

**CDBG MITIGATION CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Committee 1 Meeting Report**  
**Tuesday, March 30, 2021**  
**2 – 3 p.m.**

\*Note: This meeting was recorded\*

Committee Purpose: Each committee shall adopt the following statement of purpose:  
“The purpose of this committee is to advise the Texas General Land Office (GLO) on the implementation of programs using first-of-its-kind Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding.”

Meeting Objective: Discuss ideas, agree to a committee workplan, and determine next steps.

**Agenda**

- 2 – 2:10 p.m. Welcome & Introductions
- 2:10 – 2:25 p.m. GLO update
- 2:25 – 2:55 p.m. Discussion: Committee Workplan
- Identify priority issues / challenges and potential solutions
    - What issues or challenges are you facing / have you faced in your communities?
    - What solutions do we have to offer?
  - Survey committee members, additional stakeholders and the GLO to address high priority challenges we face in allocating and implementing CDBG-MIT funding.
    - This may not impact the allocation of current CDBG-MIT dollars. However, the Committee’s work could impact processes supporting the implementation of funds and MIT programs.
  - Other ideas on how to collect this information.
- 2:55 – 3 p.m. Closing and next steps

## **CDBG MITIGATION CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2**

**Virtual Committee Meeting Tuesday, March 9, 2021**

**2:00-3:00 PM**

**Minutes**

### **Welcome & Introductions**

Dr. Katya Wowk noted that the meeting will be recorded to be made available to the public.

Dr. Wowk called the meeting of the CDBG Mitigation Citizen Advisory Committee – Committee B to order at 2:01 p.m. and welcomed committee members.

The committee introduced themselves with their organizational affiliations, professions, experiences, and names.

**Attendees:** Katya Wowk, Arjumand Mubaarak, Nate McDonald, Andrew Harmon, Ann O’Bannion, Brad Stafford, Christa Lopez, Circe Badillo, Derek Katznelson, Elijah Casas, Gary Scoggin, Jennifer Harris, Jonah Chen, Keith Downey, Kathy Holcomb, Yvonne Sheasby, Lelo Washington, Melissa Washington, Philip Natsios, Simone Sanders, Sylvea Jones, Tony Feagin, Tracy Stephens, Rhonda Masters, and Yvette Barrera

### **Identifying Committee Secretary**

Dr. Wowk stated that the CDBG-MIT Bylaws require the identified of a Committee Secretary. She stated that one member, Mr. Derek Katznelson, has volunteered to take on the duties. Dr. Wowk welcomed any further nominations for the position. She stated that she plans to formally ask the committee if there would be any further nominations.

Mr. Derek Katznelson commented that he works at the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and performs minutes and agenda duties. He stated that he would be willing to offer his services for the committee.

### **Discussion: Committee Workplan**

Dr. Wowk presented the role of the committee is to “to advise the Texas General Land Office (GLO) on the implementation of programs using the first-of-its-kind Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding.” She included a link to the latest program updates from GLO on the first round of funding. She asked the committee if there would be any specific Mitigation program questions, and Ms. Christa Lopez of the GLO would be available for any

questions.

Ms. Lopez provided her contact information and Mr. Trey Bahm's contact information for the committee in the virtual chat. She noted she and Mr. Bahm are available for questions that Mr. Bahm is a GLO staff member, and he is responsible for coordinating with Dr. Wowk and Committee 1. Ms. Lopez said that they would be happy to provide a presentation, possibly an informal one, on the ongoing implementation work that GLO is doing. She also presented an idea for the presentation on potential frustrating challenges, so that GLO can discuss with HUD. She noted that one challenge was the awkward timeline for instituting the committee, while taking CDBG-MIT applications.

Dr. Wowk noted that importance of the context, and that the committee would welcome the presentation to add the agenda. Dr. Wowk asked the committee for comments on the committee work plan and a survey approach. She noted that Ms. Lopez noted the issues with allocating and implementing the CDGB-MIT funds. Dr. Wowk suggested to identify the high-priority challenges through a survey. She suggested that by identifying an important challenge or a few challenges, then the committee can beneficially impact our communities.

## **Discussion: Identifying Priority Issues**

Mr. Brad Stafford commented that the HUD rules think that it only floods in low-income areas, and that he has issues when business areas flood, as they are crucial to the lifeblood of the community. He noted that disasters occur everywhere. Mr. Stafford suggested that there would be a better way to help everybody. He commented that another problem is that larger cities always get funding, while smaller communities must compete with federal funds.

Dr. Wowk thanked Mr. Stafford for his comments. She virtually showed a draft of a survey and asked if she could send it out for comments. She asked Mr. Stafford for his opinion.

Mr. Stafford agreed that it would help to know what people think. He commented that people would be having similar issues. Mr. Stafford noted another issue is how the criteria changes as time goes forward: "moving the goalposts."

Ms. Lopez commented that GLO is talking with the federal government on the issue of codification of the rules. She noted that CDBG-DR under HUD changes their rules under a Federal Notice Register, yet when working with FEMA, the rules are standardized. Ms. Lopez commented that multiple states are asking to codify their rules, so that rules are not being changed between disasters.

Mr. Stafford noted he hopes that the CDBG-MIT Citizen Advisory Committee would amplify the voice of GLO, as the changes are frustrating and expensive.

Ms. Lopez commented that we can take your voice and take it to the Washington, D.C., and our representatives.

Dr. Wowk said that the committee has identified a couple of high priority challenges. She asked the committee if we should send a broader survey or the presented survey.

Judge Nate McDonald commented on the challenge of getting dollars into rural markets. He noted that his county, Matagorda County, used a "carve-out," that each community would receive a fixed sum. Judge McDonald proposed a rural carve-out, and that it was possible through the example of Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) in 2008. He asked if GLO or HUD's guidelines would allow a carve-out procedure.

Dr. Wowk commented that working groups in specific focus areas are possible for our committee, as the bylaws do not prohibit it.

Ms. Lopez agreed. She noted that Ms. Heather LeGrone and Ms. Lopez are working on two separate papers with other states on both codification of rules and data sharing between organizations. Ms. Lopez commented that data can serve your citizens' better.

Mr. Keith Downey commented that politicians and entities should understand that one size does not fit all for policies, procedures, guidelines. He commented that the umbrella effect of policy does not work for everyone.

Mr. Gary Scoggin commented that there are ways to devolve control as close to the people as possible. He noted that as we think about programs and decision-making, we should consider sculpting funds to individual needs. Mr. Scoggin commented, on LMI, that addressing his watersheds will be under 50% LMI as based on geography.

Dr. Wowk asked on taking the input from the committee on the survey.

Mr. Scoggin suggested that a survey is good place to start, with augmentation. Mr.

Downey and Mr. Mubaarak agreed.

Mr. Stafford agreed on the survey and to integrate the past discussion of the meeting.

Mr. Tracy Stephens agreed to augment the survey as the needs from big counties and small counties can be identified. He noted that some communities in some of the larger cities are in worse shape than other cities and counties. Mr. Stephens commented that the cause is neglect, where work has not been done in 40 to 50 years. He noted that we could gather the information from the survey to be inclusive of everybody on their needs, so it will not be one-size-fits-all.

Dr. Wowk agreed that there is variation across jurisdictions and within jurisdiction. She will take the input given today, and update the survey that was drafted, and then, send around to the committee to provide feedback.

Dr. Wowk informed the committee that she is coordinating with the chair (Ms. Amanda Fenwick) of CDBG-MIT Citizen Advisory Committee A to avoid duplication of effort and to support one another. She noted that Committee A has yet to meet, but she hoped that the survey tool can be distributed to Committee A as well.

Mr. Scoggin asked if there is overlap between jurisdictions.

Ms. Lopez noted that there is overlap between committees to provide balance, yet we would not like to overlap. She suggested to send out the Committee Assignment list, so that members can coordinate with other members from the two committees.

Dr. Wowk noted that she would send out the Committee Assignment list.

Dr. Wowk asked the committee if the survey should be for committee members or shared with stakeholders.

Mr. Stafford stated that he would like to share the survey with his cohorts in other cities, as we should be representing the greater state.

Mr. Downey commented that it is important that we should include the opinions of others.

Dr. Wowk agreed.

### **Next Steps**

Dr. Wowk commented that she will distribute the documents out and provide a two-week input period. She commented that the committee can share with your stakeholders and Committee A, to send out the full draft for April.

**Dr. Wowk adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.**