

RE: Hurricane Matthew Storm Response

The Edisto Beach Property Owners Association, in a Board meeting on November 27, 2016, discussed in detail the response the Town organized and oversaw in our “pre-storm” preparations, our planning adjustments during the storm, our “after the storm” response and the extensive cleanup activities needed to restore as much as practical the pre-storm conditions in the Town.

The unanimous conclusion by the Board is that the Town’s response during all phases of the reaction to the storm was done as well as could be possibly expected and, in fact, exceeded what we could have reasonably expected. During the “pre-storm” phase, the Town management put in place what was needed if the SC National Guard was required by assuring the Governor’s administration had prepositioned Guard resources so if they were needed a more “immediate” response would be possible. Also, the Town organized the necessary canvassing of the Town’s citizens on whether they would leave as recommended by the Town or if they chose to stay to process the necessary paper work. This was followed up with a door-to-door search on the final evacuation day. The search was performed primarily by Town firemen with some volunteers. They managed to gain the admiration and thanks of many of our citizens. One example of note is with an older couple, one of which is handicapped. They were in the process of leaving but were running late. The two firemen knocked on the door and asked if they were leaving. The couple responded “yes”. With that the firemen asked if there was anything they could do to help. The couple said “yes, please get our cat from under the bed”. Needless to say, they retrieved the cat much to the delight of the couple. This was one example of many of our Town employees performing above and beyond what is minimally required.

During the storm the Town’s leadership appropriately recognized that the storm was causing far more serious damage than had been anticipated. This caused the Town to move to a more aggressive approach requiring more personnel and more resources.

The “after the storm” response has brought accolades from a broad majority of the property owners and residents of Edisto Beach.

The reality of what had happened to the Town began to settle in the day after. The Town got the Governor’s support to put SC National Guard personnel on site to protect the interests of the property owners and citizens. The Town’s Safety Team which consists of the Mayor, Town Administrator, Head of Utilities, Fire Chief and Police Chief and the Building Inspector returned to the Town on October 8<sup>th</sup>, the day after the storm. This required a seven hour trip through the storm debris on Hwy. 174 to reach the Town. The Town Council members and support staff returned on Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. They provided support at Town Hall over the next week answering phones and helping our citizens get the available information about their homes. Once there on October 9<sup>th</sup> the Town management and staff began the recovery process with a “round-the-clock” effort to coordinate and perform the necessary work to move our recovery forward. In addition, the Town staff supported the Town restaurant personnel who prepared the meals for the staff, the SC National Guard and DNR personnel and other State agency personnel. Food from the freezers of the Town Council and staff was used as part of the food source. Note that the Town personnel slept in recliners and on the floor of Town Hall. There was one generator

and water available at Town Hall during this period. This was a serious sacrifice of each of these individuals who spent a large number of hours away from their families.

Finally, most certainly we should recognize and thank the SC National Guard and the DNR personnel and other State, regional and corporate personnel for their contributions. These included the following: SC National Guard, SC State Guard, SC DNR, SC DOT, SCE&G, Ft. Jackson Fire Dept. and Isle of Palms Fire Dept. During this critical phase, our citizen's safety and health were protected without incident and private property and our public property were protected from looting, vandalism and break-ins. According to the Town's police chief there were no instances of property violations. It should be noted that the Guard personnel not only did their job, in exemplary fashion, but did it in a courteous and professional manner.

Also, our local newspaper and the local news stations, as well as the Town website and Facebook pages, and the Police Dept. with all the pictures they posted, were a significant help in letting people know what was going on in the Town while they were away.

In closing, the Edisto Beach Property Owners Association Board thanks again the Town Council, the Town staff and the State, regional and corporate personnel for their outstanding performance. This was essentially a borderline "mission impossible" which these organizations and individuals rose to the occasion and successfully managed a very difficult early recovery.

With grateful appreciation,

Bob Sandifer, President

Edisto Beach Property Owners Association