

**Newburyport Resiliency Committee (NRC)**  
**3 PM March 16, 2022 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.

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**NRC Attendees:** Julia Godtfredsen, Sarah Tappan, Andrew Port, Brett Lefebvre, Jane Healey, Molly Ettenborough, Jon-Eric White, Barry Connell

Absent today: Joe Teixeira, Rishi Nandi

**Other Participants:** David Moon, Stewart Lytle

Note taker: Sarah Tappan

**Key Accomplishments this month**

- First draft of a Climate Resiliency Questionnaire is complete (Regs)
- NRC represented at NHS Environmental Symposium (Comm/Ed)
- NRC website requirements submitted to Mayor's office (Comm/Ed)
- Barry Connell joined the committee as a volunteer representative.

**Meeting Notes:**

- The 2/16/22 meeting notes were approved for posting with no changes.
- Membership - We welcome back Barry Connell as a member of the NRC. Barry will now be serving as a volunteer representative.
- Committee Update
  - CommEdu
    - Speaker series (Sarah)

The first presentation is scheduled for Wednesday May 25, 7-9 pm, at the Senior Center. Planned speakers are Tom Cusick, Newburyport water treatment superintendent and Don Kretchmer, Limnologist D&K Consulting. They will present an update on the water resiliency projects and source water protection.

The second planned presentation will be Wednesday June 22, 7-9 pm at the Senior Center and will focus on the Newburyport Energy Advisory Committee (Mike Strauss, Chair, Molly Ettenborough, Newburyport Sustainability Director) and on the city's goals, programs and status against long-term Energy objectives.
    - NHS Environmental Symposium/Student Involvement (Jane)

Molly and Jane attended the Symposium on Feb. 17. There was a great turnout by students. Two members of the environmental club expressed interest in the Resiliency Comm and may attend meetings when available. Sarah, representing Storm Surge, also attended the Symposium.

*Addition from Sarah: Storm Surge will be sponsoring PI Beach cleanup events focused towards NHS students starting in mid-April.*

- Website/City Website Overhaul (Brett/Molly)

Work continues on defining content for the website whether it is a standalone website or part of the City's new website. Several prototype pages have been added since last month.

Nick Federico (Stormwater engineer, DPS) has provided some information about the CSO notification tool. It is still a work in progress. MVPC is hosting the tool that was created by Brown & Caldwell. The CSO notification emails are sent by upstream communities to the MVPC server. Software on the server extracts the data from the emails and provides a risk designation for downstream communities. When complete, a link will be available for Newburyport to access its risk level. Still working to get contacts at Brown & Caldwell and MVPC who can provide more information.

Resiliency website requirements submitted to Andy Levine by Molly.

**Discussion:** The City website project has published a list of requirements that incorporated all of the requirements that were submitted by the resiliency committee. Molly will check on the status of that doc. It seems like the group is leaning towards an upgrade to civicplus, but not investing in the next level service from civicplus. The Resiliency Committee would be given privileges to update our pages. Brett noted that Amesbury recently updated their site and wondered if that was considered. Molly said yes, the Amesbury site was reviewed and was considered in the requirements. The IT director has not been hired yet, but is getting close.

**Action Item:** Molly will ask Andrew Levine for an update on the next steps with the project.

- Brochure (Julia)

Final revisions made by Bill Goff. She is waiting on a new quote from the Mayor for the back panel.

**Discussion:** Need to include a website link on the back of the brochure. Julia is assuming we will use the city's website link and if we end up with an external site, it will be linked to the city's page.

Jane suggested the possibility of using "[<http://cityofnewburyport.com>](http://cityofnewburyport.com) >> Government >> Resiliency Committee" rather than the full link of <https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/planning-development/resiliency-committee> because its shorter and allows for a change in the location of the page during the redesign. She will discuss off-line with Andy and Julia.

Jon-Eric and Jane had sent in feedback that Julia will incorporate. Barry asked about the deadline for feedback. Julia said we are still able to incorporate feedback and agreed to send the current revision to Barry for review.

- Regs Working Group

- Site design review/Resiliency Questionnaire (Jane)

First draft of a Climate Resiliency Questionnaire is complete and work is ongoing. The group has agreed on a tiered or threshold approach, so project proponents will be asked a certain set of questions depending on the scope of their project.

We also agreed that the floodplain map should include both SLR and MHHW.

The primary ideas behind a Nbpt Climate Resilience Questionnaire are:

- 1) educate/encourage applicants to consider resiliency issues
- 2) gather information

Site plan review language is still being drafted. The proposed language deals primarily with stormwater management and tree canopy.

- Sarah asked if we should be revisiting the SLR forecast projections in the Resiliency plan based on the 2022 SLR Tech Report from NOAA released in February. Jon-Eric responded that since the FEMA floodplain + 6 FT recommendation has not yet been adopted or codified in an ordinance for first floor elevations, we don't need to change it at this point. The effort with the MVPC to add the SLR projections into a MIMAP data-layer will be calculated for FEMA+10 FT to provide for flexibility going forward.

- Finance & Funding (Julia)

MVP Action Grant RFR is out - need to finalize choice of project (Indian Hill Water Line or Artichoke Dam)

**Discussion:** MVP Action Grant - Letter of Interest submitted last month for the Lower Artichoke Dam and the Indian Hill water pipeline as well as the bulkhead project. Based on feedback we have received, the Indian Hill pipeline is the best contender according to MVP. Jon-Eric is concerned that the project may not align well with the 9 scope items required for MVP, unless we expand the scope to include watershed protection. MVP suggested we might frame the pipeline as replacing the lower artichoke which is vulnerable to sea level rise. But our recommendations do not include abandoning the lower artichoke.

Other funding potential for Indian Hill design is the SRF loan in the Fall. Or finding existing funds for a partial payment contract to get it started. Barry noted that SRF loans have to be repaid and can impact our bond rating. Jon-Eric feels it is critical to have an engineer get started on the pipeline design sooner rather

than later and we should not wait for a grant to start. We need an engineering firm hired by next Month.

Barry asked about the schedule for the MVP grant and how much time we have to put together the additional information required. May 5th is the deadline for the MVP grant applications.

Molly suggested that the work done by Kate Mallory last year might be useful in completing the grant application. Jon-Eric feels that there is a large project associated with watershed protection and that might be a better candidate for the grant as a separate project rather than linking it to the Indian Hill pipeline.

There is an \$80K fee proposal from Woodard & Curren for watershed protection services (including potentially applying for grants, writing by-law, creating the Total Max Daily Load (TMDL); many of the items in Kate's proposal). This will be discussed today at the March Water and Sewer Commission Meeting and addresses many of the recommendations in Kate's report.

**Next steps/Action Items:** Jon-Eric & Julia will talk to Nancy London about the Indian Hill MVP requirements. Jon-Eric will report back on any decisions from the Water and Sewer Commission meeting by email tomorrow. Molly will forward Kate Mallory's report after the meeting (Done). In parallel we need to review the list of projects to identify any alternatives to submit for the MVP grant if the decision is not to pursue it for Indian Hill (Jane, Sarah, Julia).

- Other Grants- The grant application to the EEA Dam and Seawall Program (\$80K) for the Lower Artichoke Dam was submitted in February but we have not heard anything yet.
- Other Business
  - Nbpt Hazard Mitigation Plan (Julia)  
CeCe Gerstenbacher of MVPC has been designated to assist us with the final tasks for completion of the HMP (2 listening sessions, submission to MEMA, FEMA, etc.) We are planning for an introductory meeting/planning session for the week of March 28th with CeCe and Jerrard.
  - Pilot project w/ Tree Commission - stormwater mgmt/bump-outs (Jane)  
No work has been done on this since the last meeting.
- City Project Updates
  - Lower Artichoke Dam Reconstruction Project (Jon-Eric) - Permitting for the emergency spillway protection is in progress. A grant application for the EEA Dam and Seawall Program (\$80K) was submitted in February. No updates on the grant yet. On the Lower

Dam design, some concerns were raised in DPS about whether there's a cost benefit to reconstruct the dam. The idea being considered is not to raise the dam and sacrifice the lower artichoke reservoir to storm surge and SLR because its' 50-million-gallon storage volume is a fraction of the volume of the other reservoirs. Indian Hill Reservoir is over 700 MG. Jon-Eric urged our group to remain vocal to have the City keep the lower reservoir because under future climate change conditions, every gallon will be needed. He suggested attending the public meetings during the design process, hopefully this fall. There was consensus among the Committee members that we should be protecting all available water and reserve capacity is very important.

- 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) - Still being permitted with MASSDOT. Draft MOU with city of Amesbury being reviewed internally.
- WWTP Flood Protection - sidewalls (Jon-Eric) - starting design, no significant updates from last month.
- Central Waterfront Bulkhead Renovations (Andy)  
Project is still on track for “shovel ready” plans in the coming months, with efforts still underway to secure construction funding from various sources. \$2.5 Million of funding has been secured. Ideally the bulkhead project would begin this fall/winter (2022). It has to be done off-season. Total cost is around \$6M.
- Central Waterfront Park (Andy)  
Project is still on track for “shovel ready” plans in the coming months, with efforts still underway to secure construction funding from various sources. Ideally the Market Landing Park Expansion project would begin in the spring (2023).
- PI Reservation Terrace status (Julia)  
Site visit last week confirmed that beach elevation has declined in certain locations and overtopping and “underwashing” of the rock barrier is occurring at high tides. Some settling of rocks has also occurred.

We anticipate the Merrimack River dredge RFP to be issued by Army Corps within the next month so that the dredge can take place in late fall/winter as planned. Concurrently, the Army Corps has agreed to undertake a “study” of the cause of erosion on Reservation Terrace.

**Discussion:** \$250K was allocated for an Army Corp study of the Erosion of Reservation Terrace. This follows a study that was done 2 years ago. It will be important that this new study utilizes the data from the DCR funded Upper North Shore Sediment study by Applied Coastal Research and Engineering, Inc, which shows that the jetty is causing the erosion on Reservation Terrace. Barry asked if there was an RFP for a study. Julia has not seen one and we need more information on the scope and intent of the study. We need to pay attention and pay attention to this study.

The Merrimack River dredge is still targeting next Fall/Winter but the RFP has not gone out yet as far as Julia knows. Mayor Reardon is tracking this closely.

- New Business
  - City Council representative (Jane) - Connie Preston will be joining as the representative from city council. Jane and Molly will meet with her before the next meeting.
  - Waterfront West (Jane/Andy) - The Mayor convened a waterfront west advisory group. Jane will represent the Resiliency Committee.
  - Meetings format - Speaker suggestions/Public Comments (Jane) - Jane suggested adding a public comment section for the first 5 minutes of the meeting. Everyone agreed. She would also like to consider scheduled speakers for future meetings. David Moon will be one of the first scheduled. Someone from the Conservation Law Foundation to talk to us about the regulation questions. Jane would welcome ideas for other speakers. Jane asked if we should move to in-person meetings. We agreed to remain on-line for another month or two.
  - Molly asked if there were decisions about ARPA funding that Jon-Eric was aware of. Jon-Eric participated with DPS and the Mayor and Andrew Levine about priorities, but he doesn't think any decision has been made. Barry asked what was the reporting deadline to account for the ARPA funds. Jon-Eric didn't have those details.
  - David Moon spoke about Mass Audubon's initiative around coastal resilience work to restore the salt marsh between Bob Lobster and the WWTP. Audubon has added significant resources towards coastal resilience. They are looking at a living shoreline project on Joppa flats to rebuild the salt marsh and provide protection to mitigate wave energy impacts and reduce nutrient pollution in the water. There will be research this summer around the viability of a ribbed mussel reef. They will be applying for grants to support this and plan on sharing the results with the Resiliency Committee.

Next Meeting: April 20, 2022, 3-4:30pm (Jane will not be here)- we proposed shifting the meeting to April 27.