
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #37

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

2:00-4:00PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Present

Liz Durfee - Planner and CHAT coordinator

Jason Bachand - Hampton Town Planner

Jay Diener - Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance

Rayann Dionne - Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance

Tom Bassett - Resident Representative

Stephen LaBranche – Resident Representative

Keith Lessard - Planning Board Representative

Brianna O'Brien - Hampton Conservation Coordinator

Jim Waddell - Selectmen's Representative

Joe Lynch – Hampton Department of Public Works

Bob Ladd - Village District Representative

Katherine Harake - Hampton Municipal Budget Committee Representative

Maddie Dilonno - Rockingham Planning Commission (Guest Speaker)

Micheal Phillips - Hampton Resident

2. Approve meeting notes from March 2022

Mr. Bassett noted a typo on page three in the first bullet point under “Public participation”. Ms. Durfee proposed to amend the bullet to read “comments will be welcome on any topic”.

Mr. LaBranche MOTIONED to accept the minutes as amended. SECONDED by Mr. Bachand. Vote: Unanimous.

3. Relevant Flood Updates

Mr. Bachand gave an update:

- Work on updating the Master Plan continues.
- Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) Grant
 - To utilize Coastal Flood Risk Guidance to audit and amend land use regulations.
 - Audit has been conducted and inconsistencies were found in the floodplain management ordinance in regard to the state building code.
 - 4 sea-level rise design flood elevation options were developed.

- The final product from the grant will be a report by resilience that summarizes findings and suggested next steps.
- A presentation will be made to SHEA in June regarding the flood smart round-table.
- There is an opportunity to take the findings and advance them to the Flood Smart Seacoast Technical Assistance. This is due May 6th.

Ms. Dionne gave an update:

- Noted that there would be a Flood Safe Round table that evening (April 19th).
- Flood Smart Round Table on June 9th will feature Jennifer Gilbert, the State Floodplain manager. She will talk about the new FEMA rating system for Flood insurance policies and building code changes.

Mr. Bassett gave an update:

- After reaching out to members of the community he was able to acquire about 10 new emails of people who are interested in CHAT updates.

Mr. Lynch Gave an update:

- The preliminary design is done for the drainage improvement project.
- Grant applications were submitted the previous Friday.
- Expects a public hearing once they have more of a concrete plan.

Mr. Diener gave an update:

- Referenced an article about a lake in Florida that has standing to sue a developer on the grounds that it will interfere with the lake's functioning from an environmental perspective.

Ms. O'Brien gave an update:

- She is revisiting impervious coverage regulations in Hampton and what it would look like to put limitations on previous hardscape.
- She is looking to identify some parcels within the estuary to protect through easement or purchasing lots.

Jennifer Hale joined the meeting.

Ms. Hale gave an update:

- Thanked everyone for their support for the three grants they submitted for the previous Friday.
- Grants submitted for included:
 - A grant for the Kings Highway drainage implementation project. Approximately \$2.4 million.

- Sewer rehabilitation retrofit due to coastal flooding, an impact on wastewater treatment. Approximately \$400,000.
- Bank stabilization project at Eel creek and Hampton Seabrook Estuary. Unsure of the value.

Ms. Durfee noted that the Hazard Mitigation Plan update is starting and any members of the public are welcome to participate.

Ms. Hale noted that the first meeting was held earlier that day. She added that they did talk about the work CHAT has done and the efforts that Hampton has taken in regard to coastal resilience. Ms. Hale stressed that the mitigation plan is much broader than coastal resilience, and she would recommend that a representative be sent on behalf of CHAT.

Ms. Hale stated that the next meeting for the Hazard Mitigation Plan update will be held May 10th at 10 AM. Ms. Dionne suggested that the person who represents CHAT at these meetings can keep CHAT updated and dedicate a portion of the CHAT meetings to talking about it.

Ms. Durfee noted that discussion about the Hazard Mitigation Plan can be added to the agenda for a future CHAT meeting if that is something the group would like to discuss. Ms. Dionne voiced a desire to have someone attend the meetings and update CHAT with any relevant information.

4. Discussion on climate adaptation and resiliency assistance - Maddie Dilonno, Rockingham Planning Commission

Ms. Dilonno gave an overview

- The Rockingham Planning Commission is currently connecting with communities to find out what they are currently doing in regard to coastal resiliency and identify how they can assist further.
- Assistance can be provided via grant applications along with technical support of vulnerability or risk assessment reports.

Mr. Diener asked if the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) is able to work with an entity such as CHAT. Ms. Dilonno confirms that they can work with CHAT and they can put formal requests in for assistance.

Mr. Diener suggested running some of the draft recommendations by RPC to see what type of help they could offer. Ms. Durfee referenced the draft list of CHAT recommendations. There are currently 19 recommendations that CHAT put together and has been in the process of revisiting, refining, and discussing over the past year. Ms. Durfee offered to send the list to Ms. Dilonno. Ms. Dilonno stated that she would be happy to review the list and let them know what they would be able to help CHAT with. Ms Durfee has given the group members Ms. Dilonno's contact information.

Mr. Bassett asked if RPC is working with other coastal communities in New Hampshire and if she could review some of the other work they are doing. Ms. Dilonno stated that she has been checking in with other communities. She is also working with Mr. Diener to establish a similar committee in Seabrook. She is looking to figure out where all of the communities are at and next year they hope to solidify projects.

Ms. Durfee asked if there will be a follow up to the resilience land-use guide. Ms. Dilonno stated that once the guide is finalized, communities will be able to reach out for assistance with implementation.

Ms. Durfee asked that everyone think about any other ideas from everyone's respective affiliations that could be added to the draft list of recommendations.

5. Review of Recommendations

Ms. Durfee will send out an updated version of the recommendations after the meeting.

Ms. Durfee referred to a table with a list of all of CHAT's draft recommendations. This list has been shared with local boards and departments. Two resident representatives have distributed the draft recommendations to their neighborhood groups and contact lists.

Ms. Durfee reviewed the items on the list with CHAT. Ms. Durfee noted that these recommendations were put forward to the town, but CHAT would like to play a role in working to advance the recommendations and making some of the desired changes happen.

Ms. Durfee noted an update regarding the *Recommended Staff Position*: If funded, it is possible that a 2-year pilot staff position could be in-place in the fall of 2022.

Ms. Durfee noted that the "Status and Updates" column will be utilized to organize information and efforts from everyone's affiliated organizations.

Mr. Diener noted that Mr. Bachand is addressing recommendation number 10 via the PREP grant he mentioned earlier in the meeting. Mr. Bachand confirmed that efforts are in the works for recommendations number 10.

Ms. Durfee noted that there are four recommendations colored orange, which the group decided to prioritize first. There is no prioritization on the other recommendations. If members are interested in discussing specific recommendations, let Ms. Durfee know and it will be added to the agenda.

6. Continued Discussion on CHAT Recommendation #6 – Investigate creation of a capital reserve account/Town fund for emergencies, grant match, projects

Ms. Durfee shared slides to guide the discussion.

Draft Recommendation #6: Recommendation looks at the establishment of a separate pot of funding for projects or grant matches. Ms. Durfee asked the group to brainstorm answers to proposed questions.

- Why is something like this needed:
 - Mr. LaBranche noted that establishing a funding mechanism through the town would require either a petitioned warrant article or to have the Selectmen sponsor a warrant article. He suggested that CHAT make a presentation to the Select Board and that the selectmen sponsor the warrant article as opposed to going through the procedure to offer a petitioned warrant article.
 - Ms. Dionne noted the current limitation to accessing funding as grants become available. Having funding like this would offer greater flexibility instead of having to go to town vote for funding.
 - Ms. Harake noted that the budget committee looks at warrant articles with a dollar value assigned. She emphasizes that if it is too general it would not gain as much support. She suggested linking it to a department budget or have a cap or to be more specific.
 - Mr. Diener noted the Conservation Fund as a good example. It is built up over a period of time to reduce tax impact and is dedicated to very specific purposes. He felt that defining the types of projects that this could be used for and how much can be put into this fund would be important.
 - Mr. LaBranche reminded the group that if this fund is set up specifically for flooding people will assume that the money may be used for any type of flooding in-town, not necessarily directly coastal. He added that all taxpayers would be paying for this, not just the beach.
 - Mr. Ladd suggested that a sea-level rise impact study be done to demonstrate why a fund like this should exist. Ms. Durfee asked for clarification for if he believes a new study should be done, or a review of the previous studies. Mr. Ladd said that either would work, but they would need to demonstrate the impact on the town would be enormous.
 - Mr. Ladd noted the Real Estate Development Trust and a substantial amount of money in that fund that is used to reduce the tax rate. Mr. Wadell noted that the Real Estate Trust Fund is untouchable. Mr. Ladd stated that he is referring to the income generated.
 - Ms. Durfee wants to document projects that the town wanted to pursue, but couldn't due to funding and/or timing and use that to show why separate funding would be beneficial.
- What, where and who benefits:
 - Mr. LaBranche suggested CHAT invite a state senator or representative to a meeting to discuss state or federal funding for these projects.
 - Ms. Durfee confirmed that although this recommendation would be looking at town dollars, CHAT and the town should consider a wide range of funding sources.

- Ms. Hale fully supported finding funding from anywhere they can. She does not feel it is CHAT's position to lobby politicians for money.
- Mr. Bassett asked what type of projects are being funded by state or federal agencies. He noted Biden's recent budget including funding for adaptation in regard to climate change. He felt that recommendations can be made based on what is being funded out there. He recommends bringing in some adaptation funding rich individuals to learn more. He feels that educating CHAT about opportunities is important.
- Ms. Durfee emphasized that she is looking for opinions on what types of projects the recommended fund might be used for and who it would benefit.
- Mr. Diener noted that municipal funds cannot be used to directly benefit private homeowners.
- Mr. Ladd echoed Ms. Hale's comments about CHAT not being the right place for lobbying politicians.
- Ms. O'Brien felt there would be a benefit to further developing other recommendations. She would like to have a list of ready to go projects that need funding.
- Mr. Diener agreed with Ms. O'Brien.

Ms. Durfee established that CHAT supports flood mitigation town-wide, rather than limiting flood resilience efforts to areas that experience coastal flooding.

Ms. Durfee asked the group what they would like to do next with this recommendation. Mr. Bassett felt that the study should emphasize the social dimensions as much as economic aspects of the study. Ms. Harake agreed with Mr. Bassett.

Mr. Diener stated the SHEA is trying to find funding for an economic impact study and he can come prepared to talk about what they hope to cover in this study along with how they hope to fund it in a future meeting. CHAT members agree that this sounds good.

Ms. Durfee recommended putting this recommendation on hold. Ms. O'Brien stated that she felt this should continue as an underlying question as they move forward looking at other projects and recommendations.

Ms. Durfee stated that she put a few studies on funding and financing for coastal flooding projects in the working document that she sent out.

7. Next meeting: May 17, 2022

At the next meeting CHAT will talk about outreach for the recommendations. Ms. Durfee will put together some information on what they have learned so far, some of the outreach opportunities related to coastal resilience outside of CHAT, and will talk more about goals and priorities for CHAT.

Ms. Durfee noted that at the next meeting they will also try to revisit the recommendation and decide if there are any others they would like to dig into.

Ms. Durfee asked for comments and questions. Mr. Diener announced that they put out an RFP for someone to conduct a public engagement campaign so that all of Hampton's Residents have the opportunity to learn about and engage the community. They have chosen Liz Durfee for this role.

8. Adjourn