
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #70

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

1:00-3:00PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

1. Introductions

CHAT Members

Jay Diener – Hampton Conservation Commission
Jason Bachand – Hampton Town Planner
Tom Bassett – Resident Representative
Rayann Dionne – Seabrook Hampton Estuary Alliance
Kate Bashline – Hampton Resident
Bob Ladd – Hampton Beach Village District
Jen Hale – Hampton DPW Director
Ben Ritt – Hampton Coastal Resilience Coordinator
Stephen LaBranche – Resident Representative
Gary Bashline – Hampton Flood Ready Neighborhoods
Brianna Hagan – Hampton Conservation Coordinator

CHAT Support Staff

Liz Durfee – Planning Consultant and CHAT Coordinator

Guests

Maddie Dilonno – Rockingham Planning Commission

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

Motion: Mr. Diener moved to approve the February 2025 meeting minutes as written.

Second: Mr. Bassett

Vote: All in Favor, Bobb Ladd, Jen Hale, Stephen LaBranche abstained.

3. Relevant Flood Updates (20 mins)

Mr. Bachand

- Article 2, regarding elevation of non-conforming structures, passed at the recent town meeting. All of the zoning articles passed.
- There is work being done to update the zoning ordinance in its entirety in partnership with the Rockingham Planning Commission. An audit was funded during the recent town meeting.

Mr. Bassett

- There were six days of flooding in the Meadow Pond neighborhood since the last CHAT meeting. The observed high tide was higher than the predicted high tide on all six days of flooding. The flooding is likely due to high tides compounded by a lot of rain. On March 2 the flooded areas iced over due to low overnight temperatures.
- The Kings Highway/Meadow Pond Drainage Project is moving its way up King's Highway. Our neighborhood is ready for the streets to be dug up for the new forced main drainage system.
- Recent executive orders and layoffs in federal agencies like NOAA raise some questions about their impact on resilience programs for coastal flooding hazards. This may need to be added as a future agenda item.

Kate Bashline

- Stated she received an email requesting support for the Federal Estuary Program opposing federal layoffs. The email will be forwarded to CHAT members.

Mr. Diener

- Responded to a question asking if CHAT is funded by a federal grant. Mr. Diener stated that CHAT is funded through the NH DES Coastal Program which is federally funded. Funding may be impacted at some point in the long term but there are still many unknowns. Currently, funding has not been impacted.
- A judge in Rhode Island recently issued an injunction preventing the Executive Branch from withholding funds that have already been approved by Congress.

Mr. Ladd

- Stated tourism at NH beaches may be impacted this summer due to the tariffs on Canada.

Ms. Hale

- The Home Elevation Program still exists, and the Kings Highway project is still funded. However there seems to be a lull in action on projects at the federal level.
- The Kings Highway Project: Work is now being done on Kings Highway. The project should reach the Meadow Pond neighborhood in about 5-6 weeks barring weather setbacks. The goal is for the pumps to be functioning by the end of August 2025.
- Bicentennial Wall Project: The foundation is finished with wall pours projected for this week. The project is ongoing but progressing.
- Ms. Hale, Mr. Ritt, and Ms. Hagan are working on procuring DES grants.
- Plaice Cove: Ms. Hale is working with FEMA to determine the best course of action for construction which is projected to start in fall 2025.
- The Warrant Article for the sewer manhole rehabilitation study passed. This study will cover 22 manholes throughout the marsh and harbor systems which need to be retrofitted and reconstructed with saltwater infiltration prevention put into place.
- The Warrant article to enable the Town of Hampton to apply for grants that require town funding passed. The article provides a way for the Town to identify funding sources for a variety of projects when the Town can't fund the project.

4. Climate Ready Hampton and CHAT (30 mins)

Mr. Ritt

- Described Climate Ready Hampton (CRH) and how CHAT and CRH can align on goals and collaborate.

- CRH is a Town effort to increase the coastal resiliency of the Town of Hampton with a particular focus on flooding events currently impacting the town. The goal is to develop programs and projects to mitigate flooding through permitting applications, zoning ordinances, and assessment of development in areas with higher flood risk. CRH is also focused on the future and supporting resilience efforts for the entire town.
- Mr. Ritt's position was created by a grant and the grant has certain deliverables attached to it. Mr. Ritt and his team are currently working on the deliverables to meet the deadline at the end of September 2025.
 - One project is the Coastal Resilience Efforts Database. The database will track past and projected projects. The database will be publicly accessible.
 - Projects for CRH and the Town Masterplan overlap in some areas.
- A goal of CRH is for the organization to be forward thinking and make Hampton safer for everyone by implementing actionable plans that meet finding and timing constraints.
- Community Outreach is a crucial part of CRH. The Coastal Resilience Efforts Database will meet some goals of community outreach.
- Outreach and education are one way CRH and CHAT can work together. The public can provide feedback on which programs are working and where there are gaps. CRH and CHAT can also determine who needs to be included in outreach to get more people invested in coastal resilience projects. Some possible outreach strategies could include raising awareness about warrant articles, determining which areas are flooding, engaging the public in a more holistic process about long-term goals for the town and educating people who aren't directly impacted by flooding about secondary impacts.
 - Outreach and education create buy in for implementation of coastal resilience projects.
 - CHAT members already have a diverse network of contacts through residents and organizations throughout Hampton and the state. CHAT can leverage these networks in collaboration with CRH.
 - Choosing goals for outreach and education is the first step.

Ms. Bashline

- Stated that CHAT could be involved with working with conservation mapping. Aiden spoke at a recent conservation meeting and offered to provide training to the public.

Mr. Ladd

- Stated that residents who don't live near the beach are still impacted by beach related flooding because 35% of Hampton's taxes come from the beach area.
- Asked Mr. Ritt if he's involved in evacuation signage. Mr. Ritt stated that evacuation signage isn't part of the current grant, but CRH is aware of evacuation issues and hopes to be involved in facilitating notifications moving forward.

Mr. Bassett

- Stated that outreach goes both ways with residents educating policy makers just as much as policy makers educate residents. Local experience and knowledge can be helpful in creating action plans. Residents are stakeholders, not recipients. Mr. Ritt concurs and welcomes diverse voices and feedback sessions.

Ms. Durfee

- Asked Mr. Ritt how CRH is informing Hampton residents about what CRH is doing. Is there an opportunity for CHAT to assist with disseminating information. Mr. Ritt stated that outreach is currently occurring through the Town website. CRH has also done some tabling.

- Ideally, CHAT members will bring CRH updates from CHAT meetings to other meetings CHAT members attend.
- During CHAT meetings, Mr. Ritt will note feedback from CHAT members and bring them back to CRH. There could be a workshop in the future at a CHAT meeting to work on education and outreach.

Ms. Hale

- Stated CRH was a development from the first DES grant. The understanding of what is needed for coastal resilience has evolved and it is now understood that the coastal resilience coordinator needs to be someone with a skillset and depth of understanding for the issues. Mr. Ritt's role in CRH is to work on outreach and education so that residents are involved and aware. His role will bring efficiency to coastal resilience efforts through the database discussed above.

Ms. Hagan

- Clarified that CRH will not be working on projects on their own per se. CRH's role is to internally coordinate and ensure all parties are aware of coastal resiliency projects each department and external partners are working on. This may change in the future, but currently CRH is working more in a project management role.

5. Community Engagement (continued) (30 mins)

- a. Brainstorming exercise
- b. Earth Month – table?

Ms. Durfee

- Facilitated a brainstorming exercise to gather ideas for engaging the community. The four areas discussed in the session and the ideas generated are listed below.
 - Knowledge or information we want to convey
 - Advocating for specific changes needed to adapt to climate change
 - The importance of federal funding to resilience projects in NH and Hampton specifically
 - Value in proactive planning to address climate impacts
 - Options property owners have to make their property more resilient
 - Flood risk now and in the future
 - The resiliency cycle and how it impacts the town as a whole and individuals
 - The importance of future planning to best determine the future of the beach area
 - What the Town and partners are doing
 - We're in this together! It's a Town effort to adapt to our changing climate and increased flood risks
 - People's experience of flooding and their solutions are valuable and should be solicited and shared to shape solutions
 - Looking at cost of prevention and protection versus post hazard recovery
 - Let the Town know that CHAT is a link between nature and what the Town is doing to protect it
 - Groups we want to reach
 - Surfrider Foundation
 - Piggyback on existing groups such as Hampton Garden Club, civic groups, school groups or classes
 - Beach property owners, including seasonal owners

- Town groups that have diverse membership that aren't traditionally thought of as having connection to flooding
- Groups we haven't necessarily been connected with such as businesses and schools
- Youth (<18), young adults, seniors, families
- Residents outside of flood hazard areas to demonstrate how such issues affect the community as a whole
- Tourists
- Business owners at the beach and away from the beach
- Knowledge, information, ideas, opinions we want to collect and questions we have for community members
 - What kind of changes are you (decision makers, Town employees, boards, committees, AND residents) willing to support and live with
 - For flood prone property owners, do you have a long-term plan? Do you want to stay where you are?
 - In what ways are they already responding and becoming more informed?
 - Who are their trusted resources?
 - What questions do you have?
 - What are people doing to make their properties more resilient?
 - What networks do they find useful to gain and share information?
- Ways to reach and engage different groups
 - Tabling events such as Hampton Historical Society Fall Festival, May plant and bake sale, Earth Month, Rain barrel auction, Conservation Commission educational events
 - Look for other events for tabling such as soccer games, school events, Trunk or treats, etc. to reach other parts of the community
 - Mr. Ladd said events can be publicized through Hampton Beach Village District meetings that are televised and through the Facebook Events page.
 - CHAT newsletter
 - Neighborhood e-mail lists
 - Library listening sessions
 - A conservation charette on the natural resource health of our town, gather people's interest, knowledge of conservation lands, concerns, and ways to learn more on the subject.
 - Flooding workshops, including information about causes, how to see what's coming, and protective measures.
 - CHAT members should have some education and discuss best methods for tabling, if not well prepared, it can be ineffective
 - Lane Library speaker series
 - Consider adjusting CHAT meetings a few times per year to allow more of the public to attend
 - Being consistent, sporadic messing and tabling isn't enough
 - Media, Seacoast Online
 - Ask Unitil and Aquarion to include information in their mailings

Mr. Bassett

- Stated an advantage of CHAT is the ability to have a diverse group working towards a common goal. It would be helpful to understand the scale of the involvement and the level of involvement in different organizations that CHAT members have. Publicizing the composition and impact of CHAT membership can help the public to understand CHAT's role and make CHAT and coastal resiliency seem more accessible. This could encourage more participation and buy-in.

Ms. Hagan

- Stated it is helpful to keep the mission and objectives of CHAT in mind when determining CHAT's role without overreaching into the role of other groups and their current actions to reach their objectives. Some of the items on the whiteboard are already happening with other groups. Ms. Hagan made the observation that CHAT's initial mission and objectives on the website along with the list of recommendations and the discussion from the whiteboard don't appear to be aligned.
- CHAT's mission could be met by having a CHAT member speak at the Board of Selectmen's monthly meeting and provide updates or ask questions at the board.

Ms. Durfee

- Stated that it would be helpful to get clarification about which groups Ms. Hagan is referencing as already doing this work.
- CHAT has discussed increased outreach as a goal in CHAT meetings. The idea is to increase outreach and education based on items on the list of recommendations. Currently there are no specific CHAT projects or initiatives. The brainstorming exercise was designed to generate ideas about how to increase the flow of information about coastal resilience.
- Ms. Hagan expressed an understanding of Ms. Durfee's goal and stated that if the brainstorming session results in action items, the items should align with CHAT's published mission objectives, or the mission objectives should be re-worked to make them align with CHAT's current priorities.

Mr. Diener

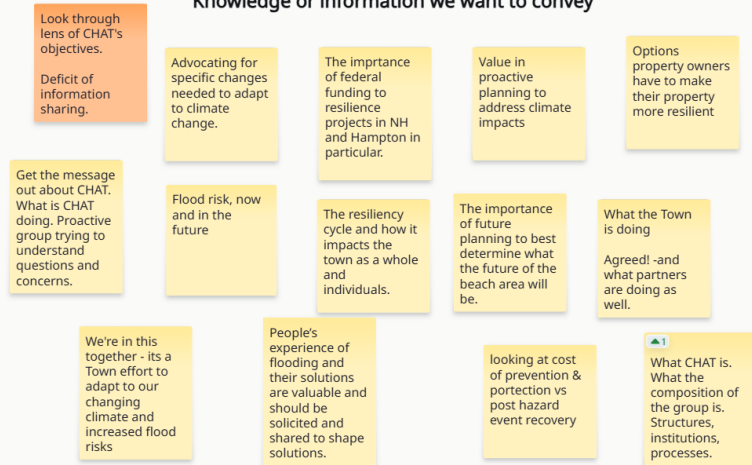
- Reinforced Ms. Hagan's idea that CHAT should have a member present at the Select Board meetings as well as reporting back to any boards or committees CHAT members attend.

Ms. Durfee

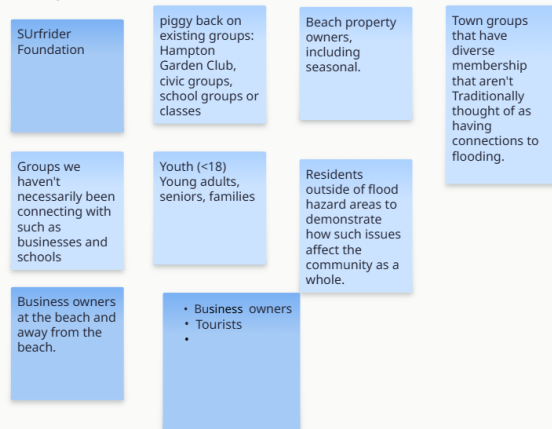
- Asked if CHAT is interested in a table at an Earth Month event. Ms. Hagan stated other groups are tabling at an event on Saturday evening, April 5th from 6-7pm.
- Mr. Diener suggested presenting the 2024 Year in Review and CHAT recommendations at a table.
- There appears to be interest in a table, Ms. Durfee will coordinate a table.

CHAT Engagement Brainstorm

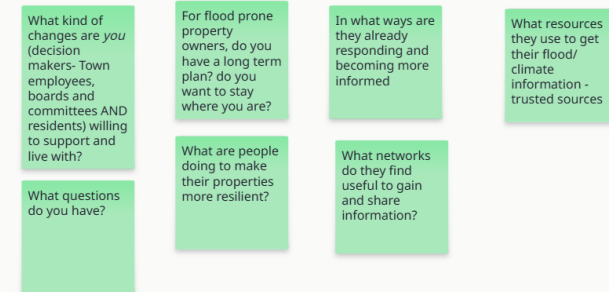
Knowledge or information we want to convey



Groups we want to reach



Knowledge, information, ideas, opinions we want to collect. Questions we have for community members.



Ways to reach and engage different groups



6. Learning Topics – What do you want to learn more about or discuss? Are there adaptation strategies, tools (ex. Coastal Viewer), or projects that you are interested in? (10 mins)

Ms. Durfee

- Stated there could be a training session with Aidan Barry from the Coastal Program about how to use the Coastal Viewer.
- A CHAT member asked if Hampton has any policies about beach nourishment.
- In the early days of CHAT there were sessions to teach about strategies to increase coastal resilience. These sessions could be revisited.

Mr. LaBranche

- Asked if someone from the state of NH could provide education about the front of the beach on the Ocean Blvd side, and the wall that extends down to Haverhill Street. The wall isn't high enough and there is frequent flooding. Sand builds up at Church Street and water goes over the wall. Flooding up to the wall has been increasing over the years. The wall belongs to the state of NH and it would be helpful to learn if there is a plan to replace the wall proactively. The current wall was raised by several feet 20 years ago, but it needs to go higher now.

Ms. Hagan

- Would like to learn how communities in other coastal municipalities balance planning for the future and responding to current events in real time. How are they responding to funding opportunities and actions they take when funding opportunities are lost.

Mr. Bassett

- Stated that North Beach has lost the most amount of sand in NH according to surveys. This impacts surfing. Surfers and surf groups are a big audience to reach for raising awareness and creating buy in for coastal resilience.
- Would like to learn about what other communities are doing in regard to marsh expansion.

Mr. Ladd

- Suggested engaging state representatives more directly regarding property casualty insurance. The cost of insurance could become prohibitive for residents.

Mr. Diener

- The grant from the Coastal Program is on a July 1 to June 30 year.. A proposal for the 2025 to 2026 funding year has been submitted. There has been no indication that the funding is in jeopardy so it is expected that CHAT will operate as usual with no disruptions.

7. Next meeting: April 15, 2025

8. 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*