
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #76

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

1:00–3:00 pm

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

1. Present

Debra Altschiller – NH State Senator
Jason Bachand – Hampton Town Planner
Scott Blair – Hampton Budget Committee
Maddie DiIunno – Rockingham Planning Commission
Jay Diener – Conservation Commission
Rayann Dionne – Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance
Ward Galanis – Hampton Planning Board
Jen Gilbert – NHDES Coastal Program
Brianna Hagan – Hampton Conservation Coordinator
Barbara Kravitz – Hampton Beach Area Commission
Steven LaBranche - Hampton Resident Representative
Bob Ladd – Hampton Beach Village District
Ben Ritt – Hampton Coastal Resilience Coordinator

2. Approve meeting notes from August 2025

Mr. LaBranche motioned to approve the August 2025 with edits provided
Second by Mr. Bachand
Vote: All in favor with Mr. Scott abstaining

3. CHAT Facilitator Transition Meeting

The meeting began with Ms. Dionne announced that Liz Durfee with EF Planning and Design had stepped down as CHAT's facilitator after leading the group for several years. Ms. Dionne mentioned that she would send out a thank-you card for the group to sign. She shared that they will be transitioning to a team-led effort for planning chat meetings, with herself, Mr. Diener, Mr. Ritt, Ms. Gilbert and Ms. DiIunno taking on this responsibility.

4. Relevant Updates

Mr. Bachand – Zoning Ordinance Amendments

- Provided an update on zoning, noting that while the board anticipated 3-4 amendments this year, they are now at 9, with none being floodplain management related. He mentioned ongoing work with the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) on a Climate Ready Hampton grant, which may help with future floodplain management ordinance amendments in 2027.

Ms. Hagan – Proposal to the NHDES Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Fund

- Shared details about a beach renourishment and dune restoration proposal submitted to the ARM grant, which aims to restore dunes between Shaw Street and James Street at Place Cove. The project, if funded, would take approximately 18 months to complete, including engineering, permitting, and implementation.

Ms. Hagan & Mr. Ritt - Drone Imagery and Marsh Restoration

- Ben and Brianna presented high-resolution drone imagery collected for the ARM grant, showing salt marsh conditions and stormwater system impacts. They discussed a pilot study on marsh restoration techniques being implemented by Ms. Hale, with Mr. Ritt and Ms. Hagan planning to visit the site the following day. Mr. LaBranche raised questions about private land ownership in salt marsh areas, leading to a discussion about the challenges of determining current land ownership, particularly for historically owned marsh land, and the potential for land donations to the town for conservation purposes.

Ms. Hagan - Salt Marsh Ownership Research Overview

- Provided an overview of salt marsh ownership research conducted by Toki, highlighting challenges in identifying and acquiring privately held marsh land. She explained that while some property owners like Seabreeze Condominium have clear ownership of marsh land, many parcels have uncertain ownership or are owned by distant heirs paying minimal taxes. Ms. Hagan described successful efforts to streamline the donation process for such properties, including the acquisition of four parcels last year, and discussed potential regulatory changes at the state level to facilitate public ownership of unutilized marsh land.

Mr. Diener – Salt Marsh Restoration work in Hampton Falls

- Shared that NH Audubon in coordination with US Fish and Wildlife is working on a salt marsh ditch restoration work in Hampton Falls. Similar techniques that are being proposed for the restoration work in Hampton.

Ms. Dionne – National Estuaries Week Activities

- Reminded members of SHEA's national estuaries week celebratory activities including a kids' coloring contest, photo contest, and new this year a speed puzzling competition.

Ms. Dionne – Meadow Pond Neighborhood Update

- Ms. Dionne shared Mr. Bassett's slides reporting that flooding in the Meadow Pond neighborhood continues to decline. There were seven days in August when the observed high tide at Hampton Harbor was greater than 9.5 ft but the neighborhood experienced just one day of partial flooding. Heavy rain (0.56 in) on September 6 resulted in flooding but during the next seven days, when the predicted tides were 9.5 ft and higher, there

was just a few days of partial flooding. This decline in sunny day high tide flooding continues a trend that began in June 2025 following the installation of the new storm drain system. Mr. Basset also reported that he looks forward to partnering with Coastal Resilience Coordinator Ben Ritt to monitor flooding trends in the neighborhood. The pump for the force main drain system is scheduled to be installed in October.

5. Coastal Resilience Coordinator Update

- **Meadow Pond/Gentian Rd Neighborhood**

Mr. Ritt presented updates on flood monitoring efforts, sharing findings from a recent 10.5-foot tide event at Meadow Pond and Gentian Road. The new drainage system installed by DPW effectively mitigated flooding in the area, with water being properly directed away from properties. Mr. LaBranche suggested encouraging the affected homeowner to consider filling in low-lying areas or planting native marsh vegetation to further mitigate water flow, though Mr. Ritt noted regulatory challenges with wetland modifications.

- **Hampton Tide Gauge System**

Mr. Ritt discussed the Hampton Tide Gauge system and its current limitations, particularly during winter when ice affects data collection. He explained how they use the system to monitor water levels and issue flood alerts, though they noted the reliance on NOAA predictions introduces some uncertainty in the data. Hampton is exploring ways to build redundancy into the system to improve accuracy and reliability for decision-making and public alerts.

- **Hampton Flood Alert System**

Mr. Ritt explained the current two-tiered alert system for flooding in Hampton, where most alerts go only to those who subscribe to the Coastal Resilience Coordinator system through Notify Me, with broader distribution during major events like Hurricane Erin. He noted that the town's emergency manager, the fire chief, has experienced issues with the state-level alert system, including failed attempts to activate alerts for severe weather events and delays in notification delivery. He is working with the emergency manager to explore alternative alert systems and improve the current setup to ensure timely and effective emergency communications.

Mr. Ritt also discussed the challenges and limitations of current cell phone alert systems, including issues with power outages and user opt-outs. He explained the current geo-fenced alert system's capabilities and limitations in targeting specific areas. Ben also reviewed data on the flood placard program, noting a decline in participation in 2025 after peaks in 2023 and 2024, and proposed conducting outreach to understand the reasons behind the drop-off and increase participation.

- **Flood Preparedness Program Updates**

Mr. Ritt discussed efforts to increase participation in the flood placard program, including digitizing property locations and using the Forerunner system to send reminders to eligible residents. He announced the Hampton Fall Preparedness Day event on October 4th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Public Works facility, where pre-filled and empty sandbags will be distributed, with volunteers needed to help with the process.

The group also discussed the possibility of developing a specific CHAT recommendation regarding emergency alerts and preparedness.

6. Emergency Alert System Improvements & White Board Exercise

The group discussed potential ways to improve emergency alert systems and website content for the town. They agreed to continue exploring options for emergency notifications, including siren systems, and to review examples of other community websites for inspiration. During a whiteboard exercise, participants suggested various improvements to the emergency management webpage and homepage, including information about evacuation routes, shelters, and emergency notification systems. See list of questions and responses below:

What community-specific information would make the Emergency Management webpage more useful for the general public?

- Different sources of information about emergency situations: newspapers? radio? alert sign-ups? WMUR? Etc.
- clear evac routes and assembly areas
 - Evacuation route information - Emergency heating/cooling shelter locations
 - Clear and understandable written evacuation plans and procedures, including routes and associated signage.
- Clear steps about what to do immediately following certain types of disasters.
- StoryMap type of visual using the Emergency Plan
- Information for people with special needs on how to deal with emergencies.
- The State has an emergency notification system you can sign up for at <https://www.desc.dos.nh.gov/resources/nh-alerts> It appears to be an app.
- Information about where the warming and cooling shelters are located and when they are open
- Summary of Hampton's Emergency Operations Plan and link the plan if it can be made publicly available
- Information about the town's alert system and what people can expect to receive and what they might have to do in response.

What types of emergency notifications should always be highlighted on the homepage?

- When street closures are anticipated - listing those streets

- Any issues with critical community services being down (water, sewer, etc)
- Water quality advisories, floods/road closures, heat advisories, droughts, intruptions to m
unicipal services...
- Bold link at the top of the Town hompage to emergency information - don't bury the info
on the website.
- Perhaps a categorization of different types of "emergencies", to help people distiguish bet
ween a short-term road closure becuae of a flood vs. a long-
term traffic disruption because of a project,

White Board link: https://zoom.us/wb/doc/6WITJ_D_QOODt6DPRJTVIw/p/159217621997695

7. Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm



CHAT Update September 2025 Meadow Pond Neighborhood

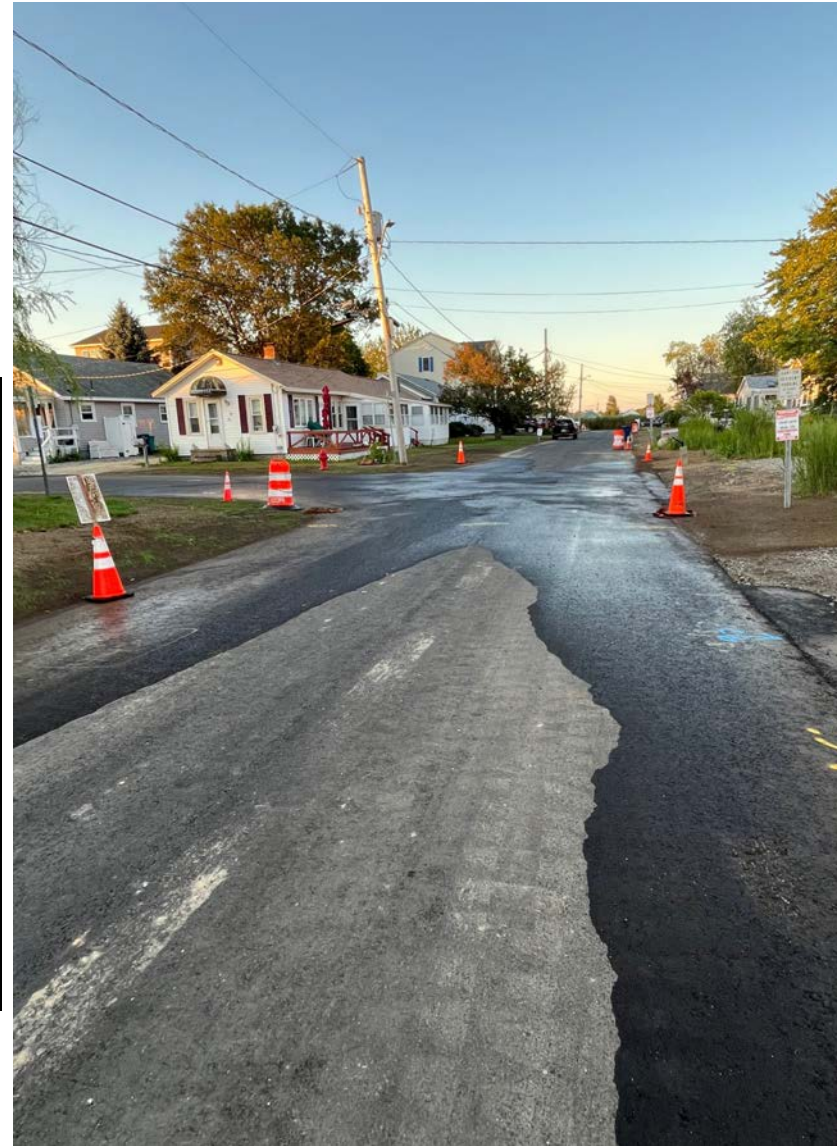
Hurricane Erin: predicted &observed tides

Date	Predicted High Tide (MLLW)	Observed High Tide (MLLW)	Rainfall	Flooding
August 19	9.2 ft	9.92 ft	0 in	No
August 20	9.3 ft	10.14 ft	0 in	No
August 21	9.5 ft	10.45 ft	0 in	No
August 22	9.5 ft	10.64 ft	0 in	No
August 23	--	10.7 ft	0 in	Partial
August 24	9.4 ft	10.11 ft	0 in	No
August 25	9.2 ft	9.95 ft		No

Hurricane Erin (22 Aug 2025)



23 August 2025
partial flooding



6 Sept 2025 flooding (high tide, intense rainfall)



Full moon tide flooding

(7-13 Sept 2025)

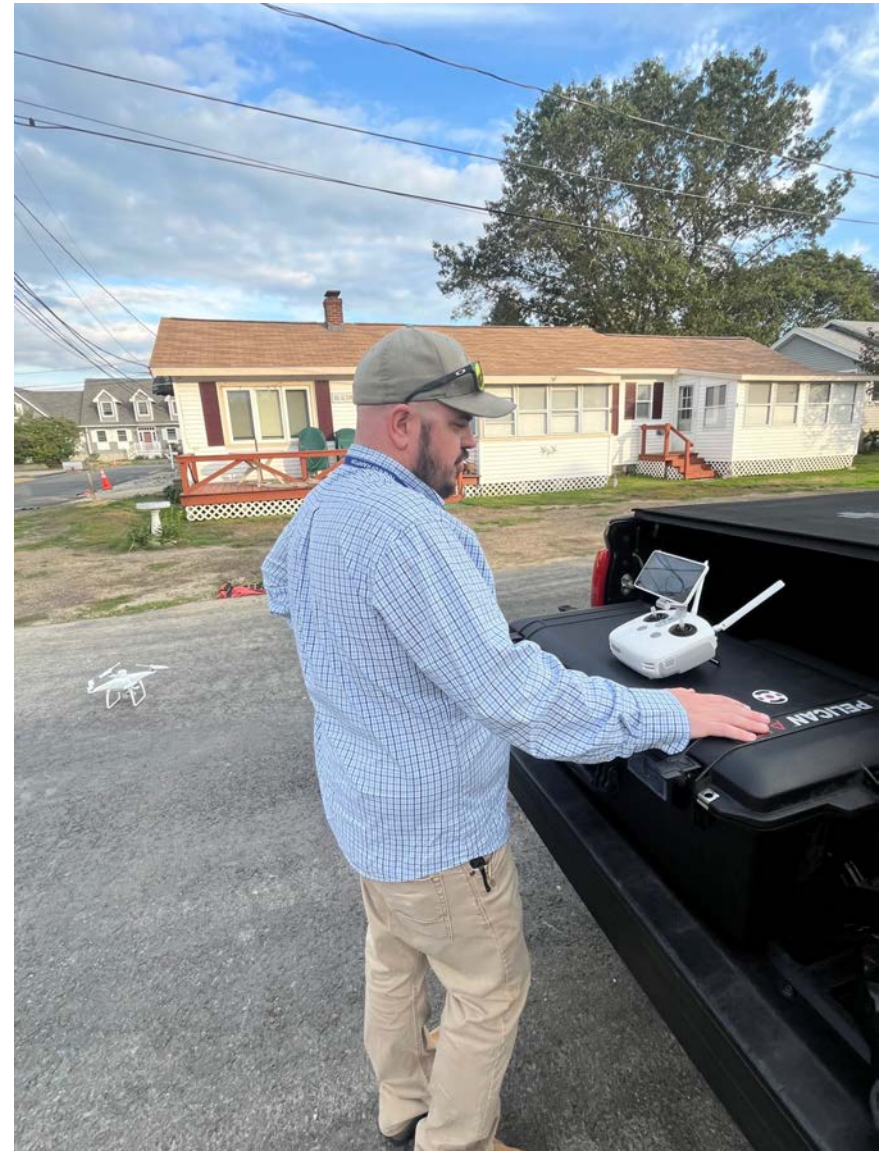
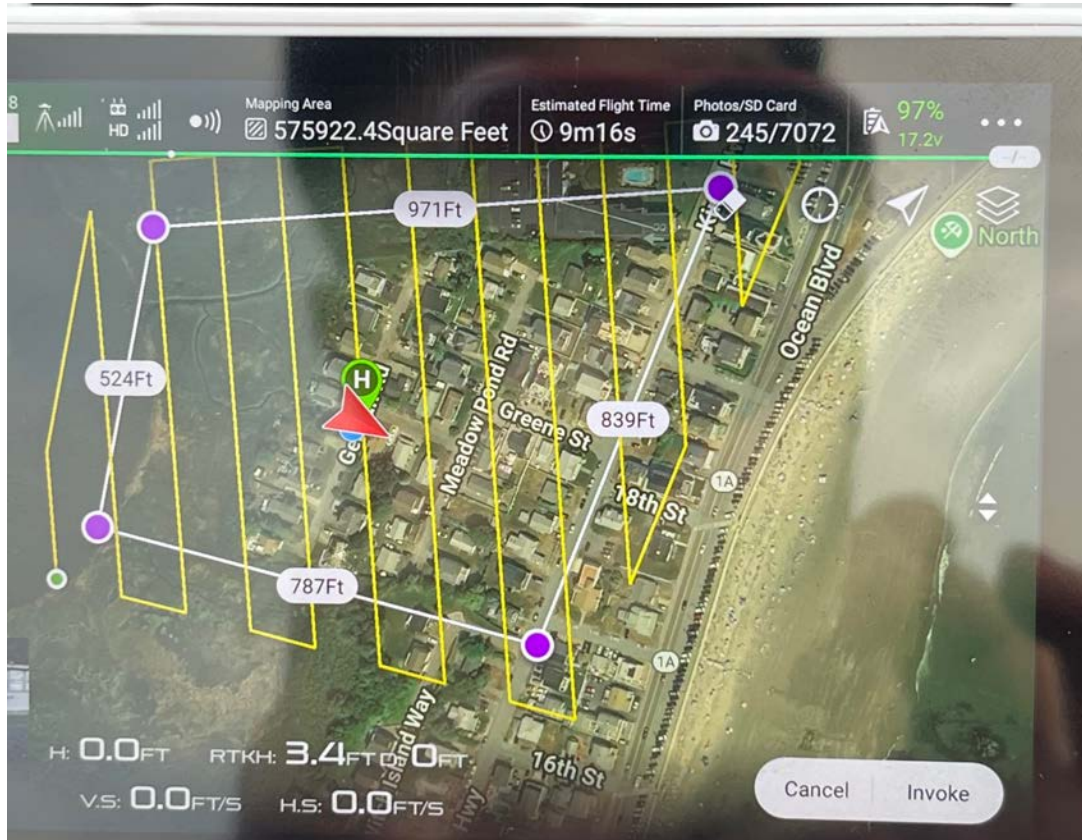
Date	Predicted High Tide (MLLW)	Observed High Tide (MLLW)	Rainfall	Flooding
Sept 6	9.7 ft	?	0.56 in	Yes
Sept 8	-- ft	?	0 in	No
Sept 9	9.8 ft	?	0 in	No
Sept 10	9.9 ft	?	0 in	Partial
Sept 11	--	?	0 in	Partial
Sept 12	10 ft	10.08 ft	0 in	Partial
Sept 13	9.5 ft	10.16 ft	0 in	No



11 Sept 2025 (partial flooding)



Flood monitoring with Ben Ritt



New Force Main Drainage System

Paving and loaming in Meadow Pond Neighborhood in early-August



Pump installation in mid-Oct?

Control box for force main
drainage pump

