
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #38

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

2:00-4:00PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

1. Introductions

Joe Lynch - Hampton Public Works

Jason Bachand - Town Planner

Tom Bassett - Resident Rep

Katherine Harake – Budget Committee Rep

Rayann Dionne - Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance

Nathalie DiGeronimo - NH dept. of environmental Services program

Jay Diener - Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance

Brianna O'Brien - Conservation Coordinator for Hampton

Bob Ladd - Village District Rep

Liz Durfee - Planner and CHAT coordinator

Keith Lessard - Planning Board Representative (Arrived at 2:02 PM)

Deb Bourbeau - Resident Representative (Arrived at 2:02 PM)

Stephen LaBranche – Resident Representative (Arrived at 2:26 PM)

Barbara Kravitz - Hampton Beach Area Commission (Arrived at 2:30 PM)

2. Approve meeting minutes from April 2022

Mr. Bassett asked that his comment on page 6 be adjusted to say “a study to represent social dimensions”.

Mr. Bachand MOTIONED to accept the minutes as amended. SECONDED by Mr. Bassett. Vote: 11-0-1 Abstained: Ms. Bourbeau.

3. Relevant Flood Updates

Mr. Bachand gave an update:

- Consultants that are working on the update to the Town Plan are in the writing stage. There will be a meeting with the steering committee and consultants in July.
- The town had an informational display set up at the Hampton Garden Plant Sale recently and got feedback that will be relayed to the consultants. Most of the feedback was in-regard to sea level rise.
- In regard to the PREPA grant project, there will be a FloodSmart round table on June 9th at 7 PM. Mr. Bachand asked everyone to attend, and noted that Mr. Diener sent a flier out last week.

Mr. Diener gave an update:

- SHEA Newsletter was sent out about FloodSmart workshop.

Ms. DiGeronimo:

- DES coastal program solicited applications for the critical flood risk infrastructure program.
 - 33 applications were submitted
 - Award notification letters will be sent out later this week.
- DES coastal program is now soliciting applications for the new ARPA funded grant: Culvert Flood Risk Assistance program
 - They are hoping to award one-million dollars in grant funding.
 - No match required.
 - Goal is to update and replace culverts that are susceptible to flooding.
 - Projects can have budgets of up to \$400,000.
 - Applications due by 4 pm July 1st.
- FloodSmart Seacoast Project
 - Solicited applications for technical assistance projects.
 - There will be a meeting tomorrow (May 18th) to review and select those projects.
 - Ms. DiGeronimo will have an update at the next CHAT meeting.

Mr. Diener:

- There will be a presentation by Jennifer Gilbert at the FloodSmart Round table which will update on Flood Rating 2.0.

Mr. Bassett:

- Presented data on current tide heights and anecdotal evidence of flooding in his own neighborhood.
- Asked about access to historical tide data.
- Noted “This is why we feel that the proposal to fund the Kings Highway drainage project is really important, because what that will do is pump water out of our neighborhood.” He added that Kings Highway does not currently have storm drains.

Ms. DiGeronimo told Mr. Bassett that she can provide a link to more data on tides.

4. Economic Study Update: Jay Diener, SHEA

Mr. Diener gave background on this project.

- A lot of work has been done over the last decade to track and rate the extent of sea-level rise.
- The information gathered is being used to address existing problems on and under the ground that are caused or made worse by sea-level rise.
- Working to help make the community more resilient to the physical effects of sea-level rise in the future.

Mr. Diener noted the questions he is looking for feedback on from CHAT:

- Economic issues: Can a community adequately plan for future impacts and changes to its economy if it doesn't have an idea of what those changes and impacts will be?
 - The study will aim for the year 2050.

Mr. Diener gave an overview of how they plan to conduct the study:

- Mr. Diener noted similar economic studies that were done in Kennebunk, Wells, and York Maine in 2020.

- They are speaking with Rachel Bouvier of RB consulting who did this analysis and they hope she will do the same work for Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls.
- The towns involved have agreed to look at economic impacts of two specific sea-level rise scenarios.
- They will also establish a baseline of information for the 3 communities and then proceed with an assessment of economic impacts from there to see how they vary from the baselines.

Mr. Diener gave an overview of how this project will be funded:

- They applied for grant money for this project last year, but did not succeed.
- Still looking for funding sources.

Mr. Diener was looking for thoughts from CHAT regarding this project.

Mr. Ladd:

- Felt that the problem could not be addressed until the implications of the problem are defined to the community.
- Asked if the state could be involved in this assessment. He felt they should at least be made aware of the study, and encouraged to offer their own input.

Ms. DiGeronimo:

- Felt that it would make sense to include DNCR as a partner in this study. She believed that they would be able to offer information that could strengthen the proposal.

Ms. Bourbeau:

- Felt that the Department of Revenue would be a good additional partner in this study.

Ms. Durfee:

- Noted that Ms. DiGeronimo added a comment in the chat about New Hampshire Employment Security.
- Noted that NHDOT has made a lot of investments in the road infrastructure in Hampton and may be another option for a partner.
- Added that there would need to be a boundary somewhere, but there are a lot of local and state investments that could be included.

Mr. Ladd:

- The state will be spending a large sum of money on the Seabrook bridge and Ocean Blvd. He voiced a belief that they may want to protect that.

Ms. Durfee asked what the snapshot of the project would be. Mr. Diener said that it would be what is currently existing. Mr. Diener added that it is difficult to look at investments coming in the future and he is unsure of how future investments could be included efficiently. Ms. DiGeronimo suggested looking at Capital Improvement Plans

and transport plans as a way to have an idea of some projects that are forthcoming, or potential vulnerabilities.

Ms. Durfee asked Mr. Diener if he could see CHAT as having a role in supporting this project in any way outside of the conversation in this meeting. Mr. Diener stated that a letter of support would be greatly appreciated. When grants are identified and proposals are being prepared he will come back to ask for that. He added that the current conversation is important for raising additional questions about the project.

Mr. Bassett, regarding the studies that are being used as models:

- What have the responses been like?
- How were the studies received and instrumentalized? Who is the audience in that region?
- How is the Hampton-Seabrook area different from the areas in those studies? How should our proposal be different?

Mr. Diener stated that the information in the studies that are being used as models were well received. He believed that the target audience was the town government as a whole, as well as residents. Mr. Diener noted that any community is going to be different due to geography, demographics, residential versus economic activity. He stated that they would look for common things between coastal communities and start there- things like property taxes, employment, transportation. Mr. Diener is also open to other suggestions for things that should be looked at.

Mr. Lynch

- Suggested analyzing the economic impacts on various sectors where the impacts may be severe and then generalize that as the overall regional economic impact.
- From a DPW perspective, there is a recurring threat to sewage capacity near the beach. Stated that it is important to understand that as a day-to-day cost.

Mr. Diener agreed with Mr. Lynch. He added that it's worth asking if in this analysis they focus on Hampton Beach, or do they look at Hampton as a whole. He noted that for Seabrook, most of the economic activity is off the beach.

Mr. Lynch: noted that the target is the municipality and it's not just the beach.

Ms. DiGeronimo:

- Stated that analysis should consider how it is going to build upon or leverage existing data. She encouraged them to link the questions to the actionable decisions they're trying to make.
- Logistical: when it comes to picking a lead consultant and partners, think about data availability and who has access to that. State partners are important because they have access to info that the public does not have access to.
- Other partners to consider: Rockingham Planning Commission, REDC
- Added that it is important to engage the Hampton Beach Area Commission.

Ms. Kravitz:

- Made an announcement: The Hampton Beach Area Commission has secured the funding from the coastal program and state legislature to do the environment and resilience updating for its master plan. We have gone through the RFP process and chosen a national firm: GEI as the lead consultant.
- They are just beginning to gather info. She will send a press release to Ms. Durfee.

Mr. Diener stated that in the Kennebunk and Wells studies, everything was reported in the aggregate. He stated that the proposed study will not get specific. The goal is for the community to understand the impacts that will be associated with sea-level rise.

Ms. DiGeronimo added that there are creative ways to visualize data.

- We don't have to just say that everywhere in Hampton is economically at risk without getting too specific.
- Noted the importance of looking at the entire community as a whole as opposed to specific areas.

Ms. Kravitz:

- The 2 year update of the state of the estuaries is happening. It will be published sometime in June. Has a lot of valuable information that could feed into this study.
- Suggested Mr. Diener should add public transportation to the list of economic items that could be impacted.
- Noted that 10 years ago Kennebunk began looking at resilience, they had already begun community awareness. The community was ready because a lot of outreach had been done prior.

Ms. Durfee noted that anyone can reach out to Mr. Diener with follow up comments or thoughts.

5. CHAT Strategic Engagement Plan Kickoff Meeting

Ms. Durfee presented slides:

- Project Overview
 - Ms. Durfee went over the main questions that CHAT should be thinking about during this discussion (Included in slide show).
 - Ms. Durfee asked if there are any other questions that should be added. (None were added).
- Project Timeline (included in slide show).
 - Today they will work on Refining public engagement goals and objectives.
- Past Outreach and Engagement Efforts
 - CHAT Meetings
 - SHEA's 2019 Situation Assessment
 - SHEA Workshops
 - Tentative Outreach Plan for Outreach (February 2020)
 - CHAT's March 2021 Survey

- Over 200 responses.
 - Master Plan Update Coastal Resilience Report
 - Department of Public Works Presentation
 - Path to Resilience
 - Land Use Audit Presentation (Upcoming)

Mr. Diener:

- Past Flood Smart Workshops and Roundtables: He felt there was good attendance in these meetings, both virtually and in-person. He added that he is unsure about general feelings about virtual vs in-person events.

Mr. Bachand:

- Coastal Renaissance: Many meetings ended up being virtual. There was good attendance. The process went smoother than expected given the situation with Covid.

Ms. DiGeronimo:

- General Note: Virtual options (at least providing one) seems to be a good strategy to get some people who would not otherwise show up. Added that hosting a couple of meetings at different times is also good.
- General Note: Hampton may be “surveyed out”. Responses have started dwindling over-time.
- FloodSmart Seacoast workshop series happened on the tails of the March 2018 storms, so people were really mobilized. She felt that CHAT should be prepared for those opportunities.

Ms. Kravitz:

- General Note: Engagement elements should include feedback from town government regarding their thoughts on recommendations that would require their participation.

Ms. Bourbeau:

- General Note: Ashworth Ave residents are feeling left out. People seem discouraged.

Mr. Bassett:

- CHAT announcements have been productive.
- Flood Smart Workshops are a good way to keep people engaged. Asked that Zoom links be maintained for future meetings.
- General Note: It’s important for people to realize that there is a problem and that there are a range of activities and opportunities to get involved and participate in.

Ms. O’Brien:

- General Note: Outcome of outreach has been successful and zoom access is important and should be continued.
- General Note: Multiple meeting times during the day for meetings would also be helpful for people.

Goals for Engagement Strategy:

Mr. Diener:

- Make sure residents of Hampton know that they are being listened to and that things are taking place in Hampton to address concerns and needs
- Make sure they understand that their input is valuable.

Ms. O’Brien:

- Agreed with Jay
- There should be an ongoing element that can collect feedback continuously over-time. Somewhere people can always contribute their questions or concerns instead of a one-time survey.

Ms. Durfee:

- Noted the diverse Audience
- Stated that it is important to reach people who are not already a part of the conversation.
- Added that it is important to educate about flood hazards and resiliency.
- It is necessary to solicit input on the set of recommendations.

Stakeholder Groups CHAT wants to reach

Mr. Ladd:

- Village District monthly meeting is an opportunity for the DPW to explain the complexity issue regarding the severity of the flooding past Ashworth Ave.

Mr. Diener:

- Targeting business owners more specifically is important. CHAT needs to get their feedback and input.

Mr. Bassett:

- It is important to translate recommendations into a clear, accessible format for the public to understand.

Mr. LaBranche:

- Asked about high school and possible ways to involve students that may have some ideas.
- Noted that teachers may be able to get involved. A science teacher could talk about this.

Ms. Kravitz:

- Suggested giving out a summary explaining what CHAT is doing and why.

Key information to share about recs and flood hazards

Ms. Kravitz:

- Asked for expert tutoring to narrow down the context of things and rank recommendations.

Mr. Diener:

- Stated that it is important to make sure people understand the rationale behind the recommendations and what they are meant to address.

Mr. Bassett:

- Participation and reciprocity is important.
- We need to listen to the public and their experiences. It is key for our understanding.

Ms. Durfee

- Asked about general outreach.
- Outreach should work to make people more aware.

Next Steps

- Ms. Durfee is working on a target audience analysis in process.

- The engagement strategy plan is being put together and will be presented to CHAT by Ms. Durfee.
- Subcommittee
 - This will give CHAT members a way to be involved in putting together the engagement plan and doesn't make it a part of the CHAT meetings.
 - Anyone interested can participate.
 - Asked if anyone was interested in attending these meetings between now and the fall.

Mr. Bassett asked if Ms. Durfee will be taking the lead on this subcommittee and asked how it will be structured.

- Ms. Durfee said that sub-committee members would have the chance to meet with her at specific points within the process to provide feedback. Ms. Durfee will then present the plan back to the group. Time commitment would require a little prep outside the meeting and then meetings will be an hour long.
 - Mr. Bassett is willing to participate.
 - Ms. O'Brien and Mr. Bachand said they would participate.

Ms. Durfee will send out more information. Anyone interested in joining can let her know.

6. Next meeting: June 21, 2022

7. Adjourn