
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #71

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

1:00-3:00PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

1. Introductions

CHAT Members

Jay Diener – Hampton Conservation Commission
Jason Bachand – Hampton Town Planner
Chris Muns – NH State Representative
Bob Ladd – Hampton Beach Village District
Jen Hale – Hampton DPW Director
Ben Ritt – Hampton Coastal Resilience Coordinator
Annie Cox – Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership
Ward Galanis – Hampton Planning Board
Barbara Kravitz – HBAC
Scott Blair – Budget Committee Representative
Kirsten Howard – DES Coastal Program Resilience Coordinator

CHAT Support Staff

Liz Durfee – Planning Consultant and CHAT Coordinator

Guests

Maddie Dilonno – Rockingham Planning Commission

2. Approve meeting notes from March 2025 (5 mins)

Motion: Mr. Bachand moved to approve the March 2025 meeting minutes as edited.

Second: Mr. Diener

Vote: All in Favor, Ms. Kravitz, Mr. Galanis, and Mr. Blair abstained.

3. Relevant Flood Updates (20 mins)

Mr. Diener

- Stated Ms. Durfee worked with SHEA to complete a land use audit for the three towns that surround the estuary. She reviewed current land use regulations and ordinances and checked off action items on the Estuary Management Plan to determine areas where the towns are meeting the Plan goals and areas for improvement. The Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls Town Planners reviewed the Estuary Management Plan for accuracy and to ensure that it is current.

- Ms. Durfee stated there is a slideshow overview on the SHEA collaborative page of PREP's website. She stated there was a presentation at a recent meeting on Hampton's Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) on the same page.
- CHAT is funded through a technical resilience grant from the NH DES Coastal Program which is funded through NOAA. The grant funding will be delayed and is projected to be received in September 2025 as opposed to the usual date of July. CHAT is working on ideas to keep CHAT's programs running in the interim and will provide updates at a later date.

Jen Hale

- King's Highway Project: The project is progressing and will likely be in the Meadow Pond neighborhood next week. There was a slight delay due to the decision to complete work on the King's Highway to install the pump station wet well.
- Bicentennial Wall: The project is about a week and a half behind due to the weather but is progressing. The parking area will be restored after the project is complete, meaning it won't be in place for Memorial Day weekend.
- Home elevation applications to FEMA: The public notice for the six elevation applications was posted. FEMA states there is still funding for this program. The legal documents that support the funding are not currently available due to federal administration changes to the language of the documents. This may cause a delay. In the interim, HSEM asked if Hampton is interested in putting the six applications through the FMA process which has more guarantees. However, FMA is a more competitive process, unlike Swift Current with dedicated funding allocated to Hampton. The Town will apply through both programs to cover all the bases in these uncertain times.

Rep Muns

- HB 595, The Bill to help property owners invest in making their properties more flood resilient: This Bill is still active, it has been retained by committee. Rep Muns will be meeting with the committee soon and is hopeful that it will move forward in the next few months. Please submit any input on the Bill to Rep Muns.

Ms. Howard

- Due to federal budget limitations requests for grants have been cancelled for 2025, so the DES Coastal Resilience program will not be submitting proposals for grants this year.
- Updated datum for the Hampton tide gauge has been completed. Ms. Howard will present more information at the next CHAT meeting.

Ms. Durfee

- Shared Mr. Bassett's flood updates from the Meadow Pond neighborhood. There was high tide flooding on four different days, March 31 and April 1-3. Observed high tides were higher than predicted high tides on two of the four days. Two of four days were characterized by partial flooding.
- Funding update: FEMA cancelled the BRIC program, this likely includes awarded and future funding. The BRIC program is Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities.

4. NH Dept of Natural & Cultural Resources Capital Improvements process (10 mins)

Ms. Durfee

- Regarding improvements to the wall from Boar's Head South to Haverhill Avenue in the State Park vicinity:

- Joanna Lyons from the NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (DNCR) provided updates on this capital improvement project.
- The Department submits a capital budget request every two years for the next three bienniums, which are a two year fiscal period. The Department keeps a running list of needs in the state park system. The list has various priorities and mainly focuses on maintenance of existing facilities, with limited new development.
- The next capital budget request is due April 2026. The Division of Public Works gather information during a set time before any projects are included in the governor's budget. The next governor's budget is due to be introduced in February 2027 for FY 2028-2029.
- The DNCR has requested funding for a resiliency study for the seacoast region state parks to better plan for changes in park operations and include design recommendations for the facilities. Ms. Lyons stated the focus is mainly on Wallis Sands. This study wasn't included in the budget or funded for FY 2026-2027.

Ms. Howard

- Stated that she is planning to work with Ms. Lyons and others on a proposal for a coastal watershed vulnerability and hazards assessment project through the National Coastal Resilience Fund. Some of the parks would be included in this assessment. CHAT members can contact Ms. Howard with input.

5. Review & Update Statement of Purpose (20 mins)

Ms. Durfee

- The current CHAT Statement of Purpose was drafted and approved in 2022. This review provides the opportunity to review it and determine if updates are needed.
- Background Statement update suggestions:
 - Update to include some of what CHAT has accomplished, such as the 19 recommendations and other projects CHAT has been involved with
- Mission Statement update suggestions:
 - Adding language about what's possible for the future, i.e. learning from recovery disaster and moving forward, not replacing existing structures/policies, but evolving (could be an objective)
 - CHAT as a facilitator to bring together town, regional, and state agencies to discuss resiliency plans, acting as a clearinghouse or coordinator (could be an objective)
- Objectives update suggestions:
 - Update third bullet to remove redundant "considering". Add a statement regarding informing other Town entities about what CHAT is doing.
 - Update second bullet with language about adding to CHAT's list of recommendations (last updated in 2019).
 - Mr. Diener stated this would involve reviewing recommendations and prioritizing those that have not been achieved.
 - Ms. Hale recommended sending recommendations to CHAT members via email so members can identify their priorities, then bring highest priorities to discuss in a future CHAT meeting.
 - Ms. Durfee stated the Planning Board and Town has started working on or completed many of the recommendations and suggested it would be most beneficial for CHAT to review and add and prioritize new recommendations. The

recommendations were developed when the Town had less capacity to complete this type of work. There is now more capacity and knowledge of adaptation measures since the addition of new staff and completion of the Master Plan.

- Ms. Durfee will send a draft out for review. There will be a formal vote to update the document at a future meeting. Contact Ms. Durfee with any additional input.

6. Engagement & Outreach Check in (15 mins)

Ms. Durfee

- Recommendation discussed at the Recommendation Workshop:
 - Increase efforts to engage and inform the community of flood hazards, vulnerability, and opportunities to increase resilience.
 - Start a visioning process to think about the long-term future of areas that are anticipated to be impacted by sea level rise.
 - The voluntary elevation and (potential) buyout program is an example of this visioning work.
 - The CHAT Vision Board from the February CHAT meeting showing CHAT members' vision for Hampton in 100 years and the CHAT Engagement Brainstorming whiteboard from the March CHAT meeting were done to work towards the two recommendations listed above.
- Presented a slide showing “knowledge or information we want to convey” as decided by CHAT members. Ms. Durfee invited discussion about the main themes identified which are:
 - Outreach about CHAT, what the group is doing and what the Town is doing
 - Coastal resiliency planning

Rep Muns

- Stated that it is important to convey that the challenges can never be fully addressed at the Town level. It is necessary for Hampton residents and representatives to be involved at the state level to seek state and federal resources to address climate resiliency challenges. Outreach involves informing residents of the magnitude of the challenges to create buy in and action.
- CHAT's role is to pull together input from multiple groups and summarize the extent of the challenges and the potential opportunities to convey to residents what the Town should do at the state and federal level.

Mr. Ladd

- Stated there should be more emphasis on economic implications of losing the beach to climate change. If the beach doesn't exist as the economic soul of Hampton, what does Hampton look like? Rep Muns stated that there would be an economic impact to the entire state if Hampton Beach didn't exist. Businesses and homeowners would be affected. CHAT could present a picture of what is possible and how the Town could pivot in the face of coastal climate impact.

Ms. Durfee

- Stated there is a lack of data on the impact of the loss of the beach, making it difficult to include this information in outreach initiatives. However, SHEA produced an Economic Forecast report which contains partial data which doesn't include specifics but does contain “what if” scenarios. This report could be a starting point for further discussion.
- It is important to focus on what is feasible for CHAT to accomplish when making recommendations.

Ms. Durfee

- How do CHAT's engagement recommendations align with what Town staff are already working on? How can we align our efforts and not be redundant?
- Mr. Bachand stated CHAT can be involved when the Master Plan Implementation Committee is doing events such as tabling. CHAT should also continue to remain aware of work the Committee is doing.

Mr. Ritt

- Suggested collaborating with other outside organizations that are stakeholders such as Surf Rider that are dedicated to promoting beach conservation for community use.
- NH Sea Grant is another group that may be interested in collaborating with CHAT. They could be invited to speak about their beach conservation efforts. CHAT could advertise them as a guest speaker to encourage public attendance.

Ms. Durfee

- Stated inviting guest speakers to present at CHAT meetings is a good outreach strategy and could encourage greater public attendance at CHAT meetings. Recordings of these meetings could be made available to the public for people who aren't able to attend the live meeting.
- Mr. Ritt agreed that sharing recordings of the meetings on the website and social media is a great way to conduct outreach and keep the public informed about CHAT actions and goals. This could increase engagement.
- Ms. Durfee stated there have been ongoing discussions about the pros and cons of posting recordings of CHAT meetings. Since CHAT meetings are open to the public, it may be beneficial to post meeting recordings, particularly meetings featuring guest speakers.

Ms. Kravitz

- Stated that it would be helpful to define terms such as adaptation, resilience, etc. Also, adaptation changes over time and the impact of adaptation is cumulative. She also emphasized the need for coordination to reduce the chance of redundancy.

Mr. Blair

- Suggested coordinating with CHAT or Conservation-like entities in other coastal communities in NH.
- Mr. Diener stated SHEA attempted to establish a coastal resilience program in Seabrook but it wasn't well received. He isn't aware of similar efforts along the Seacoast.
- Ms. Durfee stated the NH Coastal Adaptation Working Group was established as a regional group to focus on coastal issues but it isn't the same as CHAT.

7. Earth Month Table (5 mins)

Ms. Durfee

- The feedback from Ms. Hagan was that the film screening audience was smaller than anticipated. The film is available on PBS Passport.
- The schedule of additional Earth Month events is available on the Town website.

8. CHAT Recommendation Workshop Session (30 mins)

- a. Recommendation: Start a visioning process to think about the long-term future of areas that are anticipated to be impacted by sea level rise.

Ms. Durfee

- Shared a slide with a list of considerations to keep in mind for the visioning process.
 - How does this align with related Town efforts (voluntary elevation, future work on buyouts, etc.)?
 - How does this align with related efforts of other entities?
 - Is the time right?
 - What is feasible for this group to accomplish (with or without additional resources)?
 - What is the purpose or goal of this effort? What are the desired outcomes?
- CHAT is going to be involved in a multi-month process of thinking about getting the community involved in imagining different scenarios for vulnerable areas of Hampton. Does this align with what the Town is doing with the voluntary elevation program or other efforts at the Town level.

Mr. Bachand

- Suggested writing an aspirational statement for a 20-year goal. For example, in the next 20 years, how many homes will have been elevated and how many homes will have been bought out?
- Mr. Galanis stated the Town is already using this aspirational framework. The Master Plan Implementation Committee, through the Coastal Resilience sub team, has implemented various zoning articles to make it easier to elevate buildings.

Ms. Durfee

- Clarified the idea behind the visioning process. The purpose is to explore different alternatives for the town when faced with scenarios such as sea level rise for example. The visioning process will involve imagining the impact of taking certain actions or not taking action on the town 50 to 100 years in the future.
- Is this a good time for CHAT to take on this recommendation with respect to what Town agencies are doing currently.

Mr. Galanis

- Doesn't believe the public is aware enough about the impact of sea level rise on Hampton. If nothing is done to mitigate the impacts, Hampton will look drastically different in 50-100 years. Ms. Durfee replied that awareness is part of the visioning and public outreach plan. The goals of public outreach include increasing individual homeowner and business actions as well as creating buy in to support broader Town level actions.

Mr. Ladd

- The visioning process should include optimism as a core component to create buy-in and successful interventions. The future is uncertain, and it is possible technology could improve enough to positively impact climate resilience efforts. It would be difficult to convince the community to be involved if they aren't convinced there will be a community to be saved.

Ms. Durfee

- Per the discussion at this meeting, it is apparent that the time is right for starting the visioning process. CHAT's actions should align with Town efforts to reduce redundancies and cross-purposes.
- What is CHAT's capacity to accomplish this work with or without additional resources? Ms. Durfee's ability to provide technical assistance outside of CHAT meetings is limited. Future CHAT meetings would likely have time on the agenda dedicated to focusing on visioning and other outreach work. Currently, it is difficult to find funding to hire for positions to accomplish these tasks.
- Consider goals and outcomes CHAT members would like see at the end of a visioning effort, to be discussed at a future meeting.
- Developing an Engagement Framework:
 - What information will be shared and collected
 - What will be done with the information

- Potential negative impacts or unintended consequences
- Effective ways to reach different audiences

9. Other

10. Next meeting: May 20, 2025

11. Adjourn

Members of the public are welcome at CHAT meetings. Visit <https://shea4nh.org/coastal-hazards-adaptation-team-chat/> to learn about CHAT. Please contact CHAT coordinator Liz Durfee at Liz@efdesignplanning.com if you have questions about how to join on Zoom. During the meeting, please:

- *Keep your microphone on mute to minimize background noise*
- *Use the hand raise function or type in the chat box if you have a question or comment*
- *Stay on topic*
- *Be respectful of all meeting participants*