
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session # 1

January 10, 2019

3pm-5pm

St. James Masonic Lodge

77 Tide Mill Road, Hampton, NH

NOTES

Participants:

- Jason Bachand (Town Planner)
- Regina Barnes (Board of Selectmen)
- Deb Bourbeau (property owner; Hobson Ave. area)
- Jay Diener (Seabrook Hamptons Estuary Alliance SHEA)
- Rayann Dionne (Hampton Conservation Coordinator/Commission)
- Liz Durfee (EF | Design & Planning, LLC)
- Ona Ferguson (Consensus Building Institute)
- Jennifer Hale (Hampton DPW)
- Kirsten Howard (NHDES Coastal Program)
- Bob Ladd (Hampton Beach Village Precinct)
- Nathalie Morison (NHDES Coastal Program)
- Mark Olsen (Planning Board)
- Nancy Stiles (Hampton Beach Area Commission)

1. Welcome & Introductions (Jay and Liz)

Jay introduced the project; would like to develop the path forward for Hampton to deal with flooding issues; the purpose of this effort is to develop a trusted group of town residents and Town representatives to work on the topic of flooding in Hampton; the group will help Jay, Rayann, Liz, Nathalie, and Kirsten put together a work plan/project proposal to submit to Consensus Building Institute for a possible next round of funding to move this issue further forward.

Liz reviewed the ground rules. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Setting the Scene (Liz)

- a. Local context and flood vulnerability and impacts

- Prepared a Situation Assessment (SA) that included a review of existing conditions, plans, and projects, as well as a survey and some interviews (participants received the Situation Assessment prior to the meeting)
- Jennifer asked if the bigger project being referred to would be a planning project or a construction project.
 - Liz responded that it would be a planning project/coordination effort. This bigger project might involve convening the Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) which can serve as an advisory group that helps the town coordinate its flooding issues and efforts to mitigate those issues and might also include some analysis and research work to inform the CHAT and town.
- Liz reviewed demographics and geography from the SA. (See slides)
 - Jennifer stated that she disagrees with the characterization that there is little population growth and that Hampton’s population is ~15,000+ people. This does not reflect the seasonal population. The homes we’re building are not necessarily for full time residents, but we are adding homes. “Vacant” homes are lived in quite often. Majority of people coming are not residents of Hampton but own properties in these vulnerable areas. They are people who live here and they impact the town. The SA should reflect that.
 - Regina added that some days the population is 500% larger (according to police/fire).
 - Others agreed that Jennifer and Regina made good points and the project team agreed to change how population was characterized in the SA to better reflect the temporary/part-time population.
- Liz showed the areas that experience repetitive flood losses. (See slides)
 - Rayann stated that the repetitive loss areas aren’t all that surprising to folks who work and live in Hampton.
- Liz reviewed recommendations in Hazard Mitigation Plan, other planning efforts, and ongoing efforts/projects. (See slides)
 - Jennifer provided a short update about the two engineering studies; they are working on contracts and at the data collection point.
 - Jason updated the group on the approaching master plan effort. The Town is working toward a Comprehensive Master Plan with a warrant article coming up in March.
 - Rayann mentioned that the Conservation Commission is putting forward a warrant article dealing with zoning changes (freeboard). Another warrant article is in draft (pilings required in certain AE zone areas).
- Liz reviewed survey results (See handout and SA)

- Regina asked whether recommending raising homes makes sense when residents still can't access their homes in a flood; when does raising roads become part of the solution?
 - Jay responded that because foundations are cracking in high tide and storm flooding, raising homes/structures is a solution to address that structural risk. Protecting your structure is an advantage of raising your home but getting to and from your home is not one of the advantages of raising your home. That's important to recognize and acknowledge. This group can help think through that.

3. CHAT

a. Proposed CHAT goals

- Liz reviewed proposed CHAT goals and asked for feedback

Proposed Goal 1: Improve coordination of flood hazard management and adaptation efforts in Hampton.

Proposed Goal 2: Investigate, analyze, and prioritize flood management and adaptation strategies to present to the Town of Hampton for consideration

Proposed Goal 3: Inform residents about the flood hazard management and adaptation options the Town is considering and enable residents to provide input on flood hazard management

- Nancy asked for goal # 1; how do you propose to accomplish it?
 - Liz responded that one way to accomplish Goal # 1 is through regular meetings of this particular group and a report out to different boards and commissions
 - Jay explained that since many people at the table represent important groups in the Town; if we can get to a point where we can get this group to speak with a unified voice then it will carry a lot of weight; maybe the Town will take the issues more seriously
- In general the group seemed to agree with the goals. Liz mentioned they could revisit the goals next meeting to confirm.
- Jennifer mentioned that she thinks the Budget Committee and the Zoning Board are missing from the table as key Town decision making bodies.
 - Regina agreed that, in particular, the Zoning Board should be at the table and also that the Budget Committee made sense at the table. She said she recognizes that people want a solution, whether or not they have to sell their house, they need to know. She hopes CHAT can work on communication.
 - Jay mentioned that one thing we should discuss today is how this process moves forward; he thinks expanding the group is fine but is also concerned about making it too big. He wondered if the group should first focus on learning.

Perhaps the group would bring in external experts, speakers. Some meetings could be open to the public.

- Jennifer agreed that a bringing in guest speakers for certain topics makes sense; she mentioned buyout program opportunities which she doesn't know much about so would need to learn from external experts.
 - Nancy mentioned that you could invite other town representatives to the CHAT meetings depending on whether that meeting's speaker was relevant.
 - Jay agreed that someone could come talk about FEMA programs, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, buyouts.
 - Jennifer reiterated that she still thinks the Zoning Board and Budget Committee should be represented at the table regularly as key members.
 - Regina mentioned that the Zoning Board is talking about rezoning; flooding might really need to be considered in rezoning and that's why she's concerned about not having the ZB at the table.
 - The group agreed that the Budget Committee could be represented by Regina and Bob. Jay would invite Bryan Provencal, Chair, to participate on behalf of the Zoning Board.
 - Nathalie and Kirsten offered to work with SHEA to find appropriate external speakers and serve as liaisons to other state agency staff.
 - Bob mentioned that he can put CHAT meetings/presentations on the Village District Channel 2.
 - Jay suggested bringing in a person from the assessor's office at some point.
 - Bob pointed out that a first task is to get the town to vote for the master plan. Others seemed to agree that having CHAT help with the Coastal Hazards and Climate Adaptation Master Plan Chapter would be a good use of time/starting point.
- The group agreed that meetings every other month seemed like a reasonable frequency at minimum but would also meet more often, as needed.
 - Liz reviewed roles of CHAT from slides and asked for input from the group:

Primary role: Serve an advisory role for the town on coastal flooding issues and existing projects.

- *Provide educational opportunities for stakeholders to learn about adaptation strategies from each other and from other communities.*
- *Plug into ongoing projects, like the flood engineering studies.*
- *Help steer the development of the Coastal Hazards and Climate Adaptation Master Plan Chapter.*

- *Provide recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.*
- *Others?*
 - Jennifer mentioned that the group could be an advisor to funding alternatives such as Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs and TAP¹ funds and help the town determine appropriate mechanisms for raising match.
 - Jay agreed that they could call out funding as a focus of their role. In Barrington the town put aside money for match for projects like that.
 - Mark asked why there isn't a mechanism for a surplus at the end of the year to go into a matching fund.
 - Jennifer mentioned that a certain percentage has to go back to the General Fund. Also wrestling with the issue that if a line item isn't spent, it doesn't get budgeted the following year. There is an undesignated fund but would a Capital Reserve fund be better?
 - Liz mentioned that discussion on Capital Reserve Fund; might be a good early meeting topic.
 - Ona asked about a need for authority, decision-making rules, official staff resources, and whether meetings need to be or should be public.
 - Group agreed that they have adequate authority as liaisons for their boards/commissions/departments/groups. They prefer to keep the group informal without set decision-making rules. Decided to continue discussions about what meetings should be public at a later work session.
 - Bob mentioned that the status of the CRS² application should be a topic at a future meeting.
 - Nancy mentioned she would like there to be coordination between the Coastal Hazards and Adaptation Master Plan Chapter development and the update to the environmental component for the Hampton Beach Area Commission.
 - Jason agreed and mentioned that the Beach's Master Plan is part of the overall master plan of Hampton. Grant proposal submitted with Coastal Program for funding for the Coastal Hazards chapter.
 - They agreed that the timelines for the two chapters/plans align well for coordination. Timeline for Master Plan: Phase 1; RPC will set up the foundation over the course of about 1 year starting in March (draft vision chapter and template of the overall plan); Phase II full update longer term. Supported unanimously by the Selectboard; supported by the Planning Board; Village District

¹ Transportation Alternatives Program

² Community Rating System

- The proposal for the Coastal Hazards Chapter, if funded, would run from October 2019 through March 2021.
- Rayann mentioned that they would work with a consultant to develop the Coastal Hazards Master Plan Chapter; wouldn't be as overwhelming as it sounds.
- Group seemed to agree that advising/guiding the Master Plan Chapter on Coastal Hazards and Climate Adaptation should be part of their role.
- Nathalie mentioned that for their climate adaptation master plan chapter, the City of Dover established a subcommittee of the Planning Board of staff and residents and they responded to input from SRPC and got the word out. That might be a model that could work. If you start by getting educated over the next few months, you'd be in a good place to provide that guidance.
- Jennifer mentioned that the engineering studies will provide recommendations; there won't be a fix to fix everything. There will be steps and solutions to get to a better place. Will provide data. Hydrological component that works with climate adaptation. Not every area in the Hazard Mitigation Plan is being studied by the two studies, but lots are. They could be speakers to this group. (General agreement)
- Rayann mentioned that having someone come talk about the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program would be really helpful with; we need help figuring out how we will handle the process; do we have resources? How can we handle those grants? Interesting opportunity.
- Bob mentioned that Emergency Management should be part of this discussion at key points Has the problem reached the point of an Emergency Management Committee being needed?
- Public meetings?
 - Jay mentioned that Deb and Tom are serving leadership resident roles on CHAT
 - Bob mentioned that it might be premature to open the meetings up publicly until there is enough to present to residents. Focus on learning as a group first.
 - Jennifer agreed but also wants to take a step back; one goal is to educate the public; they may need to be fully invested and that might help to invite people
 - Deb mentioned that people think this is a quick fix but it's really not; so everyone needs help understanding that. Interested in learning about abatements.
 - Jay mentioned that they plan to continue the flood workshops in a more roundtable resident process/more informal/etc. which could be a forum for CHAT to interact with larger groups of residents.
 - Rayann said she supports opening up specific CHAT meetings to the public.

- Nathalie mentioned they could duplicate the topics discussed at CHAT meetings with the resident roundtables.
- Bob brought up the issue of emergency management and capacity. Hampton has 2 evacuation plans and one is school system.
 - Jennifer responded; sits in on some emergency management scenario exercises; we have a member that is part of the School Board; we have a protocol from notice to evacuation and depending on the way the winds are blowing the route changes based on that.
 - Bob mentioned that the public doesn't know those plans.
 - Group agreed emergency management and evacuation planning could be a future meeting topic and the Emergency Manager would be invited to join for that session but likely would not want to be a regular member.
- Meeting topics suggested:
 - Focus on Hampton's vulnerabilities; major issues; basic Coastal Flooding 101; getting everyone on the same page
 - HSEM; Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs; funds for raising and buying out properties as well as municipal priority projects
 - Engineering studies
 - CRS update
 - Abatements, budget process (for public too); funding opportunities/CIP
 - Resilient tidal crossings; culvert maintenance responsibilities (Kevin Lucey; NHDOT)
 - How to figure out what emergency management's roles are and how to fill other capacity needs; evacuation planning
 - Master Plan Chapter
- Ona mentioned a few resources: Flood Forum USA (<https://anthropocenealliance.org/floodforumusa/>) for resident groups, Climigration.org. Also mentioned that the group is doing really cutting edge, impressive work.

4. Next Steps

- a. Project team will put together meeting notes, draft CHAT informal charter document for review at next meeting, and proposal for the next meeting (focused on more learning)
- b. Jay will invite Zoning Board member Bryan Provencal
- c. Next meeting: Tuesday, February 19 from 3-5pm; location TBD
- d. In general, meet on the 3rd Tuesday (either monthly or every other month, depending on need)

5. Adjourn