

Newburyport Resiliency Committee (NRC)
3 PM July 21st, 2021 Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Sarah Tappan, Jane Healey, Heather Lipp, Andrew Port, Barry Connell, Julia Godtfredsen, Rishi Nandi, Joe Teixeira, Molly Ettenborough, Donna Holaday, Brett Lefebvre

Absent: David Chatfield, Chris LeClaire, Janet Daisley, Jon-Eric White,

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

1. Previous Meeting Action Points
 - 1.1 Comparison of sea levels used in the PI MVP project and the levels used in the Resiliency Plan – **Jon Eric White (2 June) - Deferred - Jon-Eric absent.**
 - 1.2 Review National Grid infrastructure change documentation. To be addressed at the 16 June meeting. **Jon Eric White 16 June Deferred Jon-Eric absent**
 - 1.3 Follow up with the Mayor for guidance on setting up a PI Group following the PI MVP report. **Andy Port July 14 -**
Waiting for final report which is expected by the end of the month before discussing further. Andy will share the report to the Resiliency Committee when it is available. Rishi and Julia had not seen the report, and final comments were due last week.
 - 1.4 Review of RMAT standards **Rishi Nandi July 21 or August 18.**

Rishi walked through a slide presentation he had pulled together on RMAT. The process is being run by MEMA and Energy and Environmental Affairs. These organizations are trying to find an approved method to allocate grant money. The process is a clearing house, bringing 6 departments (each with their own resiliency initiatives) together as RMAT administrators. The goal is that in the future all the grants money across all these agencies will be pooled. The tool provided a preliminary climate change exposure and risk rating. It is also supposed to be giving recommendations for resilience design standards and best practices. Rishi says this later part is not very far along in terms of development. Barry asked if design standards were for retrofits or prospective projects. Rishi believes it is for both.

The tool is asking for a lot of input, a lot of which overlaps general project plan data. No project has been run through the standard yet. There are no concrete examples from a project perspective. The Stakeholders in the process are outlined in the slides. The standards don't appear to exist yet, but Rishi thinks they will come on line in 2022.

Harvard Kennedy School study showed examples of the output of the tool and gave a good summary of the applications and limitations. The risk analysis is only as good as the data you put in.

RMAT grant money is likely not going to be sufficient to cover large infrastructure projects.

Molly asked if this analysis includes energy analysis -Rishi said it does not
The Mayor noted this is a big step forward, but will be a slow start. It is a big change at the state level but is a good model. Barry believes we should continue to develop the analysis for future projects so as to be in the front of the line. He asked Rishi how much money is in the grant pool? Rishi responded that he doesn't know.

- 1.5 Mayor's Blog – article on HKS project is with the Mayor. Follow up with the mayor on publishing.
Andy Port July 30

The Mayor commented that she will follow up on the status of this.

- 1.6 Decide how the City wants to approach CRS. **Andy Port July 21.**

CRS stands for the [community rating system for FEMA for flood insurance](#). Salisbury has gone through the process and been approved.. We've met some of the requirements but not all. The Mayor asked if this effort could be covered under MVP funding? Andy didn't believe it would meet the MVP criteria.

The decision on how the city would approach CRS would be the responsibility of the Office of Planning and Development with the Mayor. The Mayor noted that the Harvard Kennedy School project previously reported on this in 2018. It is a costly proposition to do this. So many other things were going on that the effort got tabled. The Mayor would prioritize CRS behind hazard mitigation planning which is tied to the FEMA BRIC program and Plum Island buyouts. Would also prioritize behind the dredging project and the Army Corp of Engineers fixing the Jetty.

Lowering the cost of Flood Insurance may be counter to Incentives not to move into high hazard areas? The CRS process is bureaucratic and costly to achieve but does not achieve flood resiliency. The Mayor suggested we revisit this in the Spring. In preparation it may make sense to have a conversation with Salisbury on the impact that this has had.

Other comments:

Going through the program doesn't contribute to resilience. Not providing funds.

Barry noted that to the extent that this eases concerns of people in the flood prone area and they use the savings to contribute to a plan to retreat from the the flood prone area, it could be a good thing.

Rishi suggested again that we should start zoning sub-committee; communicate a reduction of flood insurance rates in conjunction with new combined planning standards for the Island (with Newbury).

This could make it easier to move off as Barry noted and also control exposure.

Action - Schedule CRS topic for the Spring (Jane)

Action - Gather info from Salisbury on the cost of the initiative and the benefits. (this action item needs an owner; *does anyone have a contact?*)

Action - Molly will find the Kennedy school report and discussion from prior meetings and forward to the committee..

2. Update on Multi Hazard Mitigation Planning

- a. Review revised list of Resiliency Plan action points for inclusion in the Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) Update -**Jane**

Jane and David had identified 158 action points. At a meeting with Jennifer Hughes of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission last week she suggested cutting down the number of actions. After the removal of duplicates and combining similar items, they reduced the number to 28. Julia has reviewed, and felt there were a couple missing on the water supply and a few need to be added back from the previous version of the plan.

Jane is taking one more pass at the 28. Julia needs to add back in the hazards not associated with the Resiliency plan from the prior version of the plan.

- b. Review table of 2016 plan updates and accomplishments **Julia**
Plan requires these two tables, updates and accomplishments.
- c. Review action point responsibilities – **City Employees**
- d. Review areas of interest for volunteers - **Volunteers**

Action : Julia/Jane will distribute the action items to the resiliency committee

We need to Brainstorm how to get engaged in tracking these actions.

Brett asked if there was a priority for the items? They are currently ranked as immediate, short, medium and long term. At a future meeting we can discuss prioritization.

Action - Resiliency Committee volunteers will review the actions and identify any that they are interested in helping with.

- e. Review implementation timetable for updating the MHP - **Julia**

Timeframe - preparatory meeting August 5. The agenda for this meeting is to prepare for first of 3 public meetings. August 18 will be the stakeholder advisory meeting and will include members of neighborhood communities and the resiliency committee. The other two public meetings will be listening sessions in September

The second of the two September sessions will be a city council meeting. After that the plan goes to FEMA. Goal to complete it in Fall since it is a pre-requisite for the FEMA BRIC Grants application.

BRIC is a FEMA grant program “building resilience in communities”. The City wants to submit for the grant to support 7 houses on PI that have been damaged on Reservation Terrace.

Application process requires the city to provide a cost benefit analysis for each house. Find out a year later whether the grant is approved. If it is, FEMA will buy out the houses and deed the lot to the city once the structures are removed.

The Mayor noted that BRIC grants can be applied to a lot of other things too. The City’s previous Hazard Mitigation Plans expired at the end of May so that also contributes to the high priority to get this done.

3. Organization

- a. Confirm the members of the Resiliency Committee -**Andy Port**

Action: Molly will send out the document that was shared listing the current members.

Jane noted that the membership is a change from the past; fewer city employees as members; more as volunteers.

The Mayor noted that David is stepping down as Chair of the committee and there is now a need for a new chair. Floated the idea that Jane become chair and that Sarah or another member serve as co-chair or vice chair. Jane and Sarah agreed to meet and discuss this and report back.

Action: Jane to report back on her thoughts about the leadership roles.

b. Discuss options for organizing the committee activities such as moving to a topic based agenda
Jane raised the topic of meeting times. Potential for holding meetings on Quarterly Basis with everyone; and monthly with subcommittee or volunteers. An annual priority setting meeting to decide which Projects to submit grant funding proposals. Molly provided input that this only makes sense if the monthly meetings are making progress. Jane suggested making this a top agenda item for September.

c. Consideration for a Resiliency ~~resolution~~ ordinance
This was a mixture of two discussions. Julia was talking about a proposed ordinance as a statement of city policy. All departments would incorporate resiliency into their plans. Molly suggested adding to a similar proposed ordinance for consideration of net-zero energy reduction requirements.

Action: Andy will draft an ordinance for September. It will be helpful to have Barry help sponsor. There are other councils members interested as well.

Action: Rishi offered to help Andy since he is familiar with the similar Boston and Cambridge ordinances.

The second topic discussed was the Extinction Rebellion Climate Emergency Resolution. The Mayor, and others expressed that they don't think this is worthwhile pursuing since the resolution has no teeth. Sarah noted that in the discussion in email there was a consensus that we should talk to the group and listen to their position.

4. **AOB (new business)**

a. Communication Update

1. Resiliency Brochure Julia

Resiliency brochure- Julia is working on finalizing the text. It needs a review with Molly and Andy and then she will send it to Bill Gaff.

2. Storm Surge Speaker Series – Sarah

In the interest of time, Sarah sent the update in email. The next presentation is next Tuesday at 7pm at the Senior Center and will feature Jon Eric White talking about the Newburyport Water Supply. This program is the first to look specifically at Newburyport. Panelists will be Tracy Adamski, AICP, Vice President at the consulting firm Tighe & Bond and Thomas Cusick is Newburyport's Water Treatment Superintendent. We would encourage all of the resiliency committee to attend. In August the speaker will be Rick Taintor speaking on Zoning and Resilience.

3. Infrastructure Updates – Jon Eric - *Deferred*

b. List of standards that could be considered for incorporating in the SPR. **Rishi Nandi July 21**

*Rishi can email. It may make sense to tie to the ordance discussion above.. SPR is the Site Plan Review.
Rishi will work with Andy off-line.*

Next Meeting: Wednesday 18 August 2021 at 3 PM -

Julia will distribute the agenda; which will focus on the Hazard mitigation plan,

Joe noted that all acronyms should be spelled out in the agenda; since public meeting.

Many thanks expressed to Jane for running the meeting.