

Tornado conference call SUMMARY

15 June 2011

1:30 PM

Attending: Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners; Terry French, Massachusetts Archives; Jack Sullivan, FEMA Region I; Andrew Raddant, Dept. of the Interior; Rebecca Williams, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Lydia Kachadoorian, FEMA Region I; Lori Foley, Heritage Preservation

Calling in: Pete Thomas, Anita Uhlán, Erin Kizer, Nancy Orth, and John Callan, FEMA field staff; Greg Farmer, CT Trust for Historic Preservation/Agricola Corp.; Ben Murphy, Springfield Preservation Trust; Scott Hanson, Springfield Planning and Economic Development Dept.; Erin Kelly and Courtney Whelan, Preservation Massachusetts; Chris Skelly and Michael Steinitz, Massachusetts Historical Commission; John Ketchum, FEMA

FEMA Update

Prior to the federal declaration that was announced just before the call, FEMA was already engaged in pre-disaster declaration activities: an IMAT (Incident Management Assistance Team) has been deployed since the beginning of June; Nick Russo was assigned as the FCO (Federal Coordinating Officer); a drive through the 40-mile stretch helped determine staffing size and the types of assessments FEMA needs to conduct. Now that the declaration has been made, FEMA will provide aid in the form of reimbursement for debris removal, much of the storm-related damage to infrastructure, and emergency response costs incurred by local communities, state agencies, and eligible private non-profits. With the declaration, FEMA can now enforce compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Two programs provide aid:

The **Individual Assistance (IA) Program** is administered by FEMA and the Small Business Administration and is now available to affected homeowners, renters, and businesses in Hampden and Worcester Counties.

The **Public Assistance (PA) Program** to assist local governments, many private non-profit organizations (PNPs), and state agencies is now available in Hampden County only. (Each county must meet a financial threshold; the 2-3 affected towns in Worcester County did not meet that threshold.)

Those requesting PA should attend the Applicant Briefing(s) conducted by the State and FEMA to learn about available assistance and eligibility requirements for obtaining Federal assistance. Applicant Briefings will be announced on MEMA's Web site. (The State's Storm Recovery Web site: http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=mg2utilities&L=1&sid=massgov2&U=tornado_recovery)

Questions regarding IA and PA

Is there any incentive to rebuild historic buildings that are completely gone? In Springfield, both private and public (city-owned) structures suffered significant damage. (Scott)

Jack and Lydia / FEMA: It depends on who has jurisdiction. If the building is privately owned, it is up to the individual. FEMA has no regulatory authority to repair in-kind for individual owners. For individual homes, any assistance that FEMA provides would not take into account rebuilding in a historic context.

If it is a public building, the function of the property will be taken into account when PA is considered. The amount of damage – ranging from totally destroyed to repairable – will dictate the amount of funding that will go toward the historic property. Each property will be assessed separately.

Question regarding funding by the National Trust

Rebecca: The National Trust has very little intervention for non-profits and municipalities. They could possibly seed a revolving loan, but only in the hundreds of dollars. No funding is available for private individuals.

FEMA will set up **Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs)** in each of the nine communities hit hardest by the tornadoes. The DRCs will be staffed by FEMA and several state agencies, including MEMA. (The locations have not yet been announced.) The DRCs will be critical, especially if we want to educate homeowners and property owners appropriately.

- To address the need to disseminate information and answer questions about damage to historic structures and resources, a table will be set up at each DRC staffed by experts. Preservation Massachusetts (PM) will work with the Mass. Historical Commission (MHC) to schedule volunteers. It will not be necessary to staff the tables full time at each of the DRCs, but it will be important to publicize the hours when experts will be available in each community.
- Gregor will contact MEMA to coordinate providing a table for literature on cultural and historic preservation and to let them know the tables will be staffed at hours to be determined.
- MHC will provide assistance in photocopying literature for the DRC tables and will coordinate with the DRCs.
- Any material that should be made available should be sent to Gregor at GTrinkaus-Randall@massmail.state.ma.us.

Dissemination of information

Getting information out to the public is a priority. Organizations represented in the call are trying their best to organize volunteers to help. Michele Barker of PM is making sure information is reaching communities. Christine Bergquist, director at Wilbraham Public Library, is making sure any information they receive from the Town is being posted at the library. The town is posting information on its Web site and Facebook page.

- Erin K. will draft copy to let the general public know what is being done to help them.
- Town libraries and municipal offices need to receive what is being disseminated, and they will in turn distribute the information.

- MHC needs to connect with Pat Carnevale, Regional Administrator for MEMA Regions 3 and 4 (413.821.1500), so press releases can include information about historic preservation activities.
- FEMA External Affairs will need to be in touch with the HP community to include information beyond the canned messages.
- The link to the [National Trust disaster page](#) should be provided to homeowners and property owners.

Volunteers

PM has sent out requests to professional networks – including the Boston Society of Architects, APT New England Chapter, National Trust, and AIC CERT (American Institute for Conservation Collections Emergency Response Team) – for volunteers to assist in damage assessment. So far, 82 people have volunteered from MA, CT, and NY. Most are professionals in the HP field – architects, architectural historians, preservation consultants. Many volunteered for Katrina and other natural disasters.

Damage assessment / data collection

[Rapid Building and Site Condition Assessment](#)

[Rapid Building and Site Condition Assessment Instructions](#)

We must ask why we are collecting this data. Who's going to do what with it? FEMA will not be involved in funding everything. What are the next steps – working with homeowners, with MHC, finding other preservation grants? If concern is for individual homes, FEMA will not have a role. You need to know that you may not be able to save a building and you may not get funding. FEMA historic preservation staff will be looking at specific buildings; they will not be conducting a comprehensive survey of every historic property in the 39 affected miles. There will be some overlap of effort among the organizations and agencies. But if information can be shared widely, this will cut down on the duplication.

- FEMA can generate some detailed field maps to help record data. (Lydia)
- Lydia will coordinate how best to collect information and put it into a database; access will be available to all who need it. She has sent out a number of handouts and information from FEMA's Web site. (These documents are attachments to emails you've received; they'll be uploaded to Google Docs soon.)
- FEMA will need copies of the forms filled out by the volunteers.
- MHC will serve as the clearinghouse for all data gathered. This will include databases, field logs, and digital photos.
- Michael Steinitz is still waiting for the master list of addresses of red-, yellow-, and green-flagged structures from Gene Novak, State Building Inspector. This information is critical for the volunteer teams.
- John Callan, Historic Preservation Specialist with FEMA, recommended that the experienced leaders be identified from among the volunteers, and then they should determine how to manage and divide up the survey work.
- The point of contact (POC) for the volunteers is Preservation Massachusetts (PM).
- The chair of each town's Historical Commission should serve as the POC to PM.

- PM will coordinate deployment of volunteers, which should begin early next week. Some volunteers will be needed for data entry of collected information, others for staffing the DRCs.
- Assessment of historic landscapes should be undertaken as well because they are considered a cultural resource.
- Hazardous materials: Anita will touch base with MEMA regarding assistance the State can offer. Mass DEP has air monitors for asbestos fibers at major demolition sites. C&D (Construction & Demolition) will address the issue.

Other reports on site visits and meetings

See Michele Barker's 6/14/11 email summarizing meetings in Monson and Springfield.

Municipal records in Monson. Michael Comeau, Martha Clark, and Terry French of the Massachusetts Archives met with all town departments to ascertain the condition of public records. The records in the town clerk's vault suffered no damage. The only affected records were in the office of the Treasurer, which suffered some water damage. The materials are in the process of being dried. Town offices have been relocated to an unused elementary school untouched by the storm, and municipal operations are up and functioning. Recommendations were made to obtain fireproof filing cabinets. The Archives will follow up with the Monson Emergency Management Director, the Town Administrator, and the Town Clerk.

Libraries. All libraries in affected communities survived unscathed with the exception of Monson Free Library, which suffered slight damage. Gregor had sent emails to all libraries requesting reports of damage to cultural institutions. The New England Museum Association did the same for museums. None reported back any damage.

The conference call closed at 2:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Foley

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