
Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Work Session #72

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

1:00-3:00PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

1. Introductions

Jay Diener – Hampton Conservation Commission
Bob Ladd – Hampton Beach Village District
Ben Ritt – Hampton Coastal Resilience Coordinator
Annie Cox – Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership
Ward Galanis – Hampton Planning Board
Scott Blair – Budget Committee Representative
Kirsten Howard – DES Coastal Program Resilience Coordinator
Brianna Hagan – Hampton Conservation Coordinator
Stephen LaBranche – Resident Representative
Jen Gilbert – DES Coastal Program
Tom Bassett – Hampton Resident Representative

CHAT Support Staff

Liz Durfee – Planning Consultant and CHAT Coordinator

Guests

Anna Simpson – Coastal Resilience Manager NE Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems

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

Meeting Minutes from April 2025 will be reviewed and voted on during the June 2025 meeting.

3. Relevant Flood Updates (20 mins)

Mr. Diener

- Estuary assessment – SHEA received approval to start work on projects listed on the Congressionally directed spending grant which became active as of May 1. SHEA contracted with FB Environmental to conduct a baseline assessment of the estuary. The assessment will look at several different indicators to provide an overall picture of the health of the estuary. The plan is to review which indicators are in good health and which indicators need to be improved.
- Funding gap – There will be a gap in funding for CHAT from July through September 2025. Mr. Diener, Ms. Dionne and Mr. Ritt have been strategizing how to best plan and facilitate CHAT meetings during the funding gap. Ms. Durfee's CHAT meeting coordination is grant funded, which means she will not be available during the grant funding gap.
- Kayak tours – SHEA will be hosting three kayak tours in the estuary this summer. The dates are July 31, August 13, and August 28. Registration is required. Tours will last approximately 1.5 hours and kayaks are provided by the Seacoast Science Center.

- High tide notifications – A resident provided feedback about the recent Board of Selectmen meeting. The resident was concerned that the upcoming projected 10 plus foot high tides wasn't mentioned at the Selectmen meeting. Mr. Diener stated that residents are typically notified about projected high tides via email or the internet, but he suggested using all media forms to make the information more accessible to all residents.

Mr. Ladd

- Suggested the Town could use a flag system for high tide notifications, similar to the flag system currently used to indicate rip tide currents at the beach.

Ms. Cox

- Provided a Flood Ready Neighborhoods update. There will be a beach grass harvesting and planting event in Sun Valley. Contact Ms. Cox about this or other volunteer opportunities.

Mr. Bassett

- Presented flood updates for the Meadow Pond neighborhood showcasing six days of flooding since the last CHAT meeting. Predicted high tide exceeded actual high tide on four of six days. Rainfall during this period contributed to flooding or partial flooding events.
- Kings Highway/Meadow Pond Drainage updates – DPW held a public meeting on May 6 to discuss the project with area residents.
 - Residents raised questions about whether their damaged landscaping near the street would be replaced, the completion date for the project, and the date the new system would become operational. The project infrastructure should be in place by the end of May, but the pumps still need to be installed, therefore the pumping action likely won't start until the end of July.
 - Ms. Hale from DPW stated her office is aware of these issues and there are plans in place to address flooding between the dates the old system goes offline, and the new system starts pumping.

4. Coastal Resilience Coordinator Update (5 mins)

Mr. Ritt

- Forerunner software update – the software has been connected to the Coastal Resilience page of the Hampton town webpage. Residents can click on “Property Flood Risk” and which opens the [forerunner page](#). Residents can type in their address of view a map of the area to find flood risk hazards for their property.
 - This page will be updated at a future date to include permits and elevation certificates. This page will provide education and increase awareness to residents about their flood risks. Residents can receive mailers about flood zones their property may fall in. Residents can use this information when working with insurance, claims, and FEMA.
- Outreach events – This summer Mr. Ritt's office will host several public education and outreach events along with Climate ready Hampton. The focus will be on long-term coastal resilience funding for the town of Hampton. The goal is to secure steady funding instead of relying on grants or warrant articles for funding.
 - The first event will be a public outreach meeting in late June or early July. Information will be presented with different options for creating a Coastal Resilience Fund. Next there will be a meeting with the Board of Selectmen to present information gathered from Hampton residents and varying stakeholders. Another meeting will be held in August to move the process forward based on the previous meetings' outcomes. Mr. Ritt will write a warrant article to create the Coastal Resilience Fund.
 - The meeting dates will go out via e-mail soon.

Ms. Durfee

- Stated a training session is being planned for a future CHAT meeting to help participants learn how to use the coastal viewer on the Town website. Mr. Ritt is invited to provide training on the forerunner page as well. The public will be invited to attend these trainings.
 - Mr. Ritt is currently working on training programs for the forerunner site and other relevant tools on the Town website.
- Ms. Durfee stated CHAT has had several discussions in previous CHAT meetings regarding a Coastal Resilience Fund and will send details to Mr. Ritt.

5. Hampton Tide Gauge - Anna Simpson, Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (neracoos.org) (15 mins)

Ms. Simpson

- Hampton Tide Gauge Tidal Datum Analysis Report (slides available via e-mail)
 - The tide gauge has been collecting data nearly continuously since 2013. The tide gauge has been funded through various partnerships with organizations such as NH DES Coastal Program, NOAA, and NERACOOS. The data has been used for weather forecasts and storm warnings, and as a flood record for Hampton.
 - The current tide gauge operator recently began looking at the datums and data collected by the tide gauge. A datum is a reference frame for which measurements or locations in space can be tied to, essentially, defining a zero point for measurements. Geodetic datum and tidal datum are the datums of most concern for tide gauges. Ms. Simpson presented education about how the datums are used and how to read the charts.
 - Water elevation levels from this gauge can be compared to all other tidal gauges and other data sets when a common vertical reference frame is used. The sensors are tied to GPS which measures the levels and math is used to compute the water levels. The measures are computed over a period of time, such as a month, rather than measured in real time.
 - The data presented in different datums are used for different uses. Essentially, choosing different datums presents the data in a different way.
 - Funding: It is unknown how the current federal administration's budget cuts will impact tide gauge funding. The Hampton Tide Gauge is supported through NERACOOS's core funding. NERACOOS leadership is in discussions to determine ways react if program funding is reduced or eliminated. Ms. Simpson has designed her workflow so that the interpretation work can be continued through other means if her position is eliminated.
 - Ms. Durfee asked if tidal variability over time is tracked. For example, has there been a change in the last 50 years? Ms. Simpson stated that tide gauges that have extensive records are run through NOAA Center for Operational Oceanographic Products. Ms. Simpson is not aware if tidal variability has been analyzed but it may be possible.

Ms. Howard

- The Hampton Tide Gauge NAVD88 datum can be used in conjunction with FEMA base flood elevations to determine flood risk.

Mr. Ritt

- Asked for clarification about the disconnect between NERACOOS and the NOAA National Water Prediction Service. NOAA isn't posting updated data even though the buoy is running. Ms. Simpson stated her team became aware of technical issues with the systems communicating with each other and it is being addressed.

Ms. Durfee

- Asked for recommendations for how CHAT and the Town of Hampton should educate residents about how to read and interpret data on the NERACOOS site. Ms. Simpson stated that in the new coastal flood risk model that is being completed, NAVD88 is referenced

overwhelmingly, and mean low low water (MLLW) is no longer referenced. However, weather service flood warnings reference MLLW. There has been discussion about the best way to move forward when discussing flooding, but there is currently no resolution. Ms. Durfee suggested presenting information to residents using both NAVD88 and MLLW to help make the information more accessible.

6. Realtor Flood Training / Board Empowerment Series – Annie Cox, PREP (10 mins)

Ms. Cox

- A training session titled “Living With Water” was held in November 2024. This training session was geared towards realtors and residents who are impacted by water such as flooding. Ms. Cox provided an overview of topics that were discussed and resources that were shared during this training session. [Slides](#) and other educational resources from the training session are available on the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) website.
 - The objectives for the training session were to spark interest and care for ecosystems surrounding seacoast homes and to provide information about flooding risk to help clients assess and prepare for flooding risks.
 - Some resources available on the CAW website include an interactive NH Coastal Access Map, NH Healthy Swimming Mapper, and Maine Healthy Beaches Portal, insurance questions, and resources about tidal patterns, groundwater, and sea level rise and how they impact flooding
 - Some information shared at the training session includes what state and local rules and regulations protect water and natural resources and what role homeowners can play in protecting the environment. One goal of the session was to provide realtors with enough information to be able to point homeowners with questions in the right direction.
 - Topics that attendees want to know more about in future sessions include climate resilience, identifying site level risks, basement waterproofing, home elevations, and managing erosion.
- Lessons learned:
 - Realtors appreciated this learning opportunity and feel it is much needed.
 - This information should be shared and accessible to home buyers.
- The next scheduled course will be November 18, 2025, at Strawberry Banke.
- The relationship between realtors and natural resource providers is growing on the Seacoast and in other regions nationally, particularly in other coastal areas where flooding occurs.
- Part of the Natural Estuarine Research Reserve Science Collaborative grant includes sharing best practices and working with organizations in different phases of coastal protection work.

Suggestions

- Ms. Hale Suggested making the guides available to chambers. Ms. Durfee suggested creating a business card with the QR code to the CAWS site that realtors could hand out at chamber events and to homebuyers.

Ms. Cox

- Board Empowerment Series: This series is being developed in collaboration with PREP and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. This would continue a previously run workshop series that focuses on educational opportunities for members of municipal boards and river advisory committees to empower them with skills and confidence to protect area natural resources. This series is designed to teach board members how boards can work most effectively and educate them on the latest science. This series is also intended to educate interested residents about town and local issues, so they are equipped to serve on local boards or committees. Contact Ms. Cox with any suggestions.

7. Review Updated Statement of Purpose (5 mins)

Ms. Durfee

- Review of edits made to the Updated Statement of Purpose from the previous CHAT meeting. Ms. Durfee provided time to review and discuss changes prior in preparation for a vote at a future meeting.
- No discussion occurred about modifications to the background statement, mission statement, or objectives. No additions were made at this meeting.

8. Status of Recommendations (15 mins)

Ms. Durfee

- Presented a spreadsheet with status of CHAT recommendations for discussion.
- The recommendations were marked as ongoing, ready (to start work), completed, or deferred. These categories are designed to help set priorities. Additionally, the categories reflect what is currently being worked on or acted on in CHAT meetings. Items marked as deferred are typically something that can't be acted upon right now. For example, row 3 isn't actionable by CHAT currently, but will be more actionable when the Town starts working on the Master Plan. After discussion, Deferred was changed to "no action at this time".
- Ms. Durfee will send the updated spreadsheet out to CHAT members prior to the next meeting.
- Item and discussion:
 - *Increase efforts to engage and inform the community of flood hazards, vulnerability, and opportunities to increase resilience.* Ongoing
 - *Integrate sea level rise impacts in the Comprehensive Master Plan and identify strategies for effectively responding to sea level rise and encouraging development in safe areas.*
 - Changed to Completed.
 - *Support an Implementation Committee to follow up on recommendations of the Master Plan.*
 - Changed to Completed
 - *Develop a new coastal hazard overlay district to regulate development in vulnerable areas.*
 - No action at this time. This item is not completed. Mr. Ritt and Ms. Gilbert stated this item will be part of a larger discussion about financing options and public education.
 - *Review the Floodplain Ordinance and draft amendments to reduce vulnerability to flooding.*
 - Mr. Diener suggested breaking this row into two rows because drafting the flood plain ordinance has been completed but drafting amendments are still ongoing. Ms. Durfee shared the specific amendments currently being developed, the amendments are in varying stages of approval and can be further discussed in a future meeting. Mr. Galanis stated the number of amendments to be voted on this cycle is being limited in response to voter requests. Mr. Galanis stated additional amendments not on the current list are being developed, to include workforce housing.
 - *Identify funding sources to build town-wide flood resilience. Funding sources may include a dedicated local fund.*
 - Changed to Ongoing. The funding is not a continuous fund, it was a warrant article the provided a fixed amount of funding.

9. 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.**

Tabled to next meeting.

10. Other

11. Next meeting: TBD

12. 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*