

**Newburyport Resiliency Committee (NRC) Meeting Notes**  
**3:00 pm Jan 17, 2023**

**NRC Mission Statement**

The Newburyport Resiliency Committee will analyze, coordinate, and develop a plan in conjunction with regional planning efforts to increase community resilience related to sea level rise, storm surge, flooding and extreme weather events throughout the city. Further, the committee will advocate for and oversee implementation of the plan's recommendations.

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NRC Attendees: Jane Healey (chair), Julia Godtfredsen, Barry Connell, Sarah Tappan (note taker), Kristen Grubbs (Newbury), Connie Preston, Andy Port, Samantha Burke, Molly Ettenborough

Other Attendees: Rick Parker and Chip Wallace (West Newbury Climate Change Resiliency Committee), Ben Harman

Absent: Jon-Eric White, Joe Teixeira

- Public Comments - none
- Approval of 11/15/23 mtg notes - Notes were approved and will be published.
- Discussion
  - Heat Mapping discussions w/ MVPC
    - We have been engaged with MVPC on the topic of heat mapping. The Discussion came out of our community/outreach planning for Community Action Grant and the need to better understand heat risks in Newburyport.
    - MVPC is driving the discussions and investigating the viability of applying for a NOAA grant to fund CAPA Strategies to conduct heat mapping in Newburyport and an inland city (potentially Haverhill or Methuen). This grant application is due at the end of January. It is competitive, 14% of applications approved last year. CAPA also offers services for air quality monitoring and stationary heat mapping.
    - It is a citizen science initiative and we would need volunteers and part-time coordinator in Newburyport. Tasks include: Volunteer recruitment, engagement and training and day of support. Timeframe end of March until heat mapping day (August?)
    - If not viable, MVPC will continue to pursue other grants.
    - Rick Taintor has been helping.
  - January 13 Flood event/ Artichoke dam/spillway, next steps for outreach and advocacy –
    - Newburyport had significant flooding around the city
      - PI turnpike was shut down for 2 hours before and 2 hours after high tide
      - Fire dept. & National guard had high water vehicles on the island.
      - Reservation terrace had more than 3 feet of water over the rocks. Sand has piled up on the berm but the beach is shorter.
    - Lower Artichoke Spillway
      - Experienced a back water event (breach) on Sat, 1/13. DPS had shut down water intake in anticipation. Once water levels subsided, water testing showed it was safe to turn the system back on. Water dept letter sent letter to MEMA

- Julia noted that everyone was surprised by the ocean currents and winds pushing water into the Merrimack while currents in the Merrimack were not letting water out so water piled up. Julia noted the next super high tide is in March.
  - Jane suggested we likely need enhanced monitoring at the artichoke and/or storm modeling. Jane also wondered about a potential intake point from the upper artichoke.
  - Barry asked about the concept of dredging the Lower Artichoke.
  - Rick P. noted that West Newbury needs to protect their well fields.
  - **Action Item:** Jane will reach out to Tom/Wayne to see how the NRC can support them, and invite them to a future meeting.
- National Grid had a crew on-site monitoring water inundation at the substation on Water Street.
- The Wastewater Treatment resiliency measures held up, no inundation around the side
- Rick P. noted West Newbury also had considerable flooding over the weekend on River Road.
- It would be helpful to have a repository for photos from last weekend's flood event. Suggestion to ask the public to upload photos to [mycoast.org](http://mycoast.org) website or phone apps.
- Without Jon-Eric we tabled the discussion on outreach and advocacy around the artichoke dam project.
- Communications strategies for the grant - webpage, newsletter, etc.
  - Discussion: Need to provide information on the grant components and general vulnerabilities. Similar to the newsletter content.
  - Agreement that feedback on the infrastructure projects should come from city department heads.
  - Will be making a small number of hard copies of the newsletter for distribution
  - Newsletter was provided to the council to distribute to their ward distribution list.
- Opportunity for drone footage
  - We have an opportunity from a volunteer to shoot some drone footage for us in early February. We discussed some potential points of interest.
    - Plum Island Point
    - Lower Artichoke
    - Market Landing Park
    - Bulkhead
    - Drainage system into industrial park (little river basin, crossing at Parker and Malcolm Hoyt way)

Connie asked what is the status of DPS taking drone footage of Plum Island. Julia responded that the resource in DPS who was taking drone footage has left. Jane/Julia discussed the need for regular drone footage to measure erosion. Julia said she thinks UNH has been doing some.

- Committee Updates
  - CommEdu
    - Upcoming Movie
      - Feb 3 @ 1pm - Inundation District - Screening Room - tickets at the Screening Room are sold out. [Other local screenings](#).

- Cashman park - Earth Day Sea Level Rise educational exhibit - Funded by Grant from Institute for Savings. The Parks Commission meeting is scheduled for 1/22. Will have drone footage and will be recruiting volunteers to stand on the tide inundation line for the drone shots.
  - Molly suggested that the committee consider a field trip to Portsmouth - There is a new exhibit at Strawberry Banke: "[Water Has a Memory: Preserving Strawberry Banke and Portsmouth From Sea Level Rise](#)
- Community Action Project
  - 2 year grant funded by MA State MVP program. Multiple parts, funding for non-profits to fund resiliency related projects, Community Forums to educate residents, Leadership dialog with the Mayor's staff, and a Green Expo in 2025.
  - Progress since November Meeting:
    - Contracts signed with UMASS/UHI and CAI to jointly develop and deliver the Community Forums.
    - Proposal received from UMASS/Collins Center to develop and deliver Leadership training
    - Outreach Activities
      - Communications/Outreach plan drafted
      - Dec/Jan newsletter published and well received
      - Logo was reviewed by the committee
      - Reading list for local library completed.
      - Social Media posts
      - Updates to [ArcGis Story Map](#) to reflect current project status.
    - Community Partner Updates
      - Two projects 100% complete
        - Theater in the Open reimbursement completed
        - Sustainability Tour: Recycling Center Tour with 8th graders, completed on 11/21/2023.
      - Others are gearing up: Tinkerhaus, Museum of Old Newbury Garden Tour and Gutter restoration, Coastal Trails Coalition MEVA and MBTA, Compost centers for elementary schools.
  - Plans for upcoming month
    - Development of Community Forums starting. Pilot schedule
    - Contract signed for Leadership Dialog
    - Additional Outreach
    - Continue to work with Community Partners
    - MVP 2.0 - exploring options with MVP team
      - MVP now requires municipalities to complete MVP 2.0 before we can apply for additional MVP action grants. We are discussing options for completing these requirements with the MVP team.
- Regs Working Group
  - MC-FRM floodplain mapping/Resiliency Checklist - continues to make progress. Jane will give feedback on the checklist to Julia and Dianne this week.

- [MA DEP proposed regulations](#) - MA DEP has published draft regulations for coastal high hazard flood zones. Draft regulations are significant changes. FEMA V-zone, no new development. Significant Restrictions in A/E zone. Impacts State Stormwater management standards and Wetlands Protection Act standards. Public comment period now until March 1, there will be information sessions starting tomorrow and Julia will attend. These have been discussed for at least a decade. Barry noted that he believes there will be a lot of lobbying against the changes and that the Administrative Procedures Act dictates the timeline. Proposed changes impact the regulations on building in the AE zone. State regulations will override city regulations on building in these zones. There are new proposed performance standards that restrict the manipulation of the flow of water (channelization) and erosion control. These will impact the way development is done in these zones. Jane noted that the Regulations subcommittee will look at the proposed regulations.

**Action item:** The committee should look at providing input on the draft regulations. Potentially from NRC, Conservation Committee and Mayors office.

**Action Item:** Julia will send the summary of the draft changes and some feedback from the information systems to the committee.

- Finance & Funding
  - Grants Opportunities
    - FEMA buyout grant -Julia thinks FEMA is close to making a decision on the buyout grant. FEMA was questioning the restoration plan. Meeting with FEMA Monday to respond.
  - Future-proofing Newburyport's downtown waterfront strategy/feasibility study/grant
    - Next steps? Will capture on list of future MVP Action Grant proposals.
    - Would still be good to highlight the city's initiatives along the waterfront.
- Waterfront west -
  - City has developed an update to the terms sheet since last Fall. Jane is representing the resiliency committee in the planning discussions.
- City Project Updates (no updates this month beyond what had already been discussed)
  - Lower Artichoke Dam Reconstruction Project (Jon-Eric)
  - Indian Hill Raw Water Line and Pump Station (Jon-Eric)
  - Water Supply Protection and Treatment Projects: Amesbury Interconnect – emergency and permanent, WTP Upgrades, watershed management (Jon-Eric)
  - WWTP Flood Protection - sidewalls (Jon-Eric)
  - PI Turnpike Feasibility Study (Jon-Eric/Julia)
  - Central Waterfront Bulkhead Renovations (Andy)
  - Central Waterfront Park (Andy)
  - PI / Reservation Terrace status (Julia)
  - CSO monitoring and communication alert system/app (Mayor's office)

**Next Meeting:** February, Feb 28, 3pm. Agreement to move meeting from Feb 21 as a number of members were unavailable that week.