

**Newburyport Resiliency Committee (NRC)**  
**3 PM October 20, 2021 Virtual Meeting**

Jane Healey kicked off the meeting at 3pm. Committee members and city resources in attendance were Julia Godtfredsen, Jane Healey, Andrew Port, Sarah Tappan, Geordie Vining, Brett LeFebvre, Joe Teixeira, Jon-Eric White and Molly Ettenborough. Rick Taintor and Mark Wright attended as participants.

Rishi Nandi, Barry Connell, Janet Daisley were absent.

1. Updates (<10 minutes)

1.1. Newbury/Newburyport PI MVP Project report - Andy/Rishi

Julia and Andy checked in with Ellie Baker, and the final report is still being tweaked. Andy noted that since the report will not include a detailed analysis of the work involved in raising the turnpike, that is likely a necessary next step for Newbury/Newburyport. Specifically estimating costs, permitting etc.

1.2. Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan – Julia

Jennifer Hughes has been making progress on the MHMP update. The repetitive loss property data from FEMA took longer than anticipated and so the update is behind schedule. She is hoping to have final report in Dec. Julia can give a better update at the next meeting. Hopefully by November there will be a draft to review and a schedule for the next listening session. Jane asked if she had everything she needed from the Resiliency Committee and Julia said she did. Jon-Eric and Andy have provided input recently.

1.3. Artichoke Dam foundation/emergency sandbags - Jon Eric

The horizontal footprint of foundation design was enlarged and that triggered a MEPA filing. This delays the process and the new estimate for the permits to be available is Jan/Feb. In the meantime DPS has been stockpiling stones to hopefully expedite the build process. The updated timeframe for build would be Spring 2022.

1.4. Plum Island coir bags/wood pilings – Julia

All permits have been received. Mobilizing to start work by the end of this week. A pre-construction site visit was completed last week. There is an understanding of where coir bags will go along Reservation Terrace. Stones will be pulled back to original positions and the coir bags placed adjacent to them. Funding is approved. Project is moving forward according to plan and will hopefully provide protection until the dredging project is started.

1.5. Central Waterfront & Bulkhead – Andy

Reference:

<https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf7106/f/pages/market-landing-park-expansion-sasaki-slides-adhoc-mtg-2021-10-7.pdf>

Andy Port walked the committee through the planning for the central waterfront park design as well as the bulkhead repairs needed to address deterioration and protect the central waterfront boardwalk.

The goal was to consider for Sea Level Rise (SLR) as part of the planned improvements and not to spend money that would be wasted because of resilience changes needed in the future. A portion of the vertical bulkhead wall (which supports the boardwalk) was repaired in 2013 and the remainder needs to be repaired now. The consultants for both the bulkhead repair project and the central waterfront park expansion have considered SLR implications.

Raising bulkhead walls will still leave gangway entries and east/west sides (which are private property) exposed to water intrusion and will need additional solutions. Additionally the boardwalk will also need to be raised to account for SLR. Raising the boardwalk is not part of either of the current park or bulkhead projects). Adding to the complexity, Waterfront Trust owns the boardwalk. Waterfront trust has acknowledged that the boardwalk needs to be raised, however they rely on the city and outside grants for maintenance. Their expressed preference is not to raise the bulkhead wall without raising the boardwalk to minimize impeding the view from the boardwalk.

The bulkhead design will consider raising elevation of the cap, either now or in phases in the future. The request for bid for the bulkhead repairs will include the pricing for raising the cap and if additional money is available, that work could be added to the scope of work for the repairs. If it is not done now, the design would allow for the cap to be raised in the future.

Geordie Vining commented that we need to get used to the idea that every 20 years or so we will need additional resiliency investments to keep the waterfront safe. Doing all the improvements at once will not be feasible. It would be great to raise the boardwalk now but it has an estimated 20 years of life remaining. The boardwalk cost \$2Million 20 years ago.

The cost to repair the bulkhead is \$4.3 Million and raising the cap would be an additional \$500K. The city will acquire MEPA permits to cover the bulkhead repair and raising the wall. The environmental permit process requires looking at SLR considerations.

The city will pursue a grant for the repair work but it has not yet been written.

Jon-Eric expressed concerns with the phase approach and is advocating raising the cap now. He posited that the additional cost is 12% of the cost of the project and money will only be tighter in the future. Additionally there may be engineering risks in the phased approach. The Waterfront Trust sightline argument could be resolved by raising the bench on the edge of the boardwalk. Jon-Eric agrees with the add-alternate bid approach.

Jane asked if the boardwalk was built to withstand floods. It is. The park will also be designed to handle short term water inundation.

As time progresses there will be more water flooding the central waterfront park and the proposed design for the park expansion will raise as much of the park as possible out of the flood zone. The design will raise the berms along the waterfront and have a granite block edge along the wall.

**Action Item (Jane Healey):** It was agreed that the Resiliency Committee should be prepared to take on communicating with the Waterfront trust regarding raising the cap now as part of the planned repairs, should additional funding for that alternative become available.

## 2. Subcommittees – Roles & Ownership (5 min)

### 2.1. Straw poll results

Jane shared the results of the straw poll on subcommittees taken after last month's meeting. It is on the shared drive. Shows that have some coverage in all the areas but spread thin.

**Action item (Jane Healey)** Jane will add Andy to Regulation sub-committee and Jon-Eric water/sewer infrastructure committee.

### 2.2. Resource list

Jane shared the list of additional resources that she has been developing. It is also on the shared drive. As additional people are identified will add to list.

## 3. Project Tracking / Priorities (10 min)

### 3.1. CIP resiliency related projects list

In an effort to put together a list of the NRC project goals for FY22, Jane shared a spreadsheet that contained the CIP line items from the approved FY22 budget, the in-progress projects from last year and the resiliency projects that have been completed.

This led to a discussion on the CIP process and Jon-Eric noted that there are a number of CIP requests related to resiliency that have not made it into the funded budget. Julia recommended that the Committee's role should be to make recommendations for resiliency projects to be funded as input to the annual budget cycle in Jan-March.

It was also recommended that Ethan Manning be consulted to confirm the list of projects funded this year.

**Action item (Jane Healey/Julia Godtfredsen)** Jane and Julia will work on filling out the tracking list. Jane will coordinate checking in with Ethan Manning.

### 3.2. Resiliency related grants list

Jon-Eric and Nancy London have been working on a grant list and database on grants

#### 4. Public Education & Communications (20 min)

##### 4.1. Brochure update --

Julia walked through the brochure comments she has received and agreed with them all. Her goal is to have an updated version for the next meeting. The planned usage is to distribute the hardcopy brochure to all residents and hand it out in city hall.

##### 4.2. Website proposal

The communication/education sub-committee has been considering methods for communicating the implementation plan. 3 models have been investigated so far and the next step is to investigate what can be done with the city's website. Molly noted that each department can make small updates to the website currently. There is a consultant in town that some departments have engaged for larger updates, at \$75 per hour. A link from the city page to another website is also an option.

Jane polled the committee on whether there is agreement on the need for a website. Joe and Julia like the Salem/Beverly model since it includes handling updates; we would need clarification on ownership of the content. Julia noted that the Horsley Witten website for exploring Plum Island SLR fiscal implications was valuable.  
<https://www.plumislandsealevelrise.com/> is implemented with squarespace.  
Brett mentioned that water testing results would be good to have on the site.

Brett asked about the feasibility of engaging school students. Molly responded that it is very feasible. Nock middle school and the high-school have active environmental programs and there are other groups like ACES that involve the students.

**Action item (Communications SubCommittee)** Committee will continue to look at options for a website, including ascertaining how the city's existing website can be used.

##### 4.3. Budget proposal

Julia has funding from conservation for the brochure.  
There was agreement that the committee should focus on fleshing out actual costs for the MiMAP expansions, the website and other projects in advance of next year's budget cycle.

A question was asked about MVP grant planning for next year. Andy said his understanding was that it will be focused on water supply protection with Jon Eric leading

**Action item (Jane Healey)** Jane will check with Nancy London to see if more than one MVP grant application per cycle is allowed.

##### 4.4. FEMA RFI request / Letter to the editor re Flood Plain Mgmt Standards

The suggestion was that the regulations sub-committee look at this or possibly consider a letter to the editor encouraging comments. Comments are due 12/1. Likely the committee will pass on this.

#### 5. Regulatory Working Group (5 min)

##### 5.1. Schedule subcomm mtg.

Jane met with John O'Connell - Newbury interested in working jointly with Newburyport on plum island regulations. Any proposals for Plum Island should include broad review including Afroz Khan; Sharif Zeid and other councilors.

**Action item (Jane Healey)** Jane will coordinate a kick-off meeting for the regulations working group prior to the next resiliency committee meeting.

6. Future Meetings Format (5 min)  
Deferred
7. Next Mtg.  
November 17, 2021 3-4 PM