



## **PRFSC May 24,2017 Meeting Minutes**

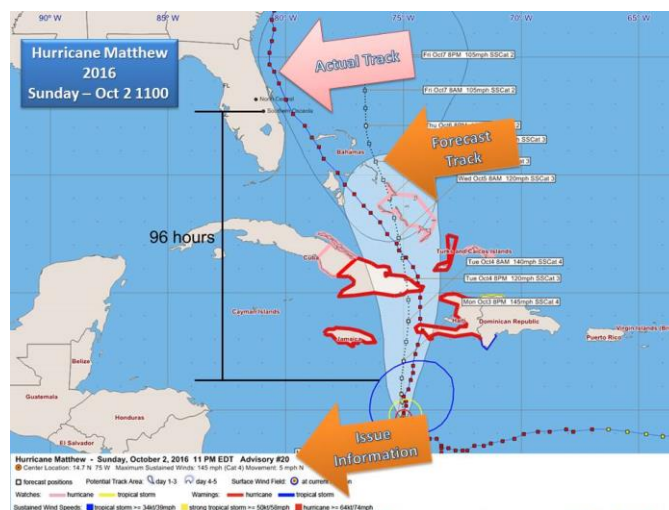
**On Wednesday May 24,2017 at 7PM PRFSC hosted Richard Halquist of Osceola County Office Emergency Management to speak on the topic of Personal Preparedness for the 2017 Hurricane Season in Poinciana. The meeting was held at the new Mary Jane Arrington Gym and Aquatic center in Poinciana. Both the meeting facility and the speaker were excellent.**

**Before introducing the speaker Annette Brown-Best reviewed what happened in Poinciana during the last major hurricane in 2004. Those were the days when Poinciana was a lot smaller community and had neither a hospital nor a Walmart. Today Poinciana is the largest community in Osceola County so while we are blessed with a great deal more today in terms of stores, roads and facilities we also have a much larger population than we had when the last hurricane hit. As a result we as individuals need to be prepared and need to depend on county governments for more community help than we did back then. That was the reason for the presentation at our May meeting.**

**Richard opened the presentation by describing who makes up the department of Emergency Management for Osceola County and what their roles and responsibilities are. He stated that the mission of his department is to reduce the loss of life and property and to protect the people of Osceola County (plus Polk Poinciana) through a comprehensive, all hazards emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation.**

**Richard described how the Osceola County Department of Emergency Management is accredited by the Federal Government standards meaning that they have met the emergency management requirements for a county the size**

of Osceola. He stated that less than half of the counties in the State of Florida have met those requirements. He also stated that the mission of Osceola County Emergency Management is to serve all of the people of Poinciana, not just those on the Osceola County side. He said that if any Poinciana resident wanted access to facilities or support from his department they should be allowed to receive the support and if denied then they should contact him at [Richard.Halquist@OSCEOLA.ORG](mailto:Richard.Halquist@OSCEOLA.ORG) telephone 407-908-9565. Richard also stated that everyone in Poinciana should be signed up for emergency alerts. To sign up go to the web site [www.alertosceola.org](http://www.alertosceola.org) and complete the required information. You may sign up even if you live in a Polk Poinciana zip code simply by saying that you live in Osceola County. The other communications means that he described as essential was a weather radio that could provide the latest storm information to you home. In fact he gave away two weather radios during his presentation.



He cited as an example what they most recently did in preparation for Hurricane Matthew last year. He said that even though the Hurricane was not expected to approach Poinciana until Oct 8,2016 his department started preparation as early as October 2 to get ready should it hit near us. He showed a chart showing that had the storm hit Central Florida near Poinciana as many as 2,041 buildings would have been at least moderately damaged with as many as 66 buildings being completely destroyed. As the above chart shows, although the projected path showed it staying farther out into the Atlantic, the actual path of the storm

was closer than what the projections were when his department started to make the preparations for the disaster.

Mr. Halquist also described how his Emergency Management Department also plans for all kinds of disasters that might hit Osceola County. Those disasters range from Hazmat to Terrorism with Floods and Tornados being among the natural disasters.

He showed the current Hurricane Forecast for the Atlantic Hurricane Season. He emphasized that the forecast was irreverent in that all that needed to happen was for one storm to hit Poinciana to cause major problems. He cited as an example Hurricane Andrew that hit South Florida as the first hurricane of the season but was one of the more devastating hurricanes in Florida history.

He stated that the best form of individual preparation for one person or a family was to have a plan. Where to go should a storm hit? What should you and you friends/family do?



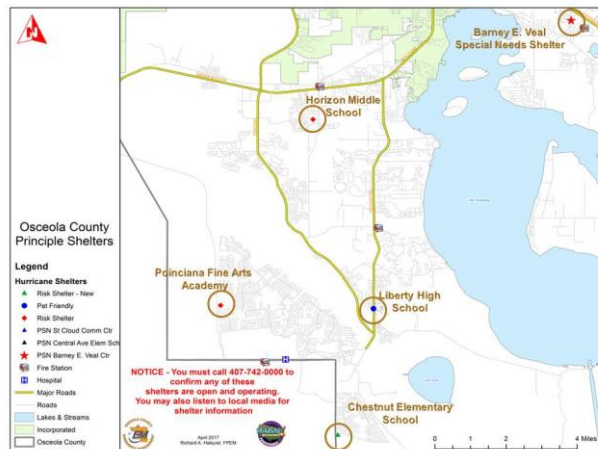
**GET A PLAN!**

- Use a timeline approach
- Supply Kit
- Food & Water 5-7 days (One to three gallons per person per day)
- Personal documents (Have copies with a friend or a family member outside of impacted area)
- Tools and miscellaneous items
- Medications

**Alert!**  
OSCEOLA

Some suggestions for creating a personal plan are identified in the chart above. Multiple documents offering suggestions for a plan were passed out at the meeting. A copy of the Emergency Preparedness brochure may be viewed and printed out at <http://prfsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Emergency-Preparedness-Quick-Tips.pdf> .

Also discussed at the meeting was the availability of emergency shelters available for residents of the Poinciana area. Again it was stated that all Osceola shelters in an emergency would be available to Poinciana residents from both Polk and Osceola Counties.



Three Types of shelters were described:

### Area Evacuation Shelters

Liberty High: 4250 Pleasant Hill Road

Chestnut Elementary: 4300 Chestnut Street

Poinciana Academy: 4201 Rhododendron Ave

### Pet Friendly Shelter

4250 Pleasant Hill Road

### Special Needs Shelter

In order to qualify to stay at a special needs shelter one must register before a disaster occurs. Forms are available on <http://mysafety.osceola.org> and <http://specialneedsprogram.osceola.org> . Forms should be mailed to Osceola County Office of Emergency Management, 2586 Partin Settlement Rd. Kissimmee, Florida 34744 407-742-9001.

**Additional Information about emergency preparedness for Poinciana may be obtained by contacting Richard Halmquist at the above address.**

**PRFSC would like to very much thank Richard and his department for not only an excellent presentation but for the work that they do and services provide to Poinciana.**