

Press Release from Stormlandia's Department of Planning, 123 Main Street, PA

For Immediate Circulation

Citizens of Stormlandia,

Last week we received a generous gift from an individual who wishes to remain anonymous. His letter reads as follows,

"To friends, neighbors, and citizens of Stormlandia,

I survived the heat wave of 1948, the catastrophic flood of 1971, and I have witnessed the deterioration of the waterfront and loss of jobs throughout our community. Our combined sewer systems are failing and cannot handle the volume of storm water we've been receiving. Our population continues to grow and temperatures continue to rise. And yet, the city I have called home for so many years is still my city.

People, we're at a crossroads of resilience planning for future climate change. We have the choice to stay as we are: letting nature take its course, increasing the chance that future floods will damage our neighborhoods and gathering places and that extreme heat will trouble our aging family and neighbors; or we can be proactive and make smart choices about improving our resilience to climate change.

I'd like to leave a legacy for my grandchildren and ensure they have a place in our great city to play, and work, and raise their own families. With such a limited operating budget, Stormlandia's investments must be carefully thought out. And so, I am donating \$250,000 to the city, with one request: the funding must be used for community resilience planning. My hope is that proactive planning will not only serve to better protect us from flooding, extreme heat, and sea-level rise, but it will help us become a more vibrant community with plenty of opportunities for all who choose to call this magnificent city home.

Signed,

X "

In accordance with our donor's wishes, we need your help in determining the best use for the \$250,000 donation. In 2015, Stormlandia adopted a Climate Action Plan that recommended specific actions to improve our long-term resilience to climate change. After reviewing the Plan, we feel the four proposals outlined below would support the Climate Action Plan and have a lasting, positive impact in our community.

Stormlandia's Climate Resilience Proposals for Consideration:

1. Keep your Cool: Beat the Heat

Our summer temperatures are escalating and excessive heat is a serious concern for our citizens. We will designate 4 community spaces as cooling centers and create a City heat emergency plan. The plan will help us determine whether enough cooling centers are available to protect our elderly residents from extreme heat. We will also develop a communication tool to alert people when a heat wave might occur, direct them to the nearest cooling center, and connect them to transportation services to reach the centers. We estimate this will prevent 4 heat-related deaths per decade and reduce the costs associated with hospitalizations by \$15,000 annually.

2. Green It Up: Keep Rain From Going Down the Drain

Our stormwater management facilities are aging and heavy rain producing storms are on the rise. Combined-sewer overflows (CSO's) and flood damage are very costly to homeowners and local businesses. We need to decrease stormwater runoff drastically. We can do this by increasing our Green Infrastructure (GI) by 25% over the next five years. Under this proposal, we will build 5 rooftop or school rain gardens and expand riparian buffers to help capture excessive rainfall, minimize flood damage to homes and businesses, and reduce run-off into the Delaware River to pre-1980 levels. The proposed improvements to our GI would reduce the penalties Stormlandia pays for Clean Water Act violations by \$50,000 annually.

3. Curb the Flow from Septic Systems: Improve Gray Infrastructure

The Uptown neighborhood of Stormlandia has a problem. All 25 houses have septic systems that are failing. During the last series of storms, downstream water quality monitoring stations recorded extremely high concentrations of fecal coliform, a bacteria typically associated with human waste. Uptown's homes need to be connected to the main sewer system to maintain local water quality standards, particularly following storm events. Connecting Uptown to Stormlandia's sewer line will keep sewage out of a popular fishing and picnicking area and increase homeowner property values by \$20,000.

4. Foil the Floods: ReBuild Smarter

Bailing out businesses and residents after flood events is taxing our City budget. We will review our planning maps and designate Floodplain Improvement Areas for businesses and neighborhoods located in the 100-year floodplain. We will meet with residents and businesses to communicate the risks associated with extreme storms and provide education on steps that can be taken (Elevate/Retreat/Relocate) to prevent future damage. We will develop new ordinances to provide guidance for rebuilding after storm damage. Twenty-five percent of the funds will go towards planning efforts and 75% percent will be set aside to assist residents and businesses with rebuilding and/or relocation efforts. Should an extreme event such as Hurricane Sandy hit the area, we estimate the project would reduce storm-related damage to businesses and residents by between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000.

Citizens, gather the members of your organizations and carefully consider the merits of each proposal. Select the best proposal to improve our City's climate resilience, keeping in mind the goals and activities of your organization. Please submit a one-page letter that persuades the planning department about your decision. Be sure to discuss the hazard/threat the proposal addresses, how the proposal complements your organization's goals or activities, how the proposal would affect Stormlandia's long-term resilience, why you believe this proposal is better than the others, and any examples of how other communities are accomplishing the proposal you support.

And finally, if you have any objections to using this donation for climate resilience, although given the strong scientific consensus supporting climate change, I don't believe you will, please submit your arguments in a one-page letter. Be sure to include any ideas you might have for how this money could be better used to benefit the citizens of Stormlandia.

The future is bright for Stormlandia. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

The Mayor