

Notes of CERT Meeting, 5-22-23

In attendance:

Melissa Barringer, President
Danielle Carter, City Council Liason
Rachel Bush, Training Officer
Mark Grisar, Secretary
Linda Green
Timothy Jenkins
Paul Ruffins
Keilia Phillips
Rachelle Yeung
Jutta Brettschneider

The meeting began at 7:32 with a welcome to new attendees Rachelle, Jutta and Keilia, and new City Liason, Councilwoman Carter.

Melissa reviewed events of the past month, including:

The Zoom session we had with Fairfax County CERT officials Elvia Foil and Jeffrey Katz, in which they provided a wealth of information as to how to build and maintain a CERT team. A summary of that meeting appears in a previous CERT missive.

The importance of pinning down insurance coverage by the City of CERT members was discussed and Danielle will investigate further.

Can Mt. Rainier CERT operate in other towns? Danielle notes a memorandum of understanding would need to be drawn up and she will look into this. It was agreed that our CERT does have the goal of expanding our assistance to neighboring towns and consolidating energies within on organization is a good idea, especially in light of Jutta and Keilia being Brentwood residents.

Melissa represented us earlier in the month at University Park's 5 K Run, and that resulted in establishing a connection with them, including one of UP's members helping out at our own 5 K.

M.R. CERT also worked at the recent 5k Run and had a table in the heart of Mount Rainier Day festivities, where Melissa, Pat (Melissa's mother), Ned (University Park CERT), Michael (Upper Marlboro CERT), Tim and Karen gave out 6 cases of water to thirsty ones, passed out almost 300 first aid kits, spoke about what CERT does to numerous people, had 24 sign-ups for our list serve and yielded 3 new faces at this meeting.

We'll be providing a first aid table, with games, handouts and water at the upcoming Mt. Rainier Elementary School Carnival on June 2. Contact Melissa at thebarringers2@gmail.com to volunteer for this event. We still need at least one more person from 5:30-7:30 pm.

Uncontested elections were held for the positions of Training Officer and Secretary. Rachel and Mark agreed to another year of service. Melissa presented Rachel and Mark with tokens of thanks for their service this past year.

Background checks are required of CERT responders in order to participate in county emergencies. The Mt. Rainier Police Department is willing to do this for us, but the general concept was met with considerable resistance. This led to a brief discussion of our meeting location, and the potential community friction caused by using the Police facility. We are investigating alternatives, including the Fire House on Rte. 1. We have reached out to the Fire House with little response. More efforts are forthcoming.

CERT has \$923.96 in the bank. Near future expenditures include: improved radio walkie-talkies, signage to be used at events, reusable water bottles with CERT logo and website that we can distribute at future events.

Melissa conducted a Heat Illness Training.

She described the symptoms for the three increasingly severe stages, from cramps and spasms to exhaustion, paleness, vomiting, fainting, to heat stroke in which the temperature rises to 103, dizziness, rapid pulse, no sweating, dryness, skin turning red.

Remedies include cooling down in the shade or if available air conditioning, an ice pack on back of neck, loosening and wetting the clothing, drinking water.

Heat stroke annually results in the highest number of deaths of all weather-related calamities. It hits the very young and the old the hardest.

As a volunteer, anticipate the heat, wear light clothing, drink plenty, avoid high energy activities.

We are going to try to establish a Cooling Station(s) in the City.

Upcoming Trainings:

CERT 2 day Basic Training, June 3 and 4 at Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

CPR and 1st Aid Training June 7 and 21 at OEM

Mental Health 1st Aid (Jutta is looking into this)

Discussion was held in the topic for next month's CERT training. Mark suggested that Lt. Simms provide a deployment training to speak on what role CERT would take, what kinds of things could CERT be called on to do, what would it look like, etc. Mark will reach out to Lt. Simms.

The next CERT monthly meeting will be June 26th.

This meeting adjourned about 8:45 pm.