
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #52

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

1:00-3:00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Minutes

I. Introductions

Jason Bachand – Hampton Town Planner

Tori Bamford – Hampton Coastal Resilience Coordinator

Tom Bassett – Hampton Resident

Jay Diener - Hampton Conservation Commission

Jennifer Hale - Hampton Department of Public Works (DPW)

Kristin Howard –NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program (NHDESCP)

Stephen LaBranche – Hampton Resident

Bob Ladd – Hampton Beach Village District

Chris Muns – Hampton Representative (arrived at 1:30)

Eric Sunderlin – DPW Engineer IT

Mikaela Heming – Flood Ready Neighbor Projects

Laurie Olivier – Planning Department

Public

Kate Bashline – Hampton Resident and Flood Ready Neighborhood Project participant

2. Approve meeting notes from May and June 2023

- May 2023 Minutes
 - Motion: Mr. LaBranch moved to approve June 2023 CHAT Minutes
 - Second: Mr. Diener
 - Vote: All in Favor
- Not enough member votes to approve the May 2023 Minutes – postponed to next meeting. Motion to approve June meeting minutes carried.

3. Relevant Flood Updates

- Mr. Bachand
 - Master Plan Implementation committee is underway - kick-off meeting on June 28th
 - Working on preliminary prioritization of the “Vibrant” and “Connected” action items. Anticipate beginning to evaluate “Resilient” action items in Sept/Oct
 - Next meeting is July 26th
 - Flood Smart Seacoast Floodplain Ordinance Project
 - At the last meeting discussed various options for higher floodplain standards. Looking to have a public information session at the second Planning Board Meeting in September.
- Mr. LaBranche
 - Recent article circulated by Mr. Diener about “Anywhere it rains, it can flood” – made him think about where he would move to escape flooding in Hampton. Vermont was a top choice, but the mountains also have flooding.

- Ms. Hale
 - Working on a response/action plan due to the high fecal level and flood levels in the Greene/Gentian neighborhoods. Still in the research phase and planning with NHDES.
- Mr. Bassett
 - Share a pdf file that illustrates the results from June – lots of flooding in June around Father’s Day
 - Recent flooding on July 5-7
 - Hampton Tide Gauge - recorded high tides at 11’, which were at least 1’ higher than the NOAA predicted tides
 - Experienced sunny day flooding with no major rainfall preceding. The high tides filled Meadow Pond and flowed into storm drains and onto the roadways. Some backyard flooding too.
 - There has been a growing concern about people walking and playing in the flood waters – images of a family walking through the flood waters and kids playing with boogie boards.
 - NHDES has been testing water quality at 4 sites (3 roadway intersections and 1 in Meadow Pond)
 - Results show fecal levels in the roadway samples well above (4 times or greater) the safe level for human contact.
 - How much data is needed to inform residents – since May, June, and July were showed high levels and with people playing in the water – clear need to tell residents to take precautions – a public health hazard
 - Worked with the Flood Ready Neighborhood Team to craft language to alert neighbors.
 - Signage has been put in place about the water quality concern
 - Mr. Bassett summarized water quality results and forwarded them to DPW along with a series of questions:
 - What is the source? - Inspect the sewer infrastructure for leaks, or what about wildlife?
 - Create a raised boardwalk at the edge of the street for pedestrians
 - Replace the dysfunctional flapper valve at the outfall of the current storm drain system on Gentian Rd to impede reverse flowing onto Gentian Rd – reduce high tide waters filling the street
 - Accelerate the schedule for the force main storm drain system
 - Multiple hazards – flooding and bacteria levels. How long does the contamination remain? Is it viable when the road dries? Is it contained in the road dust? Can residents track it into their homes?
 - Flood Ready Neighborhood has scheduled a meeting on Aug 3rd between 7 and 9 am at the corner of Gentian and Greene St in conjunction with the NHDES water sampling event to talk with experts about these concerns. The objective is to disseminate more information and inform the neighborhood about the Flood Ready Neighborhood project and what can be gained by participating. Bringing people together to talk about a common problem.
- Mr. Diener
 - Seabrook Coastal Resilience Team

- Rockingham Planning Commission, with support from SHEA on behalf of Seabrook, applied and was awarded a NHDES Coastal Resilience Grant
 - Project will evaluate the current condition of the 19 public walkways that go from the streets to the beach. Look for opportunities to address public safety concerns and to improve and support the dune structure.
- Ms. Kravitz (read by Ms. Durfee)
 - Commissioners approved the 2023 Coastal Resilience and Environment Update to the Master Plan on June 29th.
 - Document will be accessible on the HBAC website (www.HamptonBAC.com)
 - The Resource Matrix is appendix A to the master Plan identifies interest groups, finding and relevant resources, projects, and datasets. It was accepted as a stand-alone document that can be updated regularly.
 - Scheduled to be reviewed by the Planning Board for approval on Aug 16th.
- Ms. Hale
 - Hampton is not the only town or area of the state struggling with high bacteria levels due to the heavy rains. NHDES has issued a state-wide warning about bacteria levels. ([link](#))
 - CDC has a useful/educational factsheet about precautions around floodwaters regarding bacteria and physical hazards – things that cannot be seen.
 - Not all floodwaters are or can be tested – safer to assume they are a health hazard

4. Approve or amend draft Letter to Boards

Ms. Durfee shared a draft letter to Boards/Commissions/Department to reaffirm their CHAT membership, confirm their representative, and request input on meeting timing (is it a barrier?). Requested feedback and edits.

- Mr. Bassett
 - Asked about the meeting time preference. Ms. Durfee was looking to determine if the meeting time impeded participation.
- Ms. Durfee asked if the letter should be signed by a CHAT member or the Coordinator
- Mr. Diener supported it going out as soon as possible. No edits or issues with the Coordinator signing it.
- Mr. Diener motioned for the letter to be sent out
 - Second by Mr. LaBranche
 - Vote: All in favor

5. Vote on sending full meeting packets (vs. only agenda and monthly updates summary) to non-CHAT members

- Ms. Durfee asked what type of meeting materials can be shared before a meeting with those non-members who regularly attend. Currently, only the upcoming meeting agenda and previously approved meeting minutes and member updates.
- Mr. Diener shared that since the meetings are public, it would make sense to share meeting materials
- Ms. Hale shared a concern about timing. Sometimes information shared or discussed has yet to be released to the public.

- Ms. Durfee noted that the draft minutes shared are from four weeks prior, so it is not the freshest news.
- Ms. Hale asked about posting CHAT meeting information and relevant materials on CHAT's webpage, which people can visit if interested.
- Mr. Ladd supported posting meeting materials on a website but recommended keeping draft minutes within CHAT.
- Ms. Bamford noted that CHAT materials could be added to the Hampton Coastal Resilience webpage.
 - Ms. Durfee noted that SHEA posts materials there. Recommended having a conversation with SHEA about where to post materials.
 - Ms. Hale recommended having a Town page link to SHEA's CHAT page
- Mr. Bassett
 - Approved minutes are currently posted on the SHEA website, fulfilling our public duty. Why do we want to send out meeting minutes?
 - Ms. Durfee noted that the request has been for meeting materials that will be reviewed at the meeting
- Mr. LaBranche
 - Mr. Muns has been regularly attending, and would like to see him receive the same information that CHAT members receive. Pleased he is taking the time to attend the CHAT meeting. Would also like other state reps to receive the information if they attend.
- Motion by Mr. LaBranche to have non-members that regularly attend receive the CHAT meeting materials.
 - Mr. Muns recommended that people who are in an official capacity should receive information as opposed to just attending as an observer. All state reps should receive the information.
 - Amended Mr. LaBranche's motion to be only for state representatives and other officials representing Hampton to receive meeting material packets
 - Seconded by Mr. Diener
 - Vote: All in Favor
- Ms. Howard shared in the chat that she did not see any reason not to send meeting participants upcoming meeting materials to enable them to join and participate in the meeting. I think that's in the spirit of CHAT.
 - Ms. Durfee suggested reviewing the meeting materials being sent out over the next couple of months to see if any end up being time or content sensitive and to make adjustments from there. For now, the information sent to the public would be approved meeting minutes and upcoming meeting agenda.

6. Climate Resilience Regional Challenge project ideas

- Ms. Howard shared that NOAA has released a significant funding opportunity through the Inflation Reduction Act for nationwide climate-resilient work in coastal communities. To date, this is the most significant dollar amount spent on this topic by the Federal government. [Link](#) to funding opportunity description
 - Two project tracks
 - Track I – For projects that build regional networks focused on climate resilience work. The [NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup](#) (CAW) is a prime example, given its work within the coastal watershed on resilience. Could use funding to help enhance and increase their capacity.

- Track 2 – Implementation projects, including construction.
- No match requirement and can apply for up to \$75 Million with funding available for 5 years starting October of 2024.
- Competitive projects must have regional benefits based on equitable resource distribution and decision-making processes. Stronger projects will be derived from previous planning and consensus-building efforts. Since CAW is mobilizing and leading application efforts, selected projects will be based on CAW's guiding principles.
- Hampton and SHEA both participate in CAW.
- CAW is convening a meeting on Thursday (7/20/23) for members and partners to brainstorm project ideas and come to a consensus about whether to apply, which track, and the next steps.
 - Questions posed to participants to fuel that conversation are:
 - If there is one thing that this challenge funding does that directly and significantly benefits your community, what will it be?
 - If there is one thing that this challenge funding does that directly and significantly benefits a community next to you, what will it be?
 - If there is one thing that this challenge funding does that directly and significantly benefits our region, what will it be?
 - Letter of Intent due on August 21st.
- Mr. LaBranche recommended a project focused on improving the health of the salt marsh – a shovel-ready project would be to fill in all the ditches because it has already been studied and started in certain areas.
 - Mr. Diener supported this project concept but noted that a challenge is that there are numerous salt marsh parcels where ownership is unknown. This limits the work on state or Town owned land and cannot be done on private property or ownership unknown. NHDES and RPC are working on an upcoming funded project to help resolve ownership.
- Ms. Bamford noted that select Hampton staff and partners met this morning to brainstorm project ideas for Hampton.
 - Mr. Bachand shared one potential project idea, which incorporates the business community on sea-level rise and coastal resilience work in Hampton. One Master Plan action item is to create an economic development plan based on coastal resilience and climate change.
 - Mr. Diener noted another potential project: protecting parcels for salt marsh migration through acquisition or conservation easement. This could be expanded regionally through SHEA and working on the same effort in Hampton Falls and Seabrook. It's a project referenced in the Hampton Master Plan and Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Management Plan. And the Great Bay National Research Reserve also helped SHEA to create a matrix for prioritizing parcels based on marsh migration, wildlife habitat, and other parameters.
 - Although contact information for owners is available, no conversations have taken place yet. Would the interested property owners need to be identified and confirmed for the letter of intent or just for the full proposal in February 2024?
 - Ms. Howard would double-check, not likely for a letter of intent, but would need a budget estimate.
 - Ms. Hale noted that many of the projects she identified are not regional but could serve as a regional example. Interested in exploring the concept of building a wall like Salisbury did, which was deemed not financially feasible in Hampton's Flood Study. However, the only way to disprove this is to determine the financial loss of

doing nothing and what would happen over time. Very few options exist for that west side of Ashworth part of Town. This could also be an opportunity to begin implementing and advancing more of the recommendations from the Flood Studies, such as doing berm work along Meadow Pond. However, will the lack of regional benefits reduce the likelihood it would be funded?

- Ms. Howard encouraged sharing these ideas with CAW and that regional impact can be defined broadly. A case could be made that Hampton is a place of regional significance with its important tourism role.
- Rep. Muns supports Ms. Hale's project and Ms. Howard's spin on regional impact. Could a regional wastewater treatment facility qualify to help Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls improve climate resilience?
- Mr. Ladd stated that Hampton is the most regional Town in the state and that a project could be piloted in one community that could then be applied more broadly.
 - Ms. Howard noted that based on the grant structure, there would be a regional impact area of focus, lessons to be learned, sharing, piloting, and then 3 to 10 community-based projects that help to advance a regional impact objective.
- Mr. Diener added that another project discussed was that Hampton has a reasonable number of non-compliant NFIP properties. Could this funding be used to help bring those properties back into compliance? Could it be framed as bringing the Town back into FEMA compliance?
 - Ms. Howard noted that the funding could not be used to conduct work on private property. However, funding can be used to acquire private property.
 - Mr. LaBranche asked if funds could be used to purchase flood-prone properties.
- Mr. Bassett asked whether relationships or partnerships between a municipality and the state qualify as regional. Asked about the berming project and how work would be conducted on private property, and does that disqualify it for funding?
 - Ms. Hale noted that would be a potential obstacle. However, each property owner could propose a solution like a berm, but it would not be a cohesive project/solution.
 - Ms. Durfee noted that landownership is a complication but can be further explored with the funding opportunity. If ownership impacts a range of projects, it could become a stand-alone project.
- Rep Muns asked if sewerage the western part of town would qualify.
 - Ms. Howard responded potentially would need to explore further.
 - Ms. Hale noted a challenge connecting the coastal issues with installing sewer on the west side of town – would need data demonstrating that septic systems are being inundated from groundwater rise or Taylor River breaching its channels.
 - Rep Muns proposed using projected sea-level rise and climate change as justification for a proactive approach to improve wastewater management/treatment.
 - Ms. Howard agreed that groundwater rise could impact septic systems. Need to tie sewer system expansion into other supportive/relevant planning efforts.
- Ms. Bashline noted in the chat box if harbor dredging would qualify as a project
 - Ms. Howard checked webinar notes on this topic which stated, "Dredging and other sediment-related projects would be dependent on the context of the project." Generally, they could be eligible depending on the reasoning, the authority, and the equipment lined up. Would need the Arm Corp on board, dependent on readiness. There could be a

potential case as a regional resilience building benefit sustaining resilience fishing community and boating industry in the area. It would not be considered a flood mitigation strategy.

- Mr. LaBranch added saltwater intrusion into Hampton's drinking water wells could also be a significant consequence of sea-level rise. The City of Miami has had 1-2 of its 11 wells taken offline because they are salty/brackish. Forward-thinking is important.
- If CHAT members think of additional projects, they can email them to Ms. Hale and Ms. Bamford. Recognizing that it would need additional Town discussion to move forward. All ideas are welcome.

7. CHAT Outreach Table event - Update from Subcommittee Meeting

Ms. Durfee gave an overview of the recent June outreach subcommittee meeting. At SHEA's May Coastal Resilience and Resource Fair, Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Bamford hosted an interactive CHAT table to help inform visitors about CHAT's recommendations and Hampton's flood vulnerabilities. During the June meeting, subcommittee members discussed hosting a neighbor tabling event which was identified as an activity in the strategic engagement plan. Two potential locations are in the Ashworth Ave neighborhood (Green Room) and Greene/Gentian (KB's Bagels). A tabling event would consist of a table with information and signage with CHAT members present to discuss CHAT's recommendations and get visitors' feedback. Considering Friday and Saturday time slots. This was discussed before the Flood Ready Neighborhood event on August 3rd, which might influence the event's timing.

- Mr. Diener recommended an evening time during the week. Encouraged plenty of publicity to attract people.
- Mr. Bassett recommended KB's because it is on the proposed King's Highway Drainage route. KB's is several streets south of Gentian/Greene St, providing a wider reach. Interested in participating and insight may be brought from the August 3rd neighborhood meeting if held after that date. Encouraged Ms. O'Brien (who lives in the area too) and Mr. Diener to attend.
- Ms. Durfee noted that the sea-level rise mapper shows that a 2-ft sea level rise will impact both areas. Opportunity to have a display to convey that these locations are vulnerable to being inundated by water to some extent. Consider using flagging and plastic containers to show the extent of flooding.
- Mr. LaBranche noted standing-room-only public attendance for Hampton Beach Village District meetings discussing flooding. These meetings can become a bit unruly with questions about what the Town will do for me.
 - Ms. Hale as a presenter, was on the receiving end of those comments.
 - Ms. Durfee recommended having various resources available that speak to what the Town is doing. It is an opportunity to showcase ongoing planning efforts and projects. To compile questions for discussion at the following CHAT meeting. Hopeful that an informal tabling event would have a different atmosphere than a meeting presentation.
- Potential dates for consideration are August and September.
- A consensus about planning a tabling event was not reached.
 - Ms. Durfee asked members to mull it over and provide additional feedback recognizing that planning and advertising would need to happen quickly if the members want to hold an event this summer. Ms. Durfee has limited capacity to lead this event, but Ms. Bamford can take on a

leadership role in planning this event. It would be important to have CHAT members present. Hesitant to move forward if CHAT members are not interested in participating.

- Mr. Diener reminded members about their previously expressed need to conduct public outreach, spread the word about CHAT's work, and collect input, especially in those parts of the community most impacted by flooding. Encouraged everyone to think about CHAT's obligation for public outreach.
 - Mr. LaBranche will be there to support the event but will look to other members like Mr. Diener to run the event.
 - Ms. Durfee noted that there would be staff support for hosting the event and that the role of CHAT member is to be present and introduce themselves and be a part of conversations that points people in the direction of the resources and information CHAT has been gathering.

Ms. Durfee recommended that polling for potential dates be postponed to the next meeting

8. Continued discussion on Flood Risk Disclosure

Ms. Durfee asked Rep Muns to explain the process for understanding the process if CHAT would like to propose a legislative revision for flood disclosures.

- Rep Muns shared there are specific periods for submitting bills. This year it is between September 11-14. Start the process by submitting a "Legislative Service Request" (LSR), which provides the intent/subject of the bill request. The legislative council, a team of lawyers, reviews requests and drafts the bill. The sponsor of the legislation (i.e., Rep Muns) would work with the drafting attorney to clarify intent. Research and detailed information provided upfront expedites the drafting process. The attorney ensures that all laws and regulations are referenced correctly. The drafted bill is returned to the sponsor for additional review. Rep Muns would share the draft bill with CHAT for feedback to ensure it meets the needs. Rep Muns then signs off on the bill. It is assigned a number and sent to a review committee. Committee reviews begin in November, with voting in January 2024. CHAT should outline this legislative change's intent between now and September 11.
- Mr. Muns noted that if there is any uncertainty or lack of understanding about current flood disclosure requirements. He has access to the legislative research service dedicated to answering questions such as "What are the current flood disclosures available for private properties". They would provide a summary of what is available.
- Ms. Durfee requested that CHAT continue to think about what the next step should be. Is it to amend the RSA to require more information on flood disclosures? Is it inviting additional realtors to speak on their experience – currently have an invite out. Could consider surveying realtors and/or other stakeholders. Need to determine direction.
- Rep Muns recommended chatting with colleagues in other seacoast communities to see if they also think this change is necessary. If there is agreement amongst various Towns, their state reps can co-sponsor the bill – providing additional momentum.
- Ms. Olivier recommended as a first step to learn what laws are currently on the books
- Rep Muns volunteered to ask the legislative researchers a general question about identifying the current NH statutes requiring the property seller/owner in a floodplain to disclose any flood-relevant information.
- Mr. Diener asked if a bill request is not submitted in September, when is the next round. Rep Muns responded that it would be December of 2024.

- Mr. Bassett seems logical to determine current statutes, so we can determine what we need to change.
- Based on CHAT’s last meeting and discussion with realtor Matthew Ajemian, Ms. Durfee felt the issue was that there were no requirements. Mr. Ajemian shared that there was no disclosure requirement for flooding and that it was easy to select the “unknown” response on the property disclosure form.
- Rep Muns said he would still ask the question and see what information is gathered.
- Ms. Howard thought it would be interesting to know what NH generally requires to be disclosed for some baseline comparison. Is that too big of a question?
- Rep Muns responded that he would ask the question of the state but also ask the national legislature council if there are states with flood disclosure requirements and what they are. He will share it with Ms. Durfee as soon as it is available.
- Mr. Bassett noted that the literature review for the last meeting had a summary for several other states with stringent requirements – is that research already done?
- Ms. Durfee noted that some of the articles were a few years old (2019), so it might be worth getting an update.
- Ms. Durfee asked if going through those research steps with the legislature council helps validate the request.
 - Rep Muns said it helps explain what NH is missing and what other states are doing that we might want to replicate.

There was a group consensus for Rep Muns to ask the questions.

9. Voluntary Elevation and Buyout Pilot Project

Postponed to next meeting

10. Membership Terms

Ms. Durfee noted that some members have terms that end in August. There will be a follow-up email about continuing their terms.

11. Next meeting: Aug 15, 2023, 1 pm-3 pm

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm