
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #26

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

2 PM – 4 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84508357533?pwd=b3VMSC9GVVpzZEwxTzdTNUhWSjdWdz09>
or by dial-in @ (669) 205-6099

NOTES

Participants: Jay Diener, Rayann Dionne, Kara Campbell, Jason Bachand, Stephen LaBranche, James Waddell, Bob Ladd, Anne (Tocky) Bialobrzkeski, Alex Loiseau, Nancy Stiles (@2:50 PM) and Barbara Kravitz

Absent: Jen Hale, Tom Bassett, Debra Bourbeau, Bryan Provencal, June Black, Steve Belgiorno

Staff: Liz Durfee, Kirsten Howard, and Nathalie DiGeronimo

Ms. Durfee began the meeting at 2:00 PM.

1. Introductions

The members introduced themselves and indicated whether they were affiliated with the Town, a group or were residents.

Liz Durfee indicated she is the planning consultant.

Jason Bachand indicated he is the Hampton Town Planner.

Kirsten Howard indicated she is with the NH DES Coastal Program.

Jay Diener indicated he is with the Hampton Conservation Commission.

Stephen LaBranche indicated he is a representative of the Hampton Budget Committee.

Rayann Dionne indicated she was a representative of SHEA (Seacoast Hampton Estuary Alliance).

Nathalie DiGeronimo indicated she is the Resilience Project Manager with the NH DES Coastal Program.

Kirsten Howard indicated she is with the NH DES Coastal Program.

Barbara Kravitz indicated she is a representative of the Hampton Area Beach Commission.

Bob Ladd noted he is with the Hampton Beach Village District.

Jim Waddell indicated he is a representative of the Select Board.

a. New Members:

Anne (Tocky) Bialobrzkeski indicated she is a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustments.

Alex Loiseau indicated he is a representative of the Planning Board.

Kara Campbell indicated she is the new Conservation Coordinator.

b. Guests

Jim Marchese, Building Inspector, CEO, Health Officer, Flood Plain Admin & ZBA Liaison, Town of Hampton

Jennifer Gilbert, Senior Planner & Floodplain Management Program Coordinator, NH Office of Strategic Initiatives

Tim Roache, Executive Director, Rockingham Planning Commission

2. Approve meeting notes from March 16, 2021

Mr. Bachand proposed edits.

Ms. Howard noted the program is entitled NH Coastal Marine Natural Resources & Environment Commission (COMWARE).

Mr. LaBranche motioned to approve the March 16, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. Ms. Dionne seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Loiseau abstained, Ms. Bialobrzkeski abstained, Ms. Campbell abstained, Mr. Diener voted aye, Ms. Dionne voted aye, Mr. Bachand voted aye, Mr. LaBranche voted aye, Ms. Kravitz voted aye, Mr. Waddell voted aye and Mr. Ladd voted aye. The motion passed 7-0-3.

3. Relevant Flood Updates

Mr. LaBranche noted a King Tide is coming next week. Mr. Diener added that it will start Saturday and go through Monday with tides in the 9-10' range. Ms. Durfee reminded there is a lot of opportunity for good photos if folks are out and about.

Mr. Bachand reported Phase I of the Vision & Coastal Chapters of the Master Plan with Milone & MacBroom will be delivered at the end of the month. Phase II is underway with Rsilience. Planning & Design. The Steering Committee will meet tomorrow. Mr. Diener will be at the Steering Committee meeting tomorrow to talk about CHAT recommendations. Mr. Diener added that he will be at the Budget Committee's meeting tonight to present CHAT recommendations.

Ms. Howard reported the Hampton tide gauge is malfunctioning and won't be tracking the King tide. They are working with the gauge manager to swap it out and improve it with NOAA and the Gulf of Maine observation group for a couple of months. Ms. Bialobrzkeski recommended interpolating the readings from Fort Point out of Boston. Mr. Roache, who is also a meteorologist, noted there will be a strong onshore flow Sunday and Monday and high winds from the Northeast which will make interpolation difficult.

Ms. Dionne reported the Hampton Flood Studies were finalized and presented at the beginning of the month and are available on www.hamptonnh.gov/civicalerts.aspx?/AID+359

4. Initial discussion on staff position

Ms. Durfee posted a slide on some of the possible responsibilities for the staff position such as Community Resilience and Flood Plan Administration full-time, administration of the flood plain ordinance, building climate resiliency and education about flooding and climate resiliency and wanted to know the current efforts of the Town to build:

- Description of position and document need
- Oversight/department – local or regional
- Salary/Rate
- Educating residents about the position
- Explore and apply for potential sources of funding for the position
- Warrant Article

Mr. LaBranche asked if someone else in NH or MA has this position that CHAT could ask about it. Ms. Durfee noted there are coastal resiliency and planning staff in other communities.

Ms. Bialobrzkeski noted Jennifer & Jim would be the ones to ask.

Ms. Loiseau recommended educating the public about the position and why we need it despite having a Conservation Coordinator and Building Inspector, for the Warrant Article. Ms. Durfee noted this is a perfect example of how CHAT can put together educational awareness when the time comes.

Ms. Dionne recommended adding Review of Flood Plain Ordinance and applicable regulations.

Mr. Roache noted it is part of innovative land use controls. Developing a framework for a regional position that would overlap this.

Ms. Kravitz recommended communication with Town Government on the idea of the position and process.

Ms. Howard recommended not getting into the particulars of the job description before discussing the process. Mr. Diener noted he got some input already from speaking with the Town Manager.

Ms. Durfee noted the role could have shared responsibilities:

- Issuing flood permits
- Educating about the Community Rating System (CRS)
- Answering questions
- Reviewing project proposals

Ms. Dionne noted the floodplain ordinance doesn't have a board or committee that oversees it. When the PREPA Grant was applied for in 2016 she saw an opportunity to educate people about the flood plain ordinance. Hampton is eligible to join CRS but has been delayed with some violations that need correcting. There are steps to take to lower premiums. It would be beneficial to have multiple staff members educated but also a primary focus person.

Mr. Bachand noted the Planning Board gets involved in applications and compliance and educating the community about the new maps and outreach to get the maps accepted by the Select Board and answering questions about what has changed since 2005. Properties that were out are now in. The flood plain ordinance adopted the additional 1' of freeboard. The flood plain ordinance takes up a lot of his time as well. There are a lot of homeowners with flood insurance policies and therefore many inquiries.

Ms. Gilbert discussed the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) information and the need of the community to be compliant with NFIP to get into the CRS. She noted Nashua has a Waterways Manager Beth Chisholm who is in the Community Development Dept. and is the CRS Coordinator. The coordinator would work across multiple departments and be involved in outreach which is typically why the coordinator would not be the building official.

Ms. DiGeronimo asked if some names could be provided of people who hold CRS coordinator positions in other Towns and Ms. Gilbert noted she has those and will provide them.

Ms. Dionne noted there are binders with elevation certificates in the Town Building Office. Certificates are submitted by engineers and surveyors before occupancy permits can be issued. Certificates are submitted to FEMA every year. The Building Inspector is identified as the Flood

Plain Administrator and has the ability to designate someone else. The coordinator could relieve staff burdens by communicating with residents.

Ms. Kravitz asked about examples of changes in the cost of flood insurance premiums in CRS. Ms. Gilbert noted most Towns start out as Tier 10 and move based on points earned by doing CRS activities. There is a large manual and she will see if it is available. Two communities are in Tier 9 and receive a 5% discount, three communities are in Tier 8 with a 10% discount. FEMA is looking to roll out a whole new insurance program with a lot of differences. There would still be CRS discounts. Staff is being trained on it now.

Ms. Campbell discussed her role and experiences as a flood plain coordinator in the past. She has worked as the Conservation Coordinator for Hampton for three weeks and has already reviewed ZBA and TRC wetland apps for new construction and calls with elevation certificate questions.

Mr. Diener noted the RPC potential role for facilitating or applying on behalf of residents in FEMA funding or buyout situations. Hampton residents don't have the ability and it is a pretty big hole.

Ms. Dionne noted a lot of grant funding and coordination at the DPW who has been working to improve infrastructure has fallen on Jen Hale to write up.

Mr. Roache noted the coast extends beyond Hampton but aren't the size of Hampton and can't afford the position or to address those needs. Ms. Howard noted she sees a need in the future. One example is the Hampton bridge design and SLR decisions affecting boat traffic in the harbor. The DOT chose 4' SLR for 100 years which is on the low end because once it gets there the harbor won't be functioning. Having a coordinator weigh in and have a plan for the harbor to exist in the long term would be beneficial. There is a lot of grant funding coming. Ms. Dionne noted Hampton has over 1750 flood insurance policies as of 2018.

Ms. Durfee noted Peter Britz of Portsmouth is the Environmental Planner and Sustainability Coordinator for the Coakley Landfill and that started as a grant funded position and is happy to be a sounding board.

Ms. Howard and Ms. DiGeronimo identified key roles recommended by NH DES:

- Coordination with departments on projects and funding
- Manage CRS
- Represent Hampton on regional infrastructure
- Outreach

In addition to developing grant proposals the coordinator would need to establish financial structure for matching grants and manage grant projects, be the point person on the flood plain ordinance, represent Hampton in regional context, implement education and outreach and community engagement efforts and activities with CRS.

Mr. Diener recommended first getting people on board in departments who are doing these things to support the position, Conservation, the Building Inspector and Planning Board.

Mr. Ladd recommended inviting the Police Chief who is the Emergency Management Director to be involved. Mr. Ladd noted as an example co-brokering the position with other coastal towns, if the Town pays 50% of the cost it would get 50% of the time. The position could become full-time once the need is more clearly demonstrated. Ms. Durfee noted a local position doesn't preclude a regional position. Mr. Ladd recommended having the assessed values of affected properties. Ms. Bialobrzkeski recommended talking to realtors and mortgage companies. Ms. Gilbert added obtaining information about claims and repetitive losses. Ms. Howard noted there are seasonal camps that no longer have mortgages who are not required to have flood insurance. Hampton represents 20% of all flood insurance claims in the state. Mr. Roache noted that speaks to the extent of specific local needs versus regional.

Ms. Howard recommended getting Tom and Deb's perspectives on the position. Ms. Durfee added and Jen Hale and the Police Chief.

5. CHAT Outreach Survey Results

Ms. Durfee posted the survey results. Most heard by email. The #1 interest in learning was what the Town is doing to lessen the impact of flooding followed by #2 CHAT's draft recommendations to the Town about coastal flooding. Most were filled out by Hampton residents who are homeowners, year-round and then seasonal followed third by visitors and tourists. 15% had participated in SHEA's events. Most wanted to be involved in neighborhood discussions and in sharing photos on flood impacts and experiences. 62% were aware of the Coastal Resiliency Document prepared for the Master Plan and 64% had attended the Symposium. 52% knew of the new FEMA maps. 40% were aware of the DPW's flood studies. The average survey took 4 minutes to complete. Mr. Diener noted there were 209 participants.

7. Next meeting: May 18, 2021

Mr. LaBranche noted the Select Board would be meeting in person again with the public in the room. The mask mandate is still in effect in the Town building. Mr. Roache noted there is legislation pending to continue remote meetings beyond COVID.

a. Review and Update CHAT Rules and Procedures, including membership.

8. Adjourn. The meeting ended at 4:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary