

# HAMPTON COASTAL HAZARDS ADAPTATION TEAM (CHAT)

## November 2024 UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

A summary of updates and announcements relevant to flooding, coastal hazards, and coastal planning intended to be shared with Hampton boards, commissions, committees, departments, and the public. Visit <http://shea4nh.org/coastal-hazards-adaptation-team-chat/> for information about CHAT.

Jennifer Hale, Director of Public Works

- Refer to attached memorandum RE: Climate Ready Hampton, dated 11.19.24, for an update on a variety of coastal resilience-related projects.

Jason Bachand, Town Planner

- Floodplain Ordinance amendment regarding the elevation of nonconforming structures was tabled last year. This amendment was brought forward again this year as one of nine amendments that will be presented at the November 20 Zoning Board meeting.
- The ZBA is currently opposed to the proposed amendment because they believe the applications should be reviewed by the ZBA first. The ZBA's goal is to make the properties more conforming. The issue is that it would be more expensive. For example, elevating a structure high enough to add parking underneath costs more than simply elevating a few feet out of the flood zone.
- The proposed amendment was slightly changed from last year with wording added "The structure is located entirely within the boundaries of the subject property and does not encroach onto any abutting properties." This amendment refers to elevation only and doesn't refer to additions or new structures. This amendment helps homeowners elevate their structures out of harm's way.
- If the amendment passes, it should help the Community Rating System approval process. This amendment would create another opportunity to make elevation easier for homeowners.

Brianna Hagen, Conservation Coordinator

- The proposed Floodplain Ordinance amendment would have no negative effect on the eligibility for the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS standards are strictly floodplain management standards.
- 27 homes in Hampton have applied for a permit for home elevations since October 2022, and 22 have been non-conforming.

Tom Bassett, Resident Representative

- The King's Highway drainage project phase I was funded in part with \$1.3M ARPA funds. This project funding reflects successful collaboration between many stakeholders.
- There were seven days of high tide flooding in the Meadow Pond Neighborhood between November 12-17. The observed high tides were higher than the predicted high tide. The flooding was all high tide flooding, there was no rain during this period (see attached imagery and documentation).
- Aquarion contractors are working in the neighborhood to replace the water mains. They requested to start work at 5 am so they can work in non-flooding conditions.
- The neighborhood has been in contact with the ZBA regarding some of the required variances that threaten residents' ability to park during high tide events. The 931 Ocean Blvd redevelopment proposal seeks a variance for parking to utilize public parking lots. This could cause issues for residents during flood events.
- Additionally, a request was sent to and approved by the ZBA to require that applicants post their variance application online so that residents can more easily review and make comments.

**TOWN OF HAMPTON  
NEW HAMPSHIRE**



**MEMORANDUM**

Date: November 19, 2024

To: James Sullivan - Town Manager

From: Jennifer Hale, PE – Director of Public Works  
Brianna Hagan – Conservation Commission Coordinator  
Jason Bachand – Town Planner  
Gregg Arvanitis – Building Inspector

Re: **Climate Ready Hampton – Coastal Resilience Efforts Update**

**The following information is being provided to update you, the Board of Selectman, our residents, businesses on Hampton’s Coastal Resilience efforts.**

**Flood Mitigation Studies:** The Flood Studies for the Meadow Pond Area and Hampton Harbor were created and finalized in 2021 to understand the impacts of increased sea-level rise and flooding on Hampton in these routinely flooded neighborhoods. Recommendations were made to include a new drainage system to alleviate flooding in Meadow Pond/Kings Highway neighborhood and a project to look at Ditch Mitigation to restore the health of the Seabrook - Hampton Estuary - ultimately providing for reduced flooding risks.

- **Meadow Pond/Kings Highway Project** –This drainage improvement project has been designed, was put out to bid and originally had \$2.8 million dollars in funding secured to construct the new drainage system that would include two new pump stations. With the shortfall of funding (as compared to the bids received) multiple stakeholders came together, created a modified project and an additional \$1.3 million dollars was secured to start construction! (Thank you!!) This entire project has been made possible by the committed efforts of all the stakeholders including residents, engineers, Local Officials and Town of Hampton departments, State Representatives, NHDES, UNH, Flood Ready Neighbors (FRN), Coastal Hazard Adaptation Team (CHAT) and certainly many others throughout the years. The project is expected to be completed in 2025. The Town is committed to looking for additional funding to complete improvements that have been put on hold along Kings Highway due to the modified project as well as future work in the Meadow Pond Area.
- **Ditch Mitigation** – The Town contracted with their engineer SLR and worked closely with the NHDES to develop plans that were approved by the State Wetlands Bureau to create a pilot project to reduce the number of ditches, establish single channel hydrology, maintain the high marsh, act

against subsidence and ultimately reduce long-term flood risk by remediating almost 8,000 linear feet of ditches within the Seabrook-Hampton Estuary. The design work was completed in 2022. NHDES, working with the Town of Hampton and other surrounding communities, has expanded on this project by applying for the America the Beautiful Challenge Grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for funding to amend the design plans to increase the project area. The overall project includes over 230 additional acres of salt marsh restoration over a four-year period. With over 12 letters of support, including but not limited to, the Town of North Hampton's Town Administrator and Conservation Commission, Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP), Seabrook-Hampton's Estuary Alliance (SHEA), Ducks Unlimited, Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Inc. (NEAFWA), the Town of Hampton DPW and others - speaks volumes about the collaborative approach we are all taking toward resilience.

**Flood Smart Seacoast and Project RECAP:** The Town secured grant funding through two different grants (approx. \$108,000) through NHDES to Invision Coastal Resilience for the Town of Hampton. This included establishing a grant funded Coastal Resilience Coordinator (CRC) Position to promote the Town of Hampton's Resilience efforts. The Town's ability to successfully and expeditiously advance floodplain management priorities and resilience initiatives hinges up having a dedicated staff person responsible for improving internal communication and coordination, developing financing options, implementation of coastal resilience projects and having a strong and effective education and outreach program. Flood Smart Seacoast and Project Recap were a collaboration amongst many project partners including NHDES Coastal Program (NHCP), Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC), Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW), UNH and Town Staff. Flood Smart Seacoast/Project RECAP developed multiple coastal resilience initiatives between 2021-2023 including:

- **Ordinance Updates:** These grants supported the development of Hampton's Floodplain Ordinance update that was approved at Town Meeting in 2023. The purpose of updating Hampton's floodplain management ordinance was to improve compliance with State building code and incorporate higher standards, including but not limited to new sea level rise design flood elevation requirements. It built on previous work completed as part of the Town's PREPA grant project to conduct an audit of existing land use regulations and identify opportunities for integrating the NH Coastal Flood Risk Guidance. Working with NHCP, RPC and a local steering committee, the amendment options to incorporate into the Zoning Ordinance evaluated and recommendations of preferred options were made to the Planning Board.
- **Coastal Resilience Efforts and Resilient Land-Use Permitting Databases:** The CRC developed two separate databases to start the coordination and track the implementation of existing coastal resilience recommendations that were identified in Town plans and studies (e.g., Master Plan Coastal Resilience Chapter, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Coastal Hazards and Adaptation Team (CHAT) Recommendations, Hampton Beach Area Master Plan, Meadow Pond Flood Study and Hampton Harbor Flood Study, etc. These databases are used internally in coordinating ongoing efforts across Town Departments. Working with the Town's Planning and Building departments, Planning Board and Conservation Commission, regulations and applications were reviewed when land use permit application for projects located in areas vulnerable to current and future high tide flooding were

submitted for approvals. Understanding the requests for development in the area and working with the regulations to develop proactive requirements is essential in maintaining coastal resilience.

- **Coastal Resilience Long-Term Financing Options:** Many discussions were held and presentations were made to understand the future financial investments and funding opportunities that would be needed to support Coastal Resiliency. Understanding how the Town supports residents with funding (when legally Town resources are not to be spent of private property) provided for lengthy discussions on how to build private-public partnerships, whether new legislation may be needed, and the need for potential coastal resilience incentive zones or loan opportunities. This initial work confirms that there needs to be more education, discussions, and work completed to establish how Hampton moves forward with funding coastal resilience initiatives.
- **Voluntary Elevation and Property Acquisition and Relocation Program (VEPAR):** Flood Smart Seacoast/Project RECAP allowed for the collaboration with the RPC and NHCP to design and pilot an equitable process to identify, prioritize, and support FEMA grant applications for voluntary building elevation and property acquisition projects in flood prone areas. Surveys were created and conducted to collect responses to better understand residents' interest in the program, what obstacles they may encounter and the resources that would be needed to be part of the VEPAR program. This survey led to the development of a program framework that provided the purpose, program structure, potential funding sources, timelines, requirements, management processes and application guides to assist the Town and residents with moving forward with an application to FEMA for a home elevation or property acquisition.
- **Community Engagement Outreach:** Flood Smart Seacoast/Project RECAP started the conversations on how to identify members of the community that would be engaged in listening sessions, public education, assistance programs and mitigation efforts. With the assistance of CHAT, FRN, SHEA, CAW, NHCP and municipal leaders, multiple meetings were held and presentations made on these Flood Smart Seacoast/Project RECAP initiatives. A new Coastal Resilience Webpage (on the Town's website) was created and updates posted as programs are developed was made and updates posted in the Conservation Commissions quarterly newsletter.

**Project Climate Ready Hampton (RECAP Continued):** To continue the work of Flood Smart Seacoast/Project RECAP a second version, Climate Ready Hampton (CRH), was developed and submitted as an application to NDHES for additional Grant funding (approx. \$50,000). Funding has been secured and this work will be completed by fall of 2025 to implement a coastal resilience vision and action plan for our residents, businesses, visitors and our infrastructure. With the development of Climate Ready Hampton, a municipal based task force, there will now be a full-time Coastal Resilience Coordinator (funded through the Town's Operational Budget – not the grant) who will start mid-December of 2024. The CRC who will lead the efforts of CRH will be engaged to support and collaborate with all our regional partners to oversee and lead synergized resiliency efforts for Hampton into the future. This includes:

- **Municipal Coordination and Collaboration:** Weekly department head meeting will include updates to inform and receive feedback related to ongoing work and concerns. This information is documented as meeting notes so that we can look back at timeline, gain historical information and

define action items. In addition, CRH will have monthly meetings amongst partners to discuss regional opportunities, community priorities and to share experiences and knowledge. The CRH will promote public engagement through education and informative information through board meetings, quarterly updates, the Town Website and other “office hour” meetings.

- **Update to the Land-Use Permitting Tracking Database:** The database will be expanded to include information that will be collected by adjusting townwide applications to include whether a property is located in the Special Flood Hazard Zone (SFHA Zone) or routinely floods. This includes reviewing applications and providing comments on projects for the Planning Board (including PRC, Site Plan/Subdivision Approvals and Town Wetland Permits), DPW Permits applications (Driveway, Excavation and Sewer), Building Permits (Building, Demolition Electrical and Mechanical Permits) and Zoning Board Approvals (Variances) and then integrating the information with the database.
- **Update to the Coastal Resilience Efforts Database:** CRH will continue to track ongoing and future coastal resilience efforts reenforcing the goal of the database, identifying project categories, listing collaborators and providing continued updates as they are received by the community, regional partners, Town Departments and Boards. This includes updates from projects that are prioritized and identified by the Masterplan Implementation Committee (MPIC), and/or identified within the Town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan (Recently approved by FEMA) and/or included in the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan.
- **Floodplain Management:** CRH will continue to look at opportunities to identify areas that could be strengthened based on the Menu of Higher Floodplain Regulation Standards for New Hampshire Communities by working with project partners to identify additional standards to review with the community, appropriate Boards and ultimately 2026 Town Meeting to strengthen development with floodplain areas. In addition, the Town has decided to purchase a software program (Forerunner) designed to help with Floodplain Management. This software has the ability to: Assist in Elevation Certificate Processing and error detection; Provide flood and property level data; Track substantial improvements and damage; Allow for resident logs on a per-property level; Serve as a “ Public Flood Website” where the community will be able to search for FIRM data, Flood Zone, Base Flood Elevations; view elevation certificates; request help; track repetitive loss and generate related templated documents.
- **Support for Financing Options:** CRH working with project partners will develop educational resources that define what options are available to municipalities related of long-term resilience financing options (e.g., what it means and what is required to - establish a Coastal Resilience Fund with the RPC authorized under RSA 36:53-a, create a non-lapsing Coastal Resilience Incentive Zone (CRIZ) fund authorized under RSA 79-E:4-a, collect resilience fees, and other options that may be identified through the “learning process”. The goal will be to present these educational materials to the community through outreach meetings and hold discussion with the local Boards so that we can all work together to decide how Coastal Resilience is funded and what that looks like for Hampton.
- **VEPAR:** Using the Framework developed as part of Flood Smart Seacoast/Project RECAP, the Town decided to go ahead and move forward as a sub applicant to FEMA for a home elevation pilot project. In September of 2024, FEMA provided a Notice of Funding Opportunity - SWIFT Current -

which would provide 75-100% reimbursement for eligible projects which included home elevations. With approximately 40 residents potentially eligible, the Town acted quickly to hold a public interest meeting, answer questions related to the program and request property owners that were interested in submitting a Notice of Voluntary Interest to get the process started. Currently the town is moving forward with 6 properties to submit applications on their behalf to elevate their homes through the FEMA Swift Current Program. We are hoping to learn from this process and will continue our efforts to assist those property owners in the future that were not ready this time around.

**Enhancing Coastal Resilience Through Strategic Project Organization and Outreach:** The Town secured additional grant funding (\$28,400) through a NHDES Coastal Resilience Grant to hire a consultant to help the Town organize our ongoing coastal resilience efforts. Work is anticipated to be started in the winter of 2024 and begin with the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to find a consultant. The consultant will work with the CRC to connect all of the Town's partners and all interested residents to help align our efforts, put together a prioritized list of projects (pulling from existing databases and documents such as the Coastal Resilience Efforts Database, the Master Plan, HBAC Master Plan, Natural Resources Inventory, SHEA's Estuary Management Plan, etc.) and make a roadmap for us to follow to find funding for projects and implementation of projects more attainable. Seven organizations/individuals, including CHAT, submitted a letter of support for this project speaking to the extensive network of partners, supporters and collaborators with Hampton's coastal resilience efforts.

**Storm Repairs and Future Mitigation:** DPW and the Conservation Coordinator have met with our engineers to discuss repair options for the small dune area and beach entrance at Plaice Cove that is repeatedly damaged during winter storms. In January of 2024, this area was severely damaged losing revetment/rock (wave protection) and a significant amount of sand behind the revetment area that was part of the dune. This left the beach area inaccessible and the dune with significant erosion. A plan has been developed to implement a two-phased repair approach. Before the winter storms of 2024-2025, we hope to obtain an Emergency Authorization from NHDES to shore up the area to withstand any additional damage. This will include work to secure the existing rocks and hold the existing dunes such that it does not experience any more erosion. The second phase will include the engineers working on a formal restoration plan that could be implemented in the spring of 2025 for which a full NHDES permit package would be required. This part of the plan would involve more advanced rebuilding of the revetment and restoration of the dune. The Town is working with FEMA to hopefully secure partial funding for this work.

**Bicentennial Wall Construction:** The proposed project (\$2.7 million) will implement flood resilience for the Town of Hampton by reconstructing the deteriorated Bicentennial Wall which is essential for flood protection to protect the park, Ocean Boulevard, residences and businesses from coastal flooding. The project includes the demolition and reconstruction of the Bicentennial Park Seawall along Ocean Boulevard and associated improvements. The improvements to the seawall and surrounding area include the removal of approximately 275 feet of concrete seawall and reconstruction of +/-350 feet of concrete seawall, the resetting of existing stone revetment, the installation of new stone revetment, the reconstruction of public concrete sidewalks, the installation of new benches and bike racks, and the construction of a concrete access ramp. The proposed design includes the construction of the wall to be

built to the same height as the adjacent State wall providing the necessary protection from regular overtopping, erosion and sea-level rise. In addition, the face of the wall will be curved similar to the adjacent State wall to redirect wave energy. The reconstruction of the wall has been identified in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan and necessary to reduce the risk of flooding and ultimately failure of the existing wall. This work will begin in January of 2025.

**Sewer Manhole Evaluation and Rehabilitation:** The Town of Hampton Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) processes in upwards of 900 million gallons of flow a year. This flow is collected by the Town's sewer system comprised of sewer manholes (smh) that serve as junction points for the wastewater that leaves our homes and businesses. These manholes connect miles of underground piping and sit at the surface. As with many coastal communities, our sewer system is located adjacent and sometimes within our estuary, harbors, marshes, and roadways which creates a significant flood risk to our wastewater assets. The sewer manholes located in the low-lying coastal areas often are covered with flooding waters and rising tides. With the increases in sea-level rise, affecting water levels, the vulnerability will only get worse. While some of these manholes may have "watertight" covers their structural integrity, function and condition have a direct impact to our natural resources, wastewater treatment plant process and economy. In 2024, the Town with a grant from NHDES Clean Water Funding (\$34,100) has completed the vulnerability assessment and risk of 22 manholes that have been identified to be in poor condition and located in areas of flooding or where failure would have a major impact to our community. The next phase of this project will be the final design, permitting and construction. The opinion of cost from the engineers is that this project will cost approximately \$450,000.

**On-Going Collaborations:** The Town works closely with the NHDES Coastal Program and their wide array of projects.

- **NHCP/RPC Property Ownership:** Currently, funded by a Project of Special Merit through NOAA, the NHCP and RPC are working to identify marsh parcel ownership and identify pathways for making salt marsh conservation simpler/more efficient. Completing this work is important such that restoration projects can take place without the roadblock of unknown ownership or working on private property. This has had a direct positive result on the Ditch Mitigation Projects allowing for work to now move forward with permissions for other property owners including Fish and Game (F&G) and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF). Prioritizing restoring the health of the estuary is a vital part of Hampton's coastal resilience efforts.
- **Flood Ready Neighborhoods (FRN)** The Town works closely with Flood Ready Neighborhoods (FRN) and is continually working to find ways to support FRNs efforts and address the need in Hampton. This often involves sitting with residents at their homes and walking their neighborhoods together. FRN has been working with groups in the Meadow Pond Neighborhood, Sun Valley, and Streets off of Ashworth Ave providing support, information and advocacy related to improved resilience. In September of 2024, the Town held its very first Flood Preparedness Day which was a direct result of working with FRN. Nearly 400 sandbags were distributed with the help of volunteers to property owners who experience regular winter flooding. The Town and FRN have also been working on Dune restoration efforts in the

Portsmouth Ave. neighborhood (Sun Valley). This area is vulnerable to significant erosion and efforts to restore the dunes and beachgrasses are ongoing. Having FRN get together and meetings is a great touch point for community members who experience flooding to see and meet Town and State Staff who are working on these issues as well as other residents who advocate for the importance of coastal resilience work. The hope is to find a way to expand these efforts and generate a volunteer corps that can assist with making events successful.

- **Research:** Continuing important partnerships with UNH extension and other State Agencies to understand what research is ongoing, what funding opportunities might exist and what resources or networks could be integral to furthering Hampton's resilience efforts. Town Staff continually meet and participate in Dredge Task Force Management Committee Meetings, PREP Management Committee, CAW, and are working with Dr. Alyson Eberhart, Dr. Gregory Moore and Dr. David Burdock of UNH.

**Conservation Efforts:** The Conservation Coordination through the Conservation Coordinator solicits donations of conservation land on an annual basis (sometimes more frequently for targeted parcels). For example, in fall of 2024 letters were sent to property owners who own undeveloped land in the Cusack/High St area as this area has been identified as having restoration potential which could lead to flood risk reduction. These efforts take time and commitment and the Town is extremely grateful when opportunities such as these are available.

**Building/Planning Regulatory Changes:** Working together to understand the effects of the Town's existing Ordinance and Regulations, related to home elevation, the Planning Department and Conservation Coordinator have reviewed and proposed amendments to make home elevations more feasible for property owners in Hampton. The amendment would allow for existing non-conforming structures to be elevated without a variance, provided that certain conditions are met, including that no additional area is created. This would allow residents to move forward with projects that currently would experience a delay due to application submittal deadlines, notices and public meetings.

**The Town of Hampton is committed to understanding the coastal resilience needs of our residents and businesses as well as what will be necessary to support our infrastructure and properties. The list above does not cover all our efforts, but is an eye opener to the work that is being done and the work that will be needed in the years to come.**





CHAT Update  
November 2024

Meadow Pond Neighborhood

Photo: Dani Doerge

## King's Highway drainage, phase 1 funded

- Extraordinary collaborative and timely actions save King's Highway drainage project from being "paused" due to high contractor bids
- Town of Hampton (Jen Hale, Jamie Sullivan), NHDES (Robert Scott), Executive Council (Janet Stevens), and Meadow Pond neighborhood work together to find supplemental funding (\$1.3 million-ARPA funds)
- Phase 1 (Meadow Pond neighborhood drainage) funded
- Phase 2 (King's Highway improvements), needs funding

# November illustrates chronic flooding problem



Photo: Dani Doerge

# Seven days of high tide flooding

Date	Predicted High Tide (MLLW)	Observed High Tide (MLLW)	Rainfall	Flooding
Nov 12	8.9 ft	9.6 ft	0 in	Y
Nov 13	9.5 ft	9.8 ft	0 in	Y
Nov 14	10.1 ft	10.9 ft	0 in	Y
Nov 15	10.6 ft	11.2 ft	0 in	Y
Nov 16	10.5ft	11.6 ft	0 in	Y
Nov 17	10.5 ft	11.1 ft	0 in	Y
Nov 18	10.2 ft	11 ft	0 in	Y

Sources: US Harbors, Hampton Tide Gauge, LocalConditions.com, neighborhood observations

# Nov 14 flooding



# Nov 15 tidal flooding



11:09 a.m.



Photos: Tom Bassett

2:02 p.m.

Photo: Tom Bassett

# Nov 16 flooding



Photo: Dani Doerge

# Nov 17 & 18 flooding



17 Nov 2024



Photos: Tom Bassett

18 Nov 2024

Photos: Tom Bassett



# Aquarion contractors working in flood conditions, Nov 12

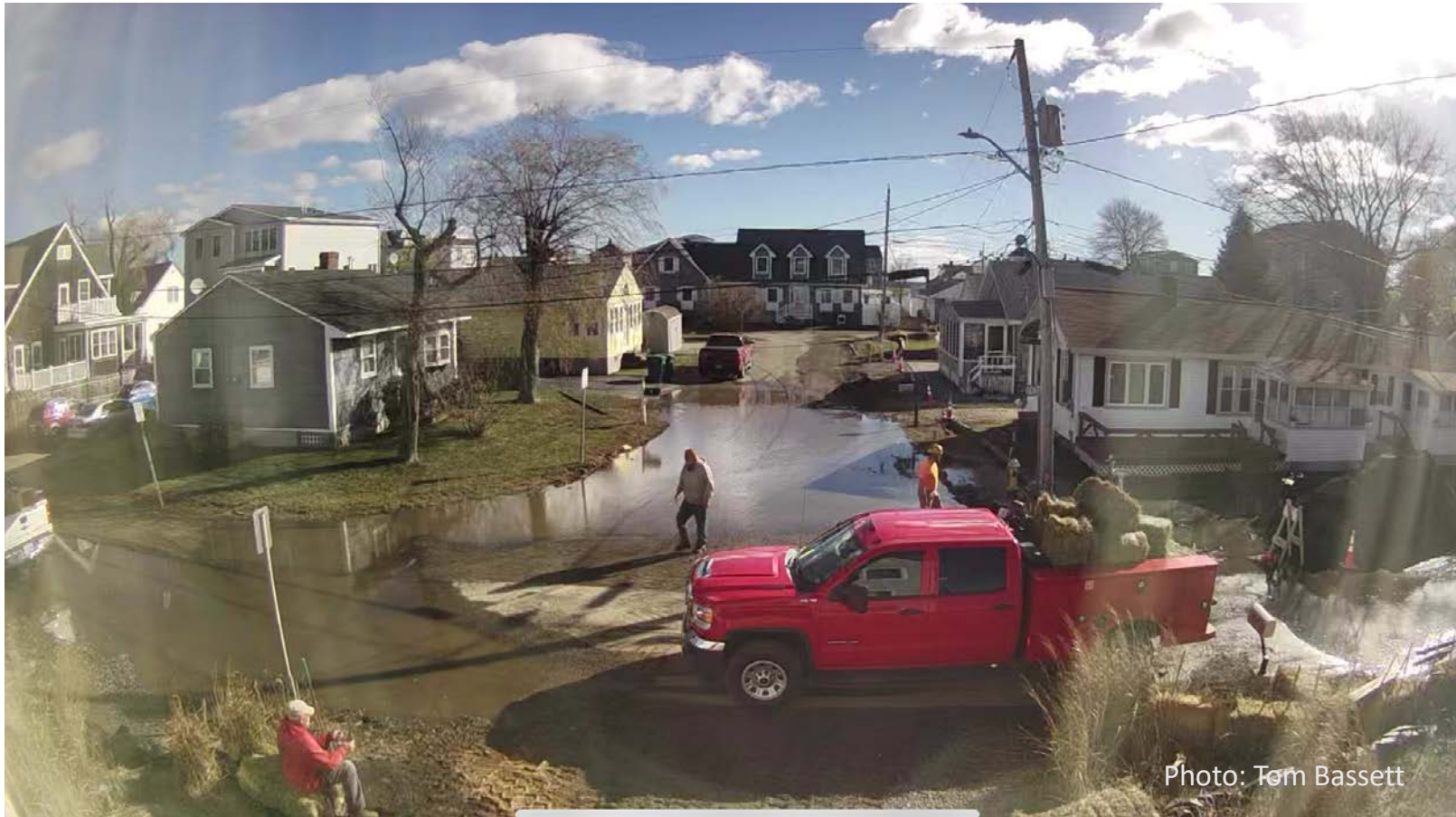


Photo: Tom Bassett

## Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA) update

- At its October 17, 2024, meeting, ZBA approved Meadow Pond neighborhood request to require variance applicants to post “petitions for relief” online.
- Board member Bill O’Brien volunteered [“to put together a package”](#) for the Board to review at its November 2024 meeting.
- When implemented, this new administrative practice will allow for greater transparency and public participation in ZBA hearings.
- The Meadow Pond neighborhood remains vigilant about variance requests that threaten our access to public parking lots via the Flood Placard Program.

## Looking forward to new storm drain system

- DPW is finalizing contacts with drainage contractor & coordinating construction schedule with Aquarion.
- Neighborhood is **Thankful** to everyone who has made this progress possible.