

Terri Stahl

From: Larry Tatsch [ltatsch@eastamwelltownship.com]
Sent: Friday, October 07, 2011 7:28 PM
To: lenox, Linda; Linda Lenox; Terri Stahl; Timothy L. Matheny; Tim Mathews; Patricia Cregar; Pete Kneski; Charles Soos; Gary Myers
Subject: Cranbury Township Storm Response

At the September 8 TC meeting, one of our residents said that Cranbury Township had a "pre-action" plan and had done a lot more to deal with an emergency than we had, and suggested that the plan would have dealt with our problems of power failures and lack of water. That comment was echoed by one of our staff during a staff debriefing of storm-related issues.

I visited the Cranbury Township municipal offices today and spoke with their Administrator, Denise Marabello. We spent almost a half hour discussing activities before, during and after the storm and I expressed interest in understanding their practices to see where we might improve. Cranbury Township is about the same population as East Amwell but has considerably more industry and has a full time police force.

Denise said that Cranbury has an OEM (Office of Emergency Management) plan, just like East Amwell does. This plan was reviewed before the storm and an emergency shelter was designated, as was the case with East Amwell. The OEM coordinator and Denise discussed emergency plans before the storm, as we did. She noted, as we have noted, that this plan is designed for life/health/safety emergencies. The main damage to Cranbury from the storm was flooding at Brainerd Lake in town, with bank scouring and collapse that affected a few homes, one seriously. There were a few trees down but none hit power lines and there were no power failures in the township. One person was housed in the shelter briefly.

I specifically asked whether Cranbury had any plans to assist horse or cattle farms, which depended on wells, in case of lost power. Denise replied that no, there was nothing the township could do - that was a power company issue. She said that people who depend on a water supply should have a generator and that the township certainly can't provide them. They had no plans to provide water for those people. I mentioned our attempts to assist with a potable water tap in our park and an arrangement for free showers and Denise was impressed with those efforts. Cranbury's post storm assistance to residents was limited to re-scheduling curbside brush chipping and waiving construction fees for storm-related repairs (something we tried but couldn't because Raritan wasn't doing that for their residents).

I asked about communication and they did not have a good method - no reverse 911 or other means. They did have emergency contact info on their phone system, so that callers to the municipal building could get that info.

In summary, Cranbury Township has an Emergency Management plan that deals with true emergencies and appears to be similar to ours. They had NO PLANS to assist residents with power failures such as providing water, ice, generators, etc. The only "pre-action" Cranbury took was to drain some water from Brainerd Lake (which didn't help), review the OEM plan, designate a shelter and be prepared for emergency situations - which East Amwell did. I couldn't identify anything else that Cranbury did differently, nor any plans for assistance afterwards, beyond sheltering and FEMA, which we also had.

Larry Tatsch