



The Avalon Home and Land Owners Association

Speakers

The President introduced Frank Mc Call, Emergency Manager for Cape May County. He commented that the primary focus was citizen protection. To do an effective job there is heavy reliance on the state and borough partners.

Cape May County ranks number 6 in difficulty of evacuation for hurricanes in the United States. There is a terrific partnership with the National Weather service in Mount Holly.

In 2010 it has been agreed there will be a 36-hour warning for hurricanes that could affect a tri-county area (Cape May, Cumberland and Atlantic). This replaces a single county warning system. The worst time for hurricanes is from mid-August until mid-October.

In planning for evacuation it has to be realized that the CMC population in summer can reach 800,000. Of this number about 90,000 are residents, 15,000 foreign workers, 2,800 are in long-term care facilities (of which there are 17 in the county), 3,000 are special needs patients and 680,000 are tourists.

In the February 2010 storms a nursing home with 103 patients lost electricity and had to be evacuated. This took four hours using every available resource. To evacuate the summer population 400 buses would be needed in addition to the 140 school buses in the county. NJ Transit has 114 buses in the state.

When a hurricane is forecast, the County issues an "out of service" mode to all electric substations in the county. Service is restored after the hurricane passes.

Mr. McCall outlined the effects of a Category 1 hurricane, e.g., the tidal fetch and storm surge add an additional 15 to 18 feet on top of a normal high tide. In addition, there could be 20 to 24-inches of rain – which the back bays cannot drain. Sixty seven buildings have been designated as public shelters, none of which are designated for hurricane evacuation. The shelters of last resort in the County can hold 3000 people; they are primitive and are only used to secure citizens temporarily. As a result the county relies on using shelters outside the tri-county area. Barrier island communities have Mutual Aid Agreements to house people in generator supplemented buildings. The average person is on their own for 72 hours, which is not good enough.

The County needs EMAC Assistance incorporated into its Emergency Operations Plans to protect its citizens in advance of a hurricane. At this time there is no pre-planned help from the State or Federal governments. It was stated that one of the potential problems is that it takes 36 hours to evacuate a health care facility.

In order to set up contra-flow on the main arteries in the County the Governor has to issue an evacuation order. Once the order has been issued it takes up to four days to get everything in motion. That means the order would have to be issued while the storm could be in the Caribbean, at which time the weather in this area is beautiful. It goes without saying that major road improvements are needed as well as early citizen warning.



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The President introduced Gary Szatkowski of NOAA

This speaker gave a detailed discussion on the National Weather Service office. He outlined the storm force categories, which are tied to wind speed and the effects of a direct hit on the County. A category 1 storm would flood just about all of the area to the Parkway; a Category 4 storm would cover just about all the County.

To show the effects of changes in the direction of a storm the 1993 storm Isabel, which passed well to the west of New Jersey was used. A map showing flood lines due to the actual course of the storm was modified to show the effects of different pathways ending with a map diagramming the effects if the storm had made landfall in southern Delaware and followed the same directional path. In the last case, not only would the shore points have been affected, but there would have been a large tidal surge in the Delaware River.

At this time it is still believed that this will be an active season. People need to know what to do and to be prepared.

Additional information can be obtained from the following websites:

www.weather.gov/os/hurricane

www.nhc.noaa.gov

www.weather.gov/phl.

STATE OF THE BOROUGH

The Mayor stated that the *Financial Situation* of the Borough was very good and that the ratio of delinquent taxes was the lowest in the County. On the Expenditure side, salaries make up 25% (down from 29% in 2009). The assessed values peaked in 2007, although there was a gradual increase in 2009. The Borough is asking permission to carry out an in-house assessment to take into consideration changes in values. It is likely that beach front properties may see an increase in assessment. The local purpose tax rate is 19 cents per \$100 for 2010.

The Borough looks at additional revenue sources, e.g., cell phone towers on the 38th Street water tower, cable TV, state energy receipt tax, grants and interest. There are negotiations ongoing to place a cell tower on the 13th Street water tower.

Avalon should be able to live within the state mandated 2% budget cap. The Borough uses a “pay as you go” philosophy (there is no heavy debt in the budget). It is felt that there needs to be legislation to control binding arbitration since there have been fantastic raises for years.

The *Beach Fill* was a joint venture with Sea Isle City and saved \$1 million in set up charges. The State eventually came through with \$4.5 million for the project. FEMA will not reimburse sand for a Corps of Engineers beach (which Avalon has and Sea Isle does not).

Avalon constantly evaluates the latest science for renourishing the beaches. The Corps of Engineers is about to release the results of a study on possible back-passing of sand and there will be discussions on an experimental program. The Borough plans on doing its own renourishment and the results will be posted on the website.

Environmental Initiatives – Three initiatives are underway:



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Dune Vegetation Management Plan

Armacost Park restoration

Community Forestry Management Plan.

Energy Audit – The results of an energy audit on Borough facilities was presented to Borough Council on August 11. Some initiatives could result in savings of from 300% to 4700%. Immediate, 4-year and long term goals have been recommended to save energy and to save money.

Water Conservation Guidelines – The problem is one of allocation, not of supply. The Borough is trying to get the allocation changed. Planning and Zoning Board have modified the zoning ordinances to conserve water.

Green Initiative – The Second Annual Green Fair will be held on October 9.

Infrastructure improvements

The water tower at 38th Street will be repainted. To do this the antennas will have to be moved
About 70% of the streets have been resurfaced since 1990. It is planned to do 6 or 7 streets in the fall and spring.

Work will start in September to add 12 feet to the south side of the bridge over the Avalon Canal. The third lane will be extended back 950 feet to alleviate traffic congestion.

MUA will be carrying out pipeline replacements, but it is not certain when that work will start.

An advisory group has been working on the removal of signs on the Boulevard.

Emergency Alerts – The Borough has a five-tiered alert system:

Updated information is given during storm events on the website www.avalonboro.org;

The AM radio station (1630) is updated by Emergency Management during storm events;

Sore TV (Cable Channel 2) has 24 hour weather information;

Global Connect (reverse 911), register your cell phone through the Borough web site;

A new smart phone APP will launch this month.

As a result of the February snowstorms negotiations are underway to get shelter at the Vo-tech school off Route 55 so families of volunteer personnel can be evacuated. There has been 45% return of a survey that was recently mailed to residents to determine needs for assistance in an emergency – the Borough wants to know what will be needed to move people and pets.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Written questions were entertained from the attendees. Questions and answers are summarized below:

Q: Along with working on changing the growth in the dunes, can we eliminate the skunks, raccoons and feral cats?

Skunk problem!! What to do?

Re skunks – 4th Avenue along the bay. Animal Control called – no response; phone call to Mayor's Office – no response.



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A: About 100 skunks have been removed from the island in two campaigns. This is the first time that I had heard there was no reply when a complaint was registered. If you call my office we will pass the word along.

Q: Any plans to construct jetties in the ocean to protect against beach erosion?

Beach replenishment was not completed to plan as 24th – 26th Streets was not given the sand planned for. Is there a plan to rectify?

[Comment] Please tell south end people how they will be affected by taking sand to north end.

A: There will be no effect on the people at the south end if sand is recycled. We are awaiting a report on a study from the US Army Corps of Engineers on sand recycling. We will make the results of the study available. As far as the beach replenishment is concerned it was built perfectly to spec. The project was monitored by a several agencies, Stockton College, Stevens Institute and the Borough Engineer. As far as a modified groyne field is concerned the Mayor has talked with Texas A & M, which has a wave monitoring tank and they are looking at a scenario with step groynes. Nothing will be done until modeling is complete. This is a long term approach; the short term approach is the sand back-passing technique.

Q: When the 38th Street tower is painted, will the surrounding area be landscaped, etc.?

A: Yes it will.

Q: Franchises in Avalon?

A: The Borough has no ordinances against franchises in the Borough but there are no nationwide franchises in the community.

Q: Are the ice cream trucks licensed? Some trucks are a disgrace. Is there a limit on the number of vendors? Should they leave their trucks with the motor running when they go up onto the beach as well as when they serve ice cream?

The ice cream trucks are completely out of hand, arriving every 10 minutes. The trucks are in disrepair and noisy, the bells ring constantly. The diesel trucks idle constantly. As a beach front home owner it is unbearable. Also visitors note that it is impossible to relax on the beach as a result. In Stone Harbor the ice cream vendors push carts on the beach. What is the plan?

A: The ice cream trucks have licenses issued by the Borough. The content of the licenses will be looked at this winter to see if changes should be made.

Q: What monetary savings can we anticipate in merging Avalon and Stone Harbor schools?

A: That is in the purview of the School Board. The Mayor stated that he was in favor of the vote taken by the Stone Harbor School Board which would split the students with K through 4 going to Stone Harbor and 5 through 8 in Avalon.

Q: On a summer week-end how long would it take to evacuate 7 mile island? And stress to all visitors, come to Avalon with at least a half tank of gas – no gas will be available from only one gas station.

A: If enough notice is given we hope people will get out in a trickle starting with seniors and families of emergency responders. With about 60,000 people in Avalon on a summer weekend we think



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it will take 7 hours to get everyone off the island. The problem is that even with contra traffic the other roads in the area would be clogged. In addition, Route 47 in Dennisville would be flooded to a depth of 4 feet with a 9 foot surge.

Q: There is no public bathroom from 30th Street until you get into Stone Harbor. Do we intend to build one?

A: There are no plans to build one in the near future.

Q: Could we have a public dock designated for swimming only?

A: If a place is designated for swimming there would have to be lifeguards present. The Mayor does not think that a public dock would be designated for swimming.

Q: Fire Alarm. With cell phone and other technology(s) available, why can't we replace current onerous alarm system with a wireless way to alert first responders and other volunteers?

A: Not all modern technology is fail-safe. A lot of volunteers do not carry pagers at work. If people hear the siren then it is known that people are responding to an emergency and if a blue light is seen in the rear view mirror a driver, by law has to pull over.

Q: Now with the seasonal ban on boat trailers so I can't park my trailer in front of my house to work on the boat, what is AHLOA's position on the construction trailers & trucks that are obviously "stored" on Dune Drive at the ball field & on the east side of Dune between 11th & 12th?

A: The "storage" of trucks and trailer in the areas mentioned in the question has not been noticed.

Q: There was a very bad odor for the past few weeks from the pump station at 39th Streets. Is there a problem?

A: This is the first report we have had. It will be reported to the MUA.

Q: Do you think that the ordinance about walking bikes on the sidewalk is effective?

Why isn't the "no bicycles on sidewalk" ordinance being enforced?

Bikes are still being ridden on the sidewalks between 20th @ 32nd Streets on Dune Drive. Many times whole groups of bikes. It was so bad last Friday you had to duck out of their way. Isn't anything that the police can do to enforce the bike law to protect pedestrians on sidewalks in the business district?

Q. The State law about crosswalks – why do we not have signs to reference the fine?

A: Police Chief David Dean explained what was being done to minimize bicycle traffic in the Business District, however, it was almost impossible to have enough officers in the area at all times. He went on to explain the ramifications of the State law on crosswalks and that pedestrians bear a large responsibility for preventing accidents by looking before they attempt to cross the road.