

## Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series I

**Funder Briefing:** #6

**Date:** December 10, 2012

**Topic:** Update on “Rebuilding a Resilient New Jersey” conference

**Speakers:** **Peter Kasabach**, Executive Director - New Jersey Future;  
**Margaret Waldock**, Program Director - Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation

---

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **Announcements**

- Nina Stack participated in a conference call hosted by the [Dept. of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD), led by Secretary Donovan, who is coordinating the Administration’s [Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force](#) with a focus on streamlining government processes based on what was learned from implementing the economic stimulus. HUD’s oversight and coordination will be operating for six months.
- CNJG is signed up for FEMA updates which will be shared with members via the Listserv twice a week.
- NJ Council members are urged to fill out the survey CNJG sent, which was co-authored by FEMA and the State to gain more information about our grantee needs and assess where there is significant damage and low capacity for recovery.
- CNJG Conference call for Corporate grantmakers is Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> with a focus on relief efforts

#### **NJ Future Re-Cap on Conference**

Peter Kasabach ([NJ Future](#)) reports on the “[Rebuilding a Resilient New Jersey Shore](#)” conference held December 7, 2012, focusing on rebuilding and land use, held at Monmouth University and co-sponsored by the [Kislak Real Estate Institute](#) and its [Urban Coast Institute](#). 400 people attended, including university professors, planners, engineers, attorneys, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) employees, architects and many others.

Conference sessions included (all presentations can be viewed [here](#)):

- The “New Normal” - Tony Broccoli (Rutgers) made a compelling argument that past weather patterns will not be predictors of future;
- Megan Linkin (Swiss Reinsurance America Holding Corporation, Armonk, N.Y.) emphasized that amount of damage being caused by natural disasters is going up and we need to pay attention to both the community and economic impacts of that;
- Ed Blakely (former ED, New Orleans Office of Recovery and Development Administration) shared insights on rebuilding efforts post-Katrina, the practical planning issues and politically charged issues that arose, the challenges of keeping people focused on the future and how to rebuild communities - not just the buildings;
- A panel discussion about Federal Agency roles with HUD , FEMA, Army corps
- Presentation by Mark Mauriello (former DEP Commissioner) - what is the state’s role and where can it be a leader, particularly since current construction standards do not take into consideration sea-level rise.
- Monmouth University poll results on attitudes toward rebuilding favored smarter, if slower or slightly more expensive rebuilding, rather than returning to the status quo.

Select challenges identified during post-conference roundtable discussions:

- Things are moving fast for rebuilding - how do we create a “time out” to give space for planning?
- There is no consensus about the scope of problem and what that means for rebuilding, codes and flood line mapping; need to coordinate advocacy offices to get information out
- Addressing social equity is important
- We’re not good at looking at the cost/benefit analysis of rebuilding efforts
- Regional approaches to solutions are needed, therefore building local capacity is essential

### **What funders can do**

Margaret Waldock ([The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation](#)) also attended the conference. Her take-aways included:

- This recovery is a 10 year process - as funders we need to think about the community and economic recovery in the long term and where we can provide assistance. Disasters follow disasters (such as the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico a few years after Katrina) and that compounds recovery challenges. How can funders help to address vulnerabilities?
- Foundations can play a role in keeping people focused on the future and rebuilding out of harm’s way.
- What role can funders play in making public infrastructure investments - schools, roads, bridges, environmental restoration? First we need to build/rebuild the safety net and THEN neighborhood redevelopment follows.
- Make regional conversations a priority. Funders will have to be talking to each other.
- Targeting some recovery efforts to benefit the 20-34 year old demographic is key to long term economic sustainability
- Environmental restoration will be key
- Providing capacity building for the organizations doing reconnaissance, research, advocacy work in the first 2-3 months after the event

### Ideas raised by funders on this call:

- CNJG Members can be plugged into any of the CNJG affinity groups
- Community/grassroots organizing: Do the processes used by [Creative New Jersey](#) and [Sustainable Jersey](#), help with community discussions and planning?
- Meetings can be arranged with media sources to help inform reporters about issues
- Adopt the model of the [Pinelands Commission](#) for the Shore
- Provide an online platform (like [mySidewalk](#)) for crowd-sourced ideas, expertise, research, partnerships
- Several members are participating in [NJ Recovery Fund](#)
- Organize group “meet the funder” events to provide opportunity for direct information exchange and relationship building between multiple funders at a time and organizations on the ground

### **FOLLOW UP**

- NJ Future’s [press release](#) about the conference.
- The PowerPoint from the HUD conference call will be shared with the members once it becomes available.

---

Beginning on the first Monday after Hurricane Sandy struck New Jersey, The Council of New Jersey Grantmakers began hosting weekly conference calls for grantmakers in-state and nationwide, facilitated by CNJG President Nina Stack, to discuss their response to Sandy and strategies facing NJ as a result of the storm. Each conference call briefing offered expert guest speakers who represented government agencies (FEMA, HUD, HHS, etc.), national philanthropic leaders, expert psychologists with experience in PTSD, planners and community redevelopment leaders, and representatives from NJ’s Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, among others. The twenty-five audio files and written summaries are available at: <http://cnjg.org/hurricane-sandy>