



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meeting to discuss Hazard Mitigation Open Space Parcels

The Gloucester County Department of Planning & Zoning will sponsor a public information meeting on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 7PM to discuss property the County has acquired, or will soon acquire, under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The meeting will be held at Achilles Elementary School, located at 9306 Guinea Road, Achilles, VA.

Under the terms of the HMGP, the County must have a plan for each parcel it acquires with grant funding. The County's current Hazard Mitigation Open Space Management Plan was adopted in 2009; the purpose of the October 14th meeting is to gather public input on potential future use(s) of fourteen (14) parcels that the County has acquired since the 2009 Plan was adopted; six (6) additional properties have been approved for acquisition, but those purchases have yet to be finalized.

The HMGP requires that these properties remain as open space in perpetuity; they cannot be developed with residential or commercial structures. Some permissible uses under the HMGP include: preservation of property that has cultural or historical significance, protection of natural resources (woodlands, wetlands, and marshes that provide numerous beneficial functions), recreation – like hunting, fishing, nature trails for hiking and bird-watching, and water access – boat/kayak launches, etc.

On behalf of the County, the Department of Planning and Zoning is coordinating with other departments to gather public input on the future use of the newly-acquired Hazard Mitigation Open Space parcels; staff will be providing maps of the area and overhead views of the properties to facilitate the discussion. Public comments will be incorporated into the Plan revision – which will be subject to public hearing before the Planning Commission on November 6, 2014, and after which a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors will be presented.

*Please note that three or more members of the Board of Supervisors may be in attendance at this meeting.

A copy of the current Hazard Mitigation Open Space Management Plan can be found here:
<http://www.gloucesterva.info/Portals/0/planning/documents/Projects/OpenSpacePlan.pdf>

To learn more about the Hazard Mitigation Open Space Management Plan, contact:

Tripp Little, Planner II
Gloucester Planning & Zoning
(804) 693-1224
tlittle@gloucesterva.info

To learn more about the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, contact:

Michael Dodson
Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Coordinator
(804) 832-2401
mdodson@gloucesterva.info

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