

**Newburyport Resiliency Committee (NRC)**  
**3 PM February 15, 2023 Virtual Meeting –Meeting Notes**

**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, Jane Healey (chair), Sarah Tappan (note taker), Jon Eric White, Molly Ettenborough, Brett Lefabvre (co-chair), Samantha Burke, Andrew Port, Connie Preston

Absent: Barry Connell, Joe Teixeira

Other Attendees: Annalee Tweitmann, Lela Wright, Mark Wright

**Key Accomplishments:**

- **Hazard Mitigation plan approved by City Council on 2/13/2023**
- **Newburyport Resiliency Planning Story map web page published**
  
- Public Comments - none
  
- Guest Speaker - Annalee Tweitmann, Mass Audubon  
Annalee reported that in the last few months they started the Atlantic ribbed mussel pilot project. In October they deployed 150 ribbed mussels in the salt marsh front of the Joppa Education Center. Ribbed mussels are the most common shellfish in salt marshes on the East coast but there were none in this section of marsh and they want to see if they will survive there and can be used as part of a restoration project. The majority of mussels deployed in October are alive today. The results of the pilot are looking promising and they are starting to think about how to scale up as a restoration process. Have hired EA engineering, a coastal restoration team, with funds from a grant from a private foundation to look at potential restoration plans in front of MA Audubon property and the parcel next to the Newburyport wastewater treatment plant. These are very challenging parcels. Also looking at the entire mouth of Merrimack. Expect to have more results to share in early Fall.

Where are ribbed mussels and what is the purpose? The mussels were collected from Rough Meadows Wildlife sanctuary and deployed at 3 elevations in front of the Audubon, High Marsh/low-marsh edge, low marsh and waterfront edge. First phase is purely to see if mussels will survive. Maybe too fresh water, marsh may be too degraded. Mussels will improve water quality, enhance denitrification, attach to plants and help prevent erosion.

Have not been tracking growth of the mussels. Deploy them by making tiny holes in the peat, and slide mussels in. They seem to be doing well but not able to measure without disrupting. Will hopefully see reproduction in spring/summer.

Committee member question: There is a pump station across from Shandel Drive in a very eroded marsh area. There is an effort to relocate it away from the marsh. Is there anything planned for this area? A: Expect to first pilot at Joppa flats audubon location. If it works out, subsequent phases would be to see if it could be expanded to other areas.

Believe that the biggest stressor to the marsh in the mouth of the Merrimack is excess nitrogen, which encourages excess growth above ground while insufficient root growth below. With wave energy, the plants will fall over. Have done water sampling and are hoping to do additional sampling to measure the above ground and below ground biomass ratio to see how top-heavy the plants are. Looking at nature-based solutions like the mussels to help stabilize the roots or reduce the wave action to stabilize the plants.

- Approval of 1/18/23 mtg notes - approved for publication. Sarah will ask Dianne to post.

- Committee Updates

- CommEdu

- Storm Surge - The Story of Plastic Documentary showing 4/20 (Sarah)

Storm Surge will host a community screening of the Story of Plastic documentary on plastic pollution issues. It will be on Thursday 4/20/2023 at 7 pm at the Screening Room. Molly has offered to provide a brochure and be available to answer local questions on recycling.

On Wednesday May 24 we will have another presentation on Plastics in the Oceans given by Laura Ludwig of the Center for Coastal Studies on the Cape.

- Story Maps (Brett/Sarah)

Newburyport Resiliency Planning Overview Story map web page was published last month. Next project is an overview of Resiliency on Plum island using the Plum Island brochure as a starting point

Analytics show stats of who has looked at the page. At present Since publishing we have had 24 visitors to the project pages. 13 to the overview page. Can't get too granular data on what the visitors do with the page.

Discussed what else we can do to encourage visits.

1) add links to the story-maps from other city web pages.

- Julia said she'd put a link on the conservation commission web page.
- Jon-Eric said he'd put the links on the Engineering and DPS pages.
- Suggestion to add a link from the city's main page

2) Announce the existence of the pages.

- Mayor's blog
- Can create a Press Release, PR agency can help
- Email to schools and other groups that would be interested
- Mayor's corner weekly video
- Molly can announce on a list server she uses for newsletters

- E-alerts for Resiliency
- Post on Newburyport news/announcement section of the website

3) Ask for analytics on the city's Resiliency web-page. Molly said these should be readily available.

- City Website Overhaul (Molly)  
New website has been released. There will be training (not yet scheduled) for someone from the Resiliency committee to be able to update the Resiliency page.
- Tree Tags (Jane)  
The Parks commission met and discussed information tags on trees. Park's commission had some concerns about how they will be displayed and so this project is on hold while that is being worked on.
- Regs Working Group
  - MIMAP floodplain mapping/Resiliency Questionnaire (Jon-Eric/Jane)  
MIMAP data was reviewed – the issues discussed last month were resolved. Jane will forward the link for the beta version to the Resiliency committee for broader review. Still working the colors. Plum Island is tricky since the beach changes every year which impacts the future flood-plane overlays. Plan is to add an identifier which will indicate the beach topography is ever changing and that this map is based on 2014 topo lines.  
  
There was no update on the Resiliency Questionnaire, it's queued behind the MIMAPS being available. Looking to develop a FAQ to go along with the questionnaire.
- Finance & Funding
  - Grants - MVP, Flap, other (Julia/Sarah)  
MVP Grant - A meeting has been scheduled next week with Michelle Rowden to receive feedback on the MVP Expression of Interest that we submitted. One area that we expect to receive feedback on is the Environmental Justice outreach aspect of the grant. Looking for more info on the EJ data for Newburyport. Andy noted that the MEPA filing for the Market Landing Park project required an EJ analysis on the downtown. He can provide us with that information and a distribution list. Julia will ask Katelyn Sullivan if she can help.  
  
No update on the FLAP grant.  
No response yet from FEMA on the Hazard Mitigation Grant for Plum Island.
- Other Business
  - Nbpt Hazard Mitigation Plan (Julia) –  
The Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted by the City Council on Monday night. It had been approved by FEMA pending approval by the City Council. Next step is to send it back to FEMA with Council signature. This will complete this effort.

- City Project Updates

No updates are needed to the projects web-page this month

- Lower Artichoke Dam Reconstruction Project (Jon-Eric) – Design kickoff in December. Next step is meeting with regulatory agencies to get feedback on what they will allow, hopefully later this month.
- Indian Hill Raw Water Line and Pump Station (Jon-Eric) - AECOM is still looking at the pump station location. Tom Cusick & AECOM will be giving an internal presentation to the city staff + West Newbury town manager & dps staff.
- Water Supply Protection and Treatment Projects: Amesbury Interconnect – emergency and permanent, WTP Upgrades, watershed management (Jon-Eric) - Jon Eric has comments for the engineer on the Emergency interconnect. There is no update on the Memorandum of Understanding.
- WWTP Flood Protection - sidewalls (Jon-Eric) - No update
- Central Waterfront Bulkhead Renovations (Andy) - still on-schedule proceeding to plan to complete next winter.
- Central Waterfront Park (Andy) - working on the bid package, including staging with the bulkhead contractors who will be working over the winter. Start Spring of this year and complete next year. CZM have expressed concerns through the MEPA environmental review process that raising the topography of the lawn areas will redirect water to the downtown and adjacent properties. Consultants have reassured this is not an issue. MEPA certificate is prerequisite for chapter 91 approval.
- PI / Reservation Terrace status (Julia) - Dredging work is still paused, since the Dec 23 storm. Current barge “Oyster Bay” can’t handle 30 MPH winds, 4 ft waves and is looking to subcontract to bring in a different barge and the dredge pipe has been temporarily removed. H&L Contracting is asking for a 2-week extension which would push it to mid April. Julia is concerned that the work might extend beyond the Spring beach grass planting season.  
Still anticipating a significant amount of sand to be added to the beach from the dredging at the mouth of the river. Only 10% of the planned sand was placed from the first phase of dredging on the Newburyport side of the river.  
The City has no control over this project since this is an Army Corp project and DCR is the owner of the beach property.
- CSO monitoring and communication alert system/app (Mayor’s office) - Jane spoke to the mayor’s office -A regional task force is being formed to work on CSO’s in general. The mayor’s office is aware of the issues with the warning system but there are currently no specific plans in place to resolve.

Jane asked for feedback on written updates vs verbal updates in the meeting. Consensus was for verbal updates.

**Next Meeting:** March 15, 2023, 3-4:30pm