

## Newburyport Resiliency Committee (NRC)

3 PM October 19, 2022

### 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, Andrew Port, Jane Healey (chair), Brett Lefabvre (co-chair), Sarah Tappan (note taker), Connie Preston

Absent - Joe Teixeira, Jon-Eric White, Molly Ettenborough, , Barry Connell, Samantha Burke

Other Attendees: Lela Wright, Kim Turner, Andrew Levine, Mayor Sean Reardon

#### **Key Accomplishments:**

- Resiliency brochure proof approved
- Hazard mitigation plan MEMA review complete

#### **Notes:**

*There was a decision last meeting that starting with this meeting, we will record the meeting and post the recording.*

- Public Comments - None
- Approval of 9/20/22 mtg notes - approved no changes. Sarah will request that they be posted.
- Video: Babcock Ranch, FL and Hurricane Ian –<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXiYbCwefCA>

Connie recommended another link from npr (below).

Julia would like more info on whether the tesla batteries were provided for all the homes, is the community off-the grid?

Homeowner Tesla batteries were optional. Solar array has 10MW of battery storage. FL Power & Light natural gas plant provides backup for Solar.

Additional info:

- [One Florida community built to weather hurricanes endured Ian with barely a scratch](#)
  - [Solar-powered town in Florida kept lights on during Hurricane Ian](#)
  - [Babcock Ranch Was Designed To Be Sustainable & Resilient. Hurricane Ian Was Its First Real Test. - CleanTechnica](#)
  - [Builder uses Tesla system to help power area new home](#)
  - [Babcock Ranch - Platinum Green Development Standards](#)
- Discussion: Long and short-term fiscal impacts of sustainable/resilience related ordinances & codes - weighing benefits & costs.

Andy Port raised the topic that as ordinances and capital projects are being considered, the cost/benefit of resiliency or sustainability codes will need to be discussed. Capital project such as Market Landing Park visitors center and the West End Fire Station required renewable energy assessments. Andy anticipates that as these projects go to city council for funding, there will be necessary discussion on the pros/cons of spending for long-term benefit.

The council requires a life-cycle cost-benefit as part of an energy assessment report for new capital projects that includes the equipment payoff-time for proposed equipment and cost-benefit over time. For the West End Firehouse sustainability was discussed by the council. Geothermal was considered and found to be feasible but not cost effective over time. Solar was chosen instead. Market Landing visitors center is also proposed to use solar. In that case because the project is within the downtown overlay district, it requires certain design aesthetic requirements that might conflict with the net-zero ordinance requirements. The Planning board will be discussing the visitors center tonight. With the HarborMaster building the EAC got involved with the discussion on the design choice of the type of solar but it didn't get raised to the council as a cost-differential as far as Andy recalls.

Action Item: Jane will follow-up with Molly to see how we can cooperate with the EAC and jointly respond to requests for input on resiliency cost-benefit questions from the council. Also we need to follow-up with Molly on whether the city is considering adopting the MA 2021 climate act Stretch Energy Code, and the requirement for green communities and the Municipalities Opt-In to the 'Net-Zero' Specialized Stretch Code.

Jane noted that cost-benefit analysis for net-zero is somewhat more straightforward than resiliency measures which are harder to quantify since avoiding future costs. See page 6 of this publication [Enhancing Resilience in Boston – A Guide for Large Buildings and Institutions](#). Conversation is important for city/public projects as well as for the private sector, including residences.

- Committee Updates

- CommEdu

- Brochure (Julia) –

- The proof is finalized and approved. Pending order for 9000 copies which will be sent out with the December tax bills. Waiting to hear if it will increase the cost of the mailing. Once they have confirmation that it won't increase the cost of the mailing, Julia will order the 9000 copies.

- StoryMaps (Brett) - As mentioned last month, have a storymap account with MVPC and the initial implementation being moved from the public account to the MVPC account. 7 projects moved over and are running. Currently using a Newburyport overview map as base-map for the storyboard. Steve Lopez plans to build a different base-map. Easy to migrate to a new map when available, but Brett believes the current base-map is sufficient for publication once the content review is complete. Brett has been using google docs instead of pdf's for the project details files, easy to update but concerns about access control.

- Jon-Eric is reviewing content. Once reviewed, it could be published.

- Jane asked if Steve needed technical assistance dollars to close on the base-map modifications? As far as a base-map for us, he does not need any additional funds.

Action item: Julia suggested a content review at the next meeting.

- City Website Overhaul (Molly) - no update.
- CSO monitoring and communication alert system/app -

Brett reported that MVPC thinks it's done. MVPC has a website that shows the CSO's. <https://mvpc.org/cso-monitoring/> He's not aware of any work on a separate application. MVPC hosts that backend server and the software that pulls the information from automated alerts of recent overflows of combined sewage from Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell, Nashua NH and/or Manchester NH.

Should we put a link to this on the NBPT city website? Brett thinks it would be good to have this on the city website if we can get access to it. It is a simple interface boiling down the info on the CSO and the river flow data to a Green/Red risk in Newburyport.

Andrew Levine noted that the law passed by the State last year requires that municipalities report CSOs via public health warning on web-site, a public health alert to residents who are signed up, and its post on health dept social media. Physical posters at cashman park, joppa and plum island, warning about public health warning.

Andrew is not convinced that the MVPC website referenced above is updating and he is following up with them. Their website reports a binary - low risk/high risk, and they were talking about adding medium risk. We are required by the law to report to residence when a CSO takes place up-river. It would be more helpful to know how harmful it is and what the alert level is at Newburyport. This was the goal of the MVPC system. In the summer the City tests the water for bacterial load weekly or more frequently. This past summer there were no CSO's correlated with closing beaches based on the coliform bacteria levels measured by the water-quality testing this summer. This was potentially due to the drought. The MVPC site does not include any bacterial measurements. Julia noted that the beaches are not going to have the same bacterial levels as up-river.

Mayor Reardon had a discussion about this with MVPC a couple days ago. We are automatically updated when there is a CSO release on the Merrimack. Trying to reconvene the Merrimack River District alliance, bringing in more communities including NH. Advocating as a collective body to address CSOs on the Merrimack either by funding or land purchases.

- Native Plantings (Jane) - Jane/Kim/Molly are working on a public communications effort about native plantings. Thinking about trees going into

parks and on the streets. Looking at a way to communicate the benefits of the trees from a resiliency perspective. Jane suggests tagging of trees showing benefits to carbon capture, stormwater and air pollution.

- Brett suggested a story map of the trees, benefits, who planted etc. Kim mentioned she was speaking with Walt Thompson and he'd be interested in contributing info on the perennials in the butterfly garden. New planting on the rail trail near Washington street.
- Connie Preston noted that the tree commission pulls from a [list of recommended street trees](#), small/large, native/non-native. The tree commission is passionate about natives as choices for street trees. We could work with the Tree Commission to add a narrative on the tree commission page that lists the trees, to describe the benefit of native trees to resiliency.
  
- Tracking Resiliency Plan Implementation Progress (Jane) - No update
  
- Regs Working Group
  - MIMAP floodplain mapping/Resiliency Questionnaire (Jon-Eric/Jane) - no update.
  
- Finance & Funding
  - Grants (Julia/Sarah) - Meeting to revisit MVP action grant for next year. Ready to start reaching out to community groups to invite them to partner with us on projects to be included in the grant proposals for next year.
  - Jane talked to David Moon. Audubon is likely receiving a grant from a private foundation which could amount to about half the amount of the CZM grant. They are moving forward with the project and he wants to maintain cooperation with the city.
  
- Other Business
  - Nbpt Hazard Mitigation Plan (Julia) – Plan was submitted to MEMA, We received feedback from them. Next step is to submit to FEMA for final review. Before we submit to FEMA we are editing the portion of the plan covering erosion, clarifying the erosion at Reservation Terrace is the result of the system of currents that the jetties create in the mouth of the river (the gyre) . This is based on the DCR study which indicated a man-made issue that needs to be addressed through mitigation measures associated with the jetty. Rather than a lack of sediment impact. Once that's in there we will be in a better position to request grant funds to address the issues. Andy noted that it's important to capture this and while FEMA is looking at the impacts of sea level rise hazards, it is important that the federal government also acknowledge that at this location there is a man-made element of this erosion due to the gyre created from the jetties. The dredging effort will move the sand out of the channel and on to Reservation Terrace temporarily but eventually it will move back.
  - The final approval for the Hazard Mitigation plan will be made by the city council after the FEMA sign-off.
  - Connie asked about the timeframe of the Army Corp study of erosion. It was reported at the last Merrimack River Beach Alliance meeting that the Army Core has allocated \$240K for the study and is initiating a 2-year study.

- The Army Corp is chartered with navigation and maybe less focused on the beach/land issues.
  - The Mayor noted that there will be a dredge river cutting on 10/31.
  - Julia suggested the City take frequent drone pictures to measure how long sand stays in place before it shifts again.
  
- City Project Updates
  - Lower Artichoke Dam Reconstruction Project (Jon-Eric) - Contract for Concept Design was signed by the consultant and is expected to be signed by the city later this week.
  - Indian Hill Raw Water Line and Pump Station (Jon-Eric) - Tom Cusick held a mtg with West Newbury and Nbpt today for discussion on locating pump house.
  - Water Supply Protection and Treatment Projects: Amesbury Interconnect – emergency and permanent, WTP Upgrades, watershed management (Jon-Eric) - Jon-Eric has reviewed the Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) and sent back comments that will require our consultant to do some modeling to make certain that it will work as intended.
  - WWTP Flood Protection - sidewalls (Jon-Eric) - no change. In design. Waiting to really start doing concept sketches
  - Central Waterfront Bulkhead Renovations (Andy) –Working on paperwork for the Federal Govt funding. Bid docs are being prepared for an early bid phase. Plan is for construction winter of 2023, coordinating with planned park improvements to allow vehicles to pass to work on the bulkhead without damaging the park's landscape improvements.
  - Central Waterfront Park (Andy) - On track to speak to planning board tonight to discuss the building. Need plan approval from council and planning board. Have approved the site plan overall, but need to approve the building/landscaping. Will then close the loop with the city council. Final bid-plans for specifications for phase 1, the park-space improvements (not parking lot or visitor's center) for next year. Looking at raising additional funds for site amenities. City council has asked the planning dept to focus on the bones of the park next year, but Andy hopes to be able to include the site amenities as part of phase 1, by raising the additional funds.
  - PI / Reservation Terrace status (Julia) – Sent photos of new sand from dredge. The dredging is on-going 24x7. There have been no complaints or concerns. The dredge team had asked for permission to complete the construction of the pipes on the beach, but they have been doing it on the parking lot, not the beach which is what we preferred.

**Next Meeting:** November 16, 2022, 3-4:30pm