much subsidence there has been in the City since 2001? He added that this plan will require a significant amount of money and the police need the money more than drainage.

Lynn McBee: Ms. McBee mentioned that the City has participated in the CRS since 2004, and it was the first time that a pre-thought scheme was presented to justify a public policy decision. She added that it was very organized because the rules were preset. Ms. McBee felt that if the City does nothing other than to make a community policy decision, that process is the best the City could possibly have.

