

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Town Commission
From: Tom Harmer, Town Manager
Report date: December 8, 2020
Meeting date: December 14, 2020
Subject: Tropical Storm Eta

Recommended Action

None, informational only.

Background

Town staff, in coordination with Sarasota County Emergency Operations Center, began monitoring Tropical Storm Eta (TS Eta) on November 2, 2020. The storm's track, landfall, and intensity was challenging to forecast. Daily updates on anticipated impacts to Longboat Key were provided to the Town Commission, and local media, with TS Eta forecast to reach Category 1 with winds to 75 mph.

In advance of the storm, a sand bag station was set up at the Broadway Beach Access to provide bags, and sand to island residents. Town staff cleared out storm drains and outfalls to maximize stormwater capacity.

Weather advisories were issued for TS Eta to be a rain event with potential for 3-5 foot of storm surge coinciding with high tide at 9:38 pm on November 11. The rain and surge triggered flooding in low-lying areas.

Alert Longboat Key messaging was issued on November 11 at 1:05 pm via phone, e-mail, and text messaging to inform residents of the TS Eta forecast, anticipated impacts, and personal protective measures to take. Website and social media postings were also used to urge residents to take protective measures and monitor local media for weather updates.

Following the storm, staff measured impacts to the island and noted rainfall from 5" – 8.3"; wind levels with gusts up to 55 mph, and storm surge of 3 feet above normal tide peaking at 9:38 pm. Some residents experienced wind damage and isolated power outages.

Flooding to 222 homes was reported ranging from minor to major damage to residential properties. Damage to the seawall at the Ohana House, and the former Colony property were reported and posted as unsafe.

The largest monetary loss to the Town was based on erosion with approximately 274,000 cubic yards of sand on the island's beaches. Durante Park also suffered \$25,000-\$30,000 in damaged infrastructure.

Town staff is working with both Counties on any potential FEMA reimbursement. We have been advised that due to their public infrastructure thresholds it may be difficult to meet their criteria. An after-action review by staff highlights the need for access to high water vehicles and water vessel to access flooded streets, and low-lying areas during extreme flooding events.

The Town Manager will discuss the Town's actions related to TS Eta and answer questions from Commissioners.

Staff Recommendation

None, informational only.

Attachments

PowerPoint Presentation (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item