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## Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #39

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### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

**2:00-4:00PM**

VIRTUAL MEETING

### Members Present

Jason Bachand - Town Planner

Tom Bassett - Resident Representative

Jen Hale - Department of Public Works

Katherine Harake – Budget Committee

Jay Diener - Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance and Conservation Commission

Brianna O'Brien - Conservation Coordinator

Bob Ladd - Village District Representative

Keith Lessard - Planning Board Representative

Stephen LaBranche - Resident Representative

Barbara Kravitz - Hampton Beach Area Commission (Arrived at 2:57 PM)

Nathalie DiGeronimo - NH Department of Environmental Services

Liz Durfee - Planner and CHAT coordinator

### Guests

Ron Desrosiers, Hampton Resident

Michael Phillips, Hampton Resident

Nick Moriarty, Hampton Resident

### 1. Introductions

Ms. Durfee started the meeting and welcomed members and guests. Ms. Durfee reminded participants to keep their microphones on mute when not speaking and asked guests to use the raise hand or chat feature to ask questions. Members and guests introduced themselves and their respective affiliations.

Ms. Durfee noted that Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) member Nicole Duggan is the new ZBA representative to CHAT. She was unable to join the June meeting but will be present at future meetings. Ms. Durfee extended an invitation to the Building Inspector to make him aware that he was invited and welcome to join CHAT as his schedule permits.

### 2. Approve meeting minutes from April 2022

- Mr. Bassett made an edit on page 6."In" was added to the end of "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. DiGeronimo corrected the spelling of her name. (added "h").

Mr. LaBranche MOTIONED to approve the May meeting minutes. SECONDED by Mr. Bachand. Vote: Unanimous.

### 3. Relevant Flood Updates

#### *Mr. Bachand*

- Provided an update about the June 9th presentation about the PREPA grant project looking at incorporating the NH Coastal Flood Risk Guidance into the floodplain ordinance. The webinar also included an update from the NH Floodplain Management Program staff on FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program's new flood insurance risk rating methodology.
- The town received the technical assistance grant from NHDES to bring the draft ordinance amendments further.

#### *Mr. Bassett*

- Shared images from three days of significant flooding in the Green Street-Meadow Pond-Gentian Road neighborhood. The proximity of the moon resulted in very high and low tides. The roadways were flooded several inches as water from Meadow Pond came in through back yards and water came up from the stormwater sewer system.

#### *Ms. Hale*

- Update on the flood alleviation project on King's Highway. The designs for a series of pump stations are due in August.
- The town was successful in receiving CFRING funds that were allocated from the state. The town received a total of \$2 million dollars for the pump stations. The DPW is still looking into how to fund the \$400,000 balance of the project through grants or possibly a warrant article.
  - CHAT congratulated Ms. Hale on this success.

#### *Ms. O'Brien*

- Recently, she received a phone call from a resident concerned about groundwater rise. This was the first call she has received on this topic.
- At the Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA) meeting last week two applications were submitted for Mooring Drive seeking relief from Flood Zone Construction Standards. Both variances were granted. In the ZBA meeting questions were raised about the validity of the ordinances requiring property that does not experience wave velocity. Financial hardships were considered in granting these variances. Ms. O'Brien noted that the intention of this ordinance is to prevent homeowners from having to rebuild and repair damages as sea-levels rise. She suggested that CHAT have a conversation about what can be done to revise the ordinance to make it more effective.

*Ms. Bourbeau* provided an update via email that was relayed by Ms. Durfee.

- Last week the tide was high and flooded the back streets of Ashworth Ave.
- Ms. Bourbeau forwarded an announcement about a DPW presentation at the Hampton Beach Village District meeting on July 13 to her email distribution list.

#### *Ms. Durfee*

- Noted media coverage of flooding and projections of more severe hurricane seasons. She specifically noted WMUR and will send out a link to the story after the meeting.

Ms. Durfee asked for guest flood updates. There were none.

#### 4. Land Conservation Update - Brianna O'Brien

Ms. O'Brien shared a slideshow presentation on Existing and High Priority Conservation Lands in Hampton, NH.

- Conservation areas that are existing (most popular):
  - Ice Pond
  - Town Forest
  - Batchelder Farm
  - Hurd Farm
  - Car Barn Pond
- Ms. O'Brien noted that she is working to make information on these locations more accessible via the town website.
- Conservation Land Overview:
  - Hampton is about 9,088 acres.
  - Total land owned/managed: about 1098 acres.
  - Total conserved land: 603 acres or 7%.
  - Total acres held in conservation easements: 424 acres.
- Ten areas have been identified as priority by the town of Hampton- taken from the Aquatic Resources shovel ready project areas, put together by the Conservation Commission in 2018. Ms. O'Brien noted that all priority areas already have some land conserved.
  - Town Forest
    - Ms. O'Brien noted that there are a number of different parcels in this area that are already conserved, but they are not contiguous.
  - Niles Brook/Great Meadow
  - Mill Pond
  - Salt Marsh Complex
  - Drake River
  - Old River/Taylor River
  - Winnicut Headwater
  - Old River Headwaters
  - Little River
  - Meadow Pond
- Ms. O'Brien applied for the ARM fund grant to protect additional parcels within the Salt Marsh Complex. This would make the conserved land contiguous.
- The ARM fund has a condition that requires there to be upland per parcel protected.
- Other ways the Conservation Commission obtains land:
  - Deeds. Recently they were deeded two parcels within the marsh. The marsh land deeded is often not surveyed and is difficult to find.
  - Donations to the town.
  - Asking property owners to sell their land to the town.

Questions and comments:

- Mr. LaBranche commented that it is interesting to see how much of Hampton is water. He also noted that where there is water there is potential for flooding.

- Mr. Diener noted that whenever there are opportunities to preserve land, the Conservation Commission tries to take those opportunities. He added that whenever the commission asks the town to approve a purchase, they take a large portion of the money needed from the Conservation Fund, which makes the burden less on the taxpayers.
- Mr. Diener noted that SHEA will be making a presentation to the Conservation Commissions in Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls regarding parcels that were identified by SHEA in 2020.
- Ms. DiGeronimo asked if the Conservation Commission and the town have thought about the potential of needing to relocate homes that are currently on the coast and where that will be. Ms. O'Brien stated that the topic came up indirectly while looking at Liberty Lane and uplands that could be developed. She noted that most of the identified areas are already densely populated and conservation of those lands would likely come as flood mitigation.
- Mr. Bassett asked for clarification regarding whose priorities are represented and what criteria was used on the identified high priority areas and the map Ms. O'Brien presented.
  - The purple areas were identified as Coastal Conservation Focus Areas by the NH Nature Conservancy in 2021.
  - The red areas were identified by the Hampton Conservation Commission in 2018 for the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund Priority Project List. They were identified as high priority for a number of different reasons.
- Ms. Durfee noted the CHAT recommendation to prioritize land conservation in areas that can support marshes in the future. She will update the recommendation sheet to reflect the work that is being done in these areas.
- Ms. Hale noted that the Town of Hampton has been working with consultants to put together and identify locations in these areas for ditch remediation. That is moving along.
- Ms. O'Brien added that the ARM fund is a great way for the town to seek funds for conservation land, but also oversees mitigation for larger projects. They look for developable land, which is why they look for uplands.
- Ms. Durfee noted the Coastal Viewer as a good resource for anyone interested in ditch remediation.

Ms. Durfee invited Ms. Kravitz and Mr. Lessard to give update. Neither had any updates.

## 5. Recommendation Discussion

Review and edit draft of simplified list of recommendations.

- Ms. Durfee noted that she added a few categories to make the list of recommendations more organized. These categories include: Outreach, Education Related, Master Plan, Ordinances/Regulations, Policy, and Progress and Studies.
  - Outreach, Engagement, and Education Recommendations:
    - No comments.
  - Master Plan Recommendations:
    - Mr. Bassett noted that he feels the master plan recommendations should be more explicit and less open to interpretation. Specifically,

in regard to development that could exacerbate flooding or the effects of sea-level rise.

- Ms. Durfee highlighted a recommendation that states “encouraging development in safe areas”. She emphasizes that they can get more specific.
- Ms. Durfee made a note to further explore how this recommendation could be altered to potentially reduce flooding or the effects of sea-level rise.
- Ordinance recommendations:
  - Mr. LaBranche asked if they should include something about freeboard and floodplain management.
    - Mr. Bachand explained that the town will continue to discuss and refine the floodplain management ordinance.
  - Ms. Durfee will reserve time at the next meeting to talk more about how to revise the ordinance and land use recommendations to make them more explicit.
  - Ms. Kravitz noted that many of these recommendations would require professional analysis in order to be driven forward.
- Implementation Committee for the Master Plan:
  - Mr. Bachand stated that an Implementation Committee is standard practice for the town.
  - Ms. Kravitz feels that the way the recommendation was written makes it sound like CHAT would be forming the Implementation Committee, but she believes it was meant to support the implementation of the Master Plan.
- General Questions:
  - Ms. O’Brien asked for clarification on the purpose of this document. She asked if the goal is to finalize the recommendations as opposed to continuously re-work them. She also suggested making a note for each recommendation about the status.
    - Ms. Durfee explained that the draft recommendations have been released to the town.
    - The recommendations will be in a more final form after there has been the opportunity to hear from the public and get their input.
    - She stated that the purpose of this document is in response to a request to make the recommendations simpler to read.
    - Mr. Diener agreed that he liked the idea of adding the status of the recommendations to this document. He added that it would be useful to include a link to the full living document.
    - Ms. Durfee suggested calling this document a working list instead of a draft. CHAT agrees.
- Projects and Studies
  - Property assessment and impacts of sea level rise.
    - Ms. Durfee would like to clarify this recommendation more.

- Mr. Bassett noted that taxes are assessed based on home sales. Despite flooding, the value of homes continues to rise. He is unclear about what this recommendation means, or what could be recommended.
- Mr. Diener wondered if the recommendation was meant to discuss and better understand how property assessments will be changing as a result of sea level rise. If market values do go down, it could affect the town via loss of tax revenue.
- Mr. LaBranche stated that current projections estimate the loss of about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of tax revenues due to loss of property.
- Ms. DiGeronimo suggested framing the recommendation in terms of potential impacts to the town's revenue.
- Ms. Durfee noted overlap between this recommendation and the third one. She suggested combining them.
- Mr. Bassett asked that "and social" be added to the second recommendation as opposed to just economic.

Ms. Durfee asked everyone to take a closer look at this document before the next meeting. They will continue this discussion.

## **6. Interest in Person Site Visit(s) this summer**

- Mr. Diener, Mr. Bassett, and Ms. Kravitz showed interest in the summer site visits.
- Ms. Hale asked for more information about what they would be looking at during the site visit. She added the summers could be difficult to schedule due to vacation schedules.
- Ms. Durfee will poll everyone in the follow up to the meeting about specific concerns and interests.

## **7. Next meeting: July 19, 2022**

## **8. Adjourn**