

Newburyport Resiliency Committee (NRC) Meeting Minutes

3 PM December 15, 2021 Virtual Meeting

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.

NRC Attendees: Jane Healey, Andrew Port, Sarah Tappan, Jon-Eric White, Brett LeFebvre, Rishi Nandi, Joe Teixeira, Molly Ettenborough, Julia Godtfredsen
Invited Attendee: Rick Taintor (joined at 3:30)

Absent: Donna Holaday, Barry Connell,
Note taker: Sarah Tappan

Minutes

1. Approval of 11/17 Meeting Minutes - no objections, minutes will be posted.
2. Prep for the incoming administration -
A subgroup of the resiliency committee (Jane, Andy, Julia and Jon-Eric) will meet to develop a presentation and/or cheat sheet addressing the resiliency plan and objectives for the coming year with the Mayor-elect.
3. Committee Updates
 - CommEdu
 - Speaker series (Sarah)
 - Working with Jane an update to the slide deck from last February for the incoming administration and other audiences.
 - Plan to send to committee by the beginning of next week
 - Shifts from what's in the plan, to status from last year.
 - Website (Brett)
 - Amazon Web Services account set up
 - Created a server sufficient to run Drupal and CiviCRM at \$.0336 per hour or about \$25 a month.
 - Drupal 9 and CiviCRM are installed
 - Temporary URL selected
 - TLS certificates created and installed for https protocol
 - Olivero selected as the Drupal theme
 - Several proof of concept pages have been created to demo articles with images and videos.

- Group reviewed the rationale for a separate website rather than the City's resiliency page.

- Brochure (Julia)

- Bill Goff at Mechanica is working on the final updates. Not sure when we get it back, likely after the holidays.
- Would like to include the web-site on the back
 - After discussion, agreement that brochure should include a link to the current City's resiliency page
<https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/planning-development/resiliency-sustainability> This page will link to the new site when it is available.

Action Item: Julia to work with Dianne to see if there is a way to shorten the city resiliency site name for the use on the brochure.

- Funding for the development of the brochure has been from the conservation commission funds.
- Would like to have printing funded from the Resiliency Committee if funds become available.
- Distribution of the brochure will be done by including it in the City's tax bills.

- Regs Working Group

- Maps (Jon-Eric/Rick Taintor/Julia) (electronic update, not discussed)
 - Regs Working Group met in early Dec. Work continues on drafting resiliency-related language for Site Plan Review regs.
 - Proposed changes will be 'low-hanging fruit', e.g. stormwater mgmt, Low Impact Development measures, tree canopy, bike and pedestrian access. Much of the language will come directly from the city's existing Smart Growth District regs.
 - We do not plan to propose language related to flooding hazards at this time. Instead, the group is developing a resilience-related questionnaire/checklist for project applicants. The questionnaire will be intended to raise awareness of potential flooding and will likely include flood maps. Next mtg 1/11/22.
 - Flood map update - to be provided during mtg (not addressed due to lack of time)

- Other Business

- Committee membership changes (Jane)

Janet Daisley has stepped down from the committee. She was reluctant to do so but felt she should due to personal and professional time constraints and not being able to attend meetings. She would like to remain a committee resource and will be available to provide support through grant writing and will also remain a conduit to the Conservation Law Foundation's work.
- Northeast Center for Coastal Resilience Letter of Support (Jane)
 - The Mayor sent a letter of support and committed Newburyport to be a partner
- CIP project tracking w/ Ethan Manning (Jane)
 - Sarah and Jane have met with Ethan Manning and are working with him to get a better understanding of current city resilience-related project budgeting & spending.

- Nbpt Hazard Mitigation Plan (Julia)
 - Julia has sent the final draft to Jennifer Hughes.
- Mtg with Newbury staff regarding Plum Island (Jane)
 - John O'Connell (past NRC member from Newbury) arranged a meeting for Jane to meet with Martha Taylor, Planning Director; Samantha Holt, Conservation Agent; and Julie O'Brien, exec asst to Tracie Blais. Jane gave the group an overview of the NRC's current priorities/work. The group talked generally about the need to address storm surge and future sea level rise on Plum Island and all agreed that a joint task force between Newburyport and Newbury makes a lot of sense. It was decided that Jane would report back to the NRC and they would report back to Tracy Blais, Town Administrator with the expectation to regroup after the NRC's 12/15 mtg.
 - Per discussions in the meeting, will regroup after meeting with the incoming mayor.
 - Newbury has a hazard mitigation committee; but no resiliency committee

4. City Project Updates

- Lower Artichoke Dam Reconstruction Project (Jon-Eric)
 - Design contract proposal being worked on. Hope to execute the contract early January, possibly using our Water Enterprise Funds to fund the design only. Conceptual design and permitting to take us into 2023. Very unique project with many environmental concerns and private property impacts, both temporary and possibly permanent.
- Indian Hill Raw Water Line and Pump Station (Jon-Eric)
 - AECOM engineering firm is reviewing the options proposed by Tighe and Bond. The City will decide which option to go with, then seek design contract proposals from engineering firms, hopefully execute the design contract at the end of January. Funding the design is TBD. Design will continue through 2022 due to the impacts to private properties and working with West Newbury. 90% of the project is in West Newbury.
- Water Supply Protection and Treatment Projects: Amesbury Interconnect – emergency and permanent, WTP Upgrades, watershed management (Jon-Eric)
 - We hope to submit our State Highway Access Permit Application this week to MassDOT. Once submitted, we expect back and forth discussions and meetings for 1-3 months. During that time, we will meet with Amesbury to execute a MOU regarding the details on how much water we can pull from their system, water rate, etc. Phase 1 will consist of tying pipes into the water-lines in Newburyport and Amesbury so they are accessible via a man-hole. Ideally will install Phase 1 by late spring, funding TBD.
 - Phase 2 is the actual emergency piping installation – no action is expected on Phase 2 until if and when an emergency is declared by the City.

- WWTP Flood Protection - sidewalls (Jon-Eric)
 - The design contract for the sidewalls has been signed. The field survey began last week, and should finish by the end of Jan. Soil borings will also be completed during that time. The conceptual design will be the next step and then permitting. Anticipate conceptual design and permitting to be completed by mid-late 2022.
 - Doorway protection is understood and will be addressed in the event of an emergency prior to the completion of the sidewalls. The sidewalls are the preferred protection method.
- Central Waterfront Bulkhead Renovations (Andy) - no update this month
- Central Waterfront Park (Andy) - no update this month
- Waterfront West (Andy) - expectation is that this will be revisited next year
- Reservation Terrace status - coir bags/rocks (Julia) - No change. Based on a site visit last week it appears like the stones are serving the purpose of blocking the wave action, although a resident reported water was coming under rocks.

5. Plum Island

- Summary of city and homeowner options (NRC member comments/ideas)
 - Recommend the Resiliency Committee focus on the island as a whole rather than focus on current erosion hot-spots.
 - City's responsibility is for infrastructure and access, not shore-line erosion as shoreline is the responsibility of MA Dept of Conservation & Recreation and jetties are responsibility of Army Corp of Engineers.
 - Recommend that Plum Island recommendations be captured as part of a holistic framework that includes all of the City's resiliency issues and provides a consolidated view of costs and risks. A framework that enables trade-off discussions, so as not to address any one concern in isolation.
 - JFK study framework and Resiliency CIP were mentioned as potential frameworks
 - Have rough cost estimates and relative priorities for most of the top priority projects in the resiliency plan
 - Missing a resiliency plan for the PI water and sewer infrastructure and the street access.
 - The Committee should not make specific recommendations on how projects should be funded. That is the responsibility of the mayor and city council. The Committee can provide a menu of financial options for resilience related projects without specific recommendations.
- MVP Plum Island Project Report (pending clarity on 'final version') - no update, waiting for final version.
- Next steps, subcommittee/joint task force with Newbury?
 - Waiting for input from the incoming mayor on the forming of a joint task force.
 - If it would be helpful to put together scope of work descriptions for any of the outstanding resiliency areas, Rishi offered to assist.

- Suggestion that a subgroup (Andy, Molly, Julia and Jane?) meet with Donna Holaday in the next two weeks to capture her thoughts and recommendations.

6. Finance & Funding - not discussed due to lack of time.

- Project ideas for next MVP Action Grant cycle (EOI's due 1-21-22/2-14-22) - Julia's email 11/23/21
- Project ideas for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program grant

Next Meeting: January 19, 2021, 3-4:30pm