
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #35

Tuesday, March 15th, 2022

2:00-4:00PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Present

Liz Durfee - Planner and CHAT coordinator

Jason Bachand - Hampton Town Planner

Tom Bassett - Resident Representative

Jay Diener - Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance

Stephen LaBranche - Resident Representative

Brianna O'Brien - Hampton Conservation Coordinator

Katherine Harake - Hampton Municipal Budget Committee Representative

Deb Bourbeau - Resident Representative

Nathalie DiGeronimo – NHDES Coastal Program (joined at 2:45 PM)

2. Approve Meeting Notes from January and February 2022 (2:03 PM)

Mr. Bassett MOTIONED to approve the January 2022 meeting notes. SECONDED by Ms. Bourbeau. Vote: Unanimous.

Ms. Durfee asked for clarification of who motioned to push the January 2022 meeting minute approval to March. Mr. LaBranche took responsibility for the motion.

Mr. Bassett noted that in the minutes from February under the Seacoast Project update it is stated that "Proposals are due May 4th and can begin the first week of May". He would like to know if that is accurate. Ms. Durfee states that the proposals are due April and she will double check and correct it.

Mr. LaBranche MOTIONED to approve the February minutes as amended. SECONDED by Ms. O'Brien. Vote: Unanimous.

2:10 PM: Jennifer Hale, Director of the Hampton Department of Public Works joined the meeting.

3. Relevant Flood Updates (2:11 PM)

Mr. Bachand gave updates:

- The Master Plan Steering Committee would meet the following day (March 16th). They will recap the community conversation series and move towards drafting the master plan update. Coastal resilience will be worked into the concept.
- A representative from the Planning Board should be appointed to CHAT in the near future.

Ms. Hale gave updates on the Department of Public Works (DPW):

- March 16th meetings with engineers focused on the drainage along High Street will start.
- The DPW is in the process of applying for Coastal Flood Risk for construction funding for King's Highway.
- DPW is applying for funding for sewer manhole rehabilitation.
- They are currently applying for grants to look at erosion as the water comes out from Meadow Pond.

Ms. Hale asked the committee if they are open to providing letters of support to the grant applications. The committee agreed that they would be comfortable writing letters of support. Ms. Hale stated that she will share the information about the proposals for CHAT members to use to write letters of support. Mr. LaBranche volunteered to write the letter.

Mr. Diener shared updates:

- Last week a meeting was held with the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative to talk about significant money that will become available for projects related to sea-level rising directly and indirectly. More information will come in the following weeks and months.
- The Hampton Conservation Commission has a full-time Conservation Coordinator as of April 1st.

Mr. Bassett shared updates:

- Mr. Diener and Mr. Bassett were interviewed by NHPR in late February for opinions on the NOAA report and how it links to coastal flooding in NH. Mr. Bassett provided a resident's perspective.

4. Annual Progress Review (2:18PM)

A. The annual progress review of CHAT processes and progress. Members can use this opportunity to provide suggestions to improve CHAT meetings, discuss progress towards meeting CHAT's mission and objectives, and share other comments pertaining to process and progress.

Mr. Diener comments:

- Likes that they are continuing to focus on recommendations they developed and finding ways to get them implemented or refined.
- He feels it is important that CHAT stay in support of those recommendations.

Ms. Bourbeau comments:

- She likes the CHAT member updates. She felt that it makes it easier to update the groups they represent and get feedback.

Mr. Bassett comments:

- Echoed Ms. Wrobel's comments.
- It's good that members of the public can participate.
- Mr. Diener's updates about coastal flooding are great.
- Too many town departments are not represented or not commonly at meetings.

Mr. Diener encouraged everyone to constantly remind citizens that the meetings are open to the public. The link is posted to the SHEA website.

Mr. Diener added that he had conversations with the town manager in regard to potential legal issues due to RSAs for municipal bodies due to how many representatives are involved. Mr. Diener has since been in-touch with the municipal association to get their opinion and he has learned that CHAT is exempt from having to follow RSA 91A because they are not an advisory board to the town. He noted that this would become an issue if they did want to become a part of the town government.

B. Publicizing Meetings (2:28 PM)

The public is invited to join the CHAT meetings. Mr. Diener posts the agenda to SHEA's website. The agenda is also posted on social media. Ms. Durfee would like to establish a more formal procedure for publicizing meetings.

- Mr. Bachand notes that there is a bulletin board in the entryway to the town office and he will check to make sure it is okay to post the agendas there.
- Mr. Diener asked if the agenda can also be posted in the library. Mr. Bachand will check.
- Ms. Bourbeau and Mr. Bassett will start attaching the agenda to their mailing list updates.
- Mr. Diener will post to Facebook pages including the Conservation Commission, SHEA, In The Know, Friends of Hampton Beach, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls. Ms. Bourbeau adds the Hampton Beach Official Facebook page.

Barbara Kravitz joined the meeting (2:32 PM)

- Ms. Durfee will look into other platform options for posting, like Instagram.
- Mr. LaBranche notes that the Hampton Beach Official page is run by the Hampton Beach Village District and he will make sure the agenda is posted there.
- Ms. Durfee will send Mr. Diener the agenda in advance. When she sends it out to everyone they can share the link to the SHEA page or a copy as an email attachment.

Mr. Bassett asked if there are rules and procedures for public participation. Ms. Durfee reviewed a previous discussion regarding public participation.

Rules and procedures specifically decided by CHAT are:

- Comments would be welcomed on any topic.
- Public participants would be asked to remain on mute until public comment.
- If a participant becomes disruptive, Ms. Durfee will kick them out.
- Public comment will be allowed after CHAT members have had an opportunity to discuss an issue.
- If more formal procedures are needed, they will put something more formal together.

Ms. Kravitz suggested that the rules be added to the agenda so that the public is aware. Ms. Durfee agrees.

Ms. Durfee noted that the Planning Board will likely have a representative joining CHAT soon. She will reach out to the Zoning Board. The current attendance policy allows for 3 unexcused absences before Ms. Durfee sends an email regarding participation.

Mr. Diener announced that CHAT is funded through a Technical Assistance grant from the Coastal Program. It runs out at the end of June 2022. They have submitted a proposal for next year and have included that they would like to continue supporting CHAT. Usually the approval process takes from March until June.

Ms. Kravitz expressed a desire to accentuate CHAT's outreach capacity.

Nathalie DiGeronimo joined the meeting. (2:45 PM)

Mr. Bassett asked if the grant proposal is for a multi-year grant, or one year. Mr. Diener clarified that it is a one-year grant for a total of \$15,000. He added that he cannot remember how much is allocated to CHAT.

Mr. LaBranche asked what expenses CHAT has. Mr. Diener explained that the funding comes through SHEA and there are expenses for organizing the meeting, sending out the information, and paying the consultant, Liz Durfee, and the secretary, Molly McCoy. Mr. LaBranche asked the amounts paid to each of these positions. The consultant is paid \$80.00 per hour and she submits a monthly invoice. The secretary is paid \$17.00 per hour.

Ms. Durfee asked if meeting virtually is still working for everyone. Everyone agrees that it is.

Ms. Durfee asked Ms. DiGeronimo for updates:

- Ms. Dionne has stepped down from Flood Smart Seacoast, but she will still be participating as a member of SHEA.

- She has a call out for non-financial technical assistance for coastal communities, Hampton would qualify. The town would be eligible to apply for 3 project categories.
 - Incorporating the Coastal Flood Risk Guidance into community plans and regulations.
 - Adopt higher floodplain management standards.
 - Assist communities in scoping and developing applications for FEMA hazard mitigation assistance funding.

Ms. Harake asked for clarification on FEMA qualifications. Mr. Bachand explained that they had previously worked on getting into the Community Rating System Program (CRS). The building department had issued some permits that did not comply and that is now being addressed. He stressed that no one will fall out of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the rules are more for if you completely disregard it. Mr. Bachand expects another visit soon and once everything is going in the right direction they will work on CRS again. He added that the numerous new building inspectors has meant there has been a lot of learning.

Ms. DiGeronimo added that the noncompliance issues do not render the community ineligible to apply for FEMA grants. There are some that may require property owners to hold national flood insurance at the time of the application, but the town's status does not stop the town from applying.

Mr. LaBranche added that Bob Ladd is knowledgeable on this topic. He asked if qualifying allows for a discount? Mr. Bachand explained that it is CRS. They had previously evaluated eligibility for the program and that's when the issues with NFIP were uncovered. The CRS program does assign credits based on work your community is doing.

Ms. Kravitz asked if it is a good idea to also look at the land-use zoning regulations. Mr. Bachand stated that that is one way you can get the credits.

5. Continued Discussion on CHAT Recommendation #6 – Investigate creation of a capital reserve account/Town fund for emergencies or grant match (3:02 PM)

Ms. Durfee sent out a document as a follow up on how CHAT can assist with moving recommendation 6 forward. Ms. Durfee reviewed the document.

Ms. Harake stated that she feels that the group needs to be sure that the public understands what CHAT is and what it is not.

Mr. Durfee reminded the group that they are doing challenging work and there is no easy solution. Everyone is learning how to do this now. She thanked everyone for their efforts.

Mr. Diener suggested defining the types of projects they are thinking about and what type of projects they would like to fund. Ms. Durfee agreed and added that there are different types of funding.

Ms. DiGeronimo asked if any of CHAT's recommendations talk specifically about the town's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and the process that the town goes through for determining those projects. She noted that some towns are considering how to incorporate coastal resilience into their CIPs before requiring private properties to do the same.

Ms. Durfee reviewed a CHAT recommendation that does not specifically reference the Coastal Flood Risk Guidance, but they are just drafts, so they can be adjusted.

Mr. Basset: It would be nice to know the grant programs that are out there and if they require matching funds. Noted community participation is important.

Ms. Durfee believes it's important to have an understanding of what is currently available as far as grant funds, but does not want to limit the group because there may be other ways to fund projects.

Mr. Bassett agrees.

Ms. Kravitz Echoed Mr. Diener and Ms. Harake She noted the amount of research that would be required for what they are currently doing would be too much for CHAT. She suggested looking at a list and eliminating things that CHAT would not be capable of, like a TIF. Ms. Kravitz voiced a belief that CHAT's highest and best use is public outreach. She noted the Conservation Fund that the town has and said that she feels that they could convince the town to do some of the projects.

Ms. Durfee asked what items on the list Ms. Kravitz, and all of the CHAT members would be interested in tackling.

Mr. LaBranche asked what 'TIF' stands for. TIF is a Tax Increment Finance. It would create a separate area and identify a type of project you would want to fund with revenue. It reallocates some of the tax revenue that comes after you establish the district.

Mr. LaBranche asked how projects related to coastal flooding that were not passed by the town were dealt with. Ms. Hale stated that they are actively behind the scenes looking for grant money. She noted that she feels that informing people is likely the best use of CHAT.

Ms. Kravitz stated that CHAT has been extremely successful in what it has done up until now. She credits the insights and planning. She voiced a concern that project finance for large projects takes a level of expertise and she feels it is more than CHAT is capable of. She feels that a bigger difference can be made by focusing on doable items. She added that she has spoken with others about exactions. An exaction is basically a deal between the town and the planning board and the developer to fund off-site infrastructure that is caused by the particular development. Other communities have done this.

Ms. Durfee asked everyone to think about what type of projects everyone thinks the town should be funding.

Mr. Bassett asked if there are any Hampton departments or boards who will be applying for the Flood Smart Seacoast funding. Mr. Bachand did not know. Ms. Hale stated that she thinks it would be helpful to list out what is going on simultaneously. She added that it is a lot of work for 3 people and this work is only a part of all of their jobs. Ms. Durfee agrees that capacity is a big issue.

Ms. Durfee asked how everyone feels after talking about all of this. What is CHATS best role in the overall process?

Ms. Durfee will share the document she reviewed and other information. She noted that they will have a staff member from RPC joining the next meeting: Maddie Dilonno. She will be coming to get some input from Hampton on the town's needs.

- 6. Next meeting: April 19, 2022**
- 7. Adjourn 4:00 PM**