

1/19/12

DESCRIPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD CAPTAIN

We envision a neighborhood captain as an individual who is monitoring his or her neighborhood and neighbors during an emergency of moderate duration, such as we've had twice in the past several months. (Long-term emergencies; e.g. pandemics, nuclear events, etc. are outside the scope of this initiative.) The neighborhood captain would be a source of information for the Town as to conditions in his or her neighborhood. So, for example, if a tree is blocking the road the captain would report that to Town Hall, rather than having multiple calls made by the many people who saw the tree. This would alert Town officials without unduly tying up the Town's resources.

The neighborhood captain can also be a source of information for his or her neighbors, so that the Town can convey neighborhood-specific information to the neighborhood captain who can forward it to affected neighbors.

Here are some specific activities that we have in mind for neighborhood captains:

Pre-Emergency Steps:

1. Alert neighbors that you have been designated as their neighborhood captain.
2. Gather contact information from your neighbors – cell phones and email addresses, and assure them that this information is only to be used in case of emergency.
3. If possible, note situations of special need (disability, very elderly, etc.) that might need additional attention in the event of an emergency.
4. Note for yourself in advance any potentially dangerous conditions that might need to be monitored in the event of an emergency (e.g. is there a particular area in your neighborhood that is prone to flooding?)

During an Emergency:

1. As best you can, assess conditions in your neighborhood, and report them to Town Hall, to help them have the best overview of the situation.
2. Check on the status of your neighbors.
3. Identify special needs for your neighborhood or individuals within your neighborhood and if the Town needs to be alerted to them, do so.
4. Serve as someone whom your neighbors can alert as to dangerous conditions, and pass these on to Town Hall.
5. Pass on information that is neighborhood-specific from Town Hall to your neighbors.

6. Assist in directing help, should it be needed, from the Town to your neighborhood (e.g. food deliveries, if access is blocked).

Since we cannot anticipate the nature or severity of an emergency, the above description may not be complete, and some of this, of course, we will refine as we experience (hopefully not) more emergencies.

One thing we do know from our past experiences is that we need to be prepared to help ourselves because the Town cannot, given its personnel and resources, fully respond to emergencies without our help.