**Minutes from 9-21-2021 GP-CERT Zoom Call:**

**Holtby started out by saying that he was as disappointed as everyone that after finally moving back to an in-person meeting in July, we find ourselves back with a Zoom meeting. However, he noted that he felt it was the prudent thing to do. He mentioned that we had a very creative training exercise put together by Rich MacCready for tonight that now will have to wait until our next in-person meeting. He then welcomed everyone, and gave a special welcome to all newcomers who were attending their first GP-CERT meeting.**

**Holtby noted that GP-CERT previously held 30-minute orientations for newcomers prior to the start of each regular in-person meeting, but that we had moved away from that during COVID. In the Zoom meeting invite, he had asked if any of our new volunteers would like a Zoom introduction to GP-CERT, but noted that nobody took him up on it. He offered to provide a GP-CERT introduction prior to future meetings – whether virtual or in-person.**

**Holtby reiterated that all GP-CERT volunteers are welcome to reach out to him or any of the Command Team by telephone, text, or email at any time. All of the Command Team contact information is listed on the GP-CERT.org web-site. He also reminded everyone that we also have a** granparadisocert@gmail.com **email address.**

**Holtby noted that the Atlantic hurricane season has been active so far – with the latest storms named Peter and Rose (the next two names on the list are both names that have not been used before - Sam and Teresa). While he noted that we have been fortunate so far this season – now is not the time to let your guard down. He requested that all Command Team members with walkie talkies should keep them charged up and at the ready.**

**Holtby then moved to Agenda updates, and noted that the thing that concerns him the most is GP-CERT’s readiness – we have a lot of volunteers in new roles and he felt that we have not done enough in the way of training over the last 18 months. However, he mentioned that he was happy to announce that we have a number of our volunteers who have taken the time to do the virtual CERT Basic training, and many of them will be taking the skills portion of the training this weekend (25th-26th). He mentioned that Rich MacCready and Kristi Loret have done an incredible job putting the training together, and he thanked them for all of their work. He then called upon Kristi Loret, our Education and Training Coordinator and Zone 1 Lead, to provide an update.**

**Kristi advised that the skills portion of the virtual CERT Basic training was taking place this weekend. She requested the assistance of anyone who has already taken CERT Basic training to help out for a few hours either day, as while there are instructors, the training goes much smoother with a second person helping out each group. Training each day starts at 9 am and runs until approximately 3 pm. She mentioned that GP volunteers would be provided with their own backpack (filled with an assortment of supplies – compliments of our Sarasota County Neighborhood Initiative grant), and should be prepared to utilize the hardhats, gloves, and other PPE.**

**Kristi then talked about the in-person training opportunity that will take place October 1-3. It will run from 8-5 each day, and there are still openings if anyone wishes to take this training. Attendance on all three days is required to obtain certification, and the course will take place at the IW event center.**

**Holtby thanked Kristi – and he stated that we are taking steps with the skills portion for the virtual training, as well as the October 1-3 in-person training, to be as safe as possible. Instructors and students will wear masks, and gloves will be required for the skills portions. He mentioned that the only thing asked of the GP volunteers is that you sign out the GP backpacks – and you return them at the end of each hurricane season (November 30th) to Priscilla.**

**He also recognized and thanked the GP-CERT volunteers who have taken the virtual CERT basic training – and those who signed up for the in-person training on October 1-3rd.**

**Holtby repeated that he has ample training material for anyone who is interested in getting a leg up on the next CERT basic training course. We have CERT training video DVDs, CPR lifesaving skills kits with hands-on Mini Anne Learning Manikins, as well as CERT Basic training manuals available for anyone who wants to take the CERT Basic training. Holtby noted that we also have CERT Train-the-Trainer instructor guides available for anyone who wants to take this course and help Kristi out training volunteers in the future.**

**For those who have been “sitting on the sidelines” because they have already taken CERT basic training, Holtby advised that we will have another “desktop exercise” on Thursday, September 30th at 6 pm. David Elwart put together our last desktop exercise, and he put together an updated version. David then explained what the goals of the desktop exercise were: 1. To test how GP-CERT will respond to the existing plan for responding to, and recovering from an emergency; 2. To increase the effectiveness of coordination for plans and actions with the GP community and its partners; 3. To strengthen the integration of services and resources into emergency response and recovery efforts; and  4. To identify areas for improvement relative to specific objectives and core capabilities of the GP-CERT plan. Holtby advised that he would be sending out information on the exercise shortly.**

**Final item on the training side, communications – in Holtby’s view the most important thing we need to improve upon. Coming out of the Yellow Box exercise that we did way back on June 23rd – we recognized that our communications skills needed to be a little better, as things can get chaotic in the aftermath of any storm. Tom Porada, our Communications Officer, spoke and discussed effective communications protocol. He also directed everyone to the GP-CERT.org web-site (go to the “About Us” tab and click on “Gran Paradiso CERT Operational Plan” and Communications Plan shows up to the right of the tab – then click on it for a PDF of the plan). Tom referenced page 5 of the plan as particularly key.**

**Second update – we still need a new Access Control lead – Chris Moen has accepted a full-time job with North Port Fire Rescue as a Life Safety and Fire Prevention Officer, and started last month. So, if anyone has an interest in stepping up as Access Control Officer, please let Holtby know.**

**Third update - ‘The GP Responder’ newsletter, which we started up in September of last year, has published five issues so far. Holtby thanked all those volunteers and contributors who have helped so far, and offerred a special thanks to Carole and Jeff Myles. Holtby again noted that we still don’t have enough volunteers willing to write articles for the newsletter – it continues to be the same 4-5 volunteers. Our next issue is scheduled for publication in November. He asked everyone to please consider contributing an article – we are looking for 100-150 words on anything with a safety or weather focus that would be of interest to the GP community. We have a couple of volunteers who proofread all submitted articles. If you have an idea for a newsletter article you would like to write that does not have a safety or weather focus, please run it by us.**

**Fourth update – Finances. Holtby advised that the GP cap fundraiser worked out extremely well – we started with 158 Core 365 Adult Pitch Performance caps and we only have 18 white caps left. Once we sell off the remaining caps, we will have made just over $1,800 in profit from this fundraiser. We also have $10,800 in our CERT bank account, after spending $150 for one Zoom annual license – which is our only recent expenditure. As things start to open back up around here, Holtby noted that he would like us to continue to do some fundraising (it also increases our visibility within the community), so any suggestions would be welcomed.**

**Fifth update item – Holtby thanked everyone who both helped out (and all those volunteers who offered to help out, but whose assistance was not required) with the 9/11 flag commemoration set-up and takedown a few weeks ago. He read the “Thank-you note” from the Activities Committee – which thanked GP-CERT profusely for all of our assistance.**

**In addition to helping put up some of the flags – what we did was help keep the flag volunteers safe from all the traffic zipping by the volunteers. To do this, we put up traffic cones and had our CERT safety vests on. One of our volunteers also reattached the traffic arm that one of the community flag volunteers hit with a golf cart and knocked off. While some may question why we helped out the Activities Committee on this – Holtby said that he believes that our team is all about helping out our community and keeping them safe.**

**Sixth update item was recruitment – we have approximately 95 volunteers on GP-CERT as of today – but only a third show up for meetings and are active – so we need to continually recruit. Holtby suggested asking your friends and neighbors whether they might be interested, and if so, to encourage them to come to a meeting. Trent DePersia advised that he would get ICON to add a GP-CERT recruitment pitch to the weekly email, as that has generated interest in the past.**

**Seventh update item – communications – Tom Porada had earlier provided an update and there was really nothing of substance to add. Holtby also mentioned that he would like to have Leroy Spayd join us for a future meeting. Leroy is our retired resident meteorologist and he has consented to provide storm updates specific to GP. Leroy spent 40 years working at NOAA, mostly in the National Weather Service.  For a few years he did hurricane research and forecasting hurricane paths at NOAA’s National Center in DC.   He is friends with the current Director of the Nat Hurricane Center in Miami.**

**Last item before questions and comments – Holtby mentioned at our last meeting that he has been leading GP-CERT for 2-1/2 years now. At the end of this hurricane season he would still like to step aside to give some “new blood” their opportunity to take GP-CERT to the next level, but it has to be the right person. Holtby advised that he continues to be busy with the 2022 budget and his role on the Finance Committee, but Steve Sloane is now Co-Chair of the Finance Committee with him, and that has certainly helped. Bottom line – Holtby would still like to take a step back on leading GP-CERT. So, please let him know if you have an interest in stepping up – apprenticeship opportunities are available.**

**We then opened things up for questions and/or comments, and Mitch Farrah asked Tom P. whether we would be going to monthly communication checks like IW does. Tom advised he would like to see us move in that direction.**

**Holtby advised the date for our next meeting is Tuesday, November 9th at 6 pm either via Zoom or in the craft room if we determine it is safe to move back to in-person meetings. Meeting was adjourned after 48 minutes.**