



HAMPTON BEACH AREA COMMISSION



100 WINNACUNNET ROAD, HAMPTON, NH 03842

HBAC Draft minutes of Commissioner meeting for 3/25/2021 at 7PM

This meeting was recorded by Zoom kindness of the RPC and posted to the Town of Hampton website

Meeting called to order by Chair Nancy Stiles in the following manner, followed by the pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

"As Chairman, I, Nancy Stiles have determined that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, I have determined that to properly ensure the safety of the public and as several of the Commission Members are within the CDC guidelines needing to take special precautions, this body is authorized to meet electronically

Please note there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming we are the Hampton Beach Area Commission."

The Public may join the meeting by phone 929 205 6099, or join the zoom meeting # 857 7371 8345 using the passcode # 465056
All votes will be taken by roll call for clarity.

In attendance:

Commissioners:

Nancy Stiles, Town of Hampton and Chair
Dean Merrill, Member at Large and Vice Chair
Barbara Kravitz, RPC representative
Michael Housman, NH Dept Natural & Cultural Resources
Robert Ladd, Hampton Beach Village District
Bill Watson, NH Dept. of Transportation
Bob Preston, Hampton Chamber of Commerce

also attending:

Jason Bachand, Town Planner
Ann Carnaby, administrative assistant
Kirsten Howard NH DES Coastal Program

Not present:

Chuck Rage, Hampton Beach Village District
Rick Griffin, Board of Selectmen Representative

Public Comment related to agenda items:

An unnamed member of the public commented on the "good listening" provided by the HBAC, and the fact that the Sea Spray condos had trash cans left out in front of their building.

Treasurer's report (Housman)
balance in treasury - \$6,635.99

Minutes of previous meeting 2/9/21

acceptance moved by B Kravitz

seconded by B Watson

correction offered by B Ladd on p2 that "fire" should be "police"

correction accepted

minutes accepted as corrected unanimously

Appointments:

CHAT update - Jay Diener

Mr Diener's report follows here in its entirety. A report of the discussion follows:

- Good evening. Thank you for inviting me to meet with you. My name is Jay Diener, and I'm here on behalf of the Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance.
- SHEA is a local non-profit organization that was formed in 2013 by a group of concerned citizens from each of the communities that surround the estuary - Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls. Our mission is to help those 3 communities preserve, protect, and become more informed about the Estuary's health, its current and future threats, and its valuable ecosystem services. We work toward those goals by providing educational opportunities and technical services through partnerships with like-minded organizations. With those organizations, we collaborate on a variety of research and planning projects, create citizen-scientist opportunities where local residents and students can participate and learn, and hold public outreach events on a variety of estuary-related topics that also foster learning and engagement. Our most recent event was an online workshop on the history, current status, and restoration and remediation options related to salt marsh ditching. We frequently meet with, present to, and gather input from officials and residents in Hampton, Hampton Falls, and Seabrook, as I am doing this evening. We are proud of the fact that the Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance has become recognized as advocates for the estuary, and that the focus on a wide variety of issues related to the estuary is greater than it has been in many years. And we are grateful that municipal officials, local residents and business owners, and even teachers and their students are more engaged in efforts to protect and preserve this wonderful resource.
- This evening, I'm here to discuss a specific program of ShEA, which is the Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) and its recommendations to the Town of Hampton.
- In 2018, with a grant from the Climigration Institute, we completed a Situation Assessment in Hampton that helped us better understand local experiences with tidal flooding, as well as people's perspectives on flooding impacts and their costs, and those people's concerns

for the future. In 2019, in partnership with, and with grant funding from the NHDES Coastal Program, we launched CHAT - the Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team. CHAT's mission is to evaluate and propose a range of approaches to help residents "live with water" (structure elevations), "keep the water out" (floodproofing) and/or "get out of the water's way" (voluntary relocation). CHAT is also focused on identifying strategies that the Town can implement that will help to increase Hampton's flood resiliency.

- The CHAT team is comprised of representatives of every board and commission in Hampton, including this one, plus other key individuals. It is vital to the success of CHAT's work that all of these unique perspectives are heard and considered. And it is interesting to note that this is the first time all these voices have been brought together to focus on one issue.
- Meeting monthly since January of 2019, CHAT has studied local flood maps, reviewed sea level rise projections by local and regional organizations, looked at our natural barriers to flooding, learned the benefits and challenges of flood insurance, reviewed case studies from around the country about how other communities have dealt with increasing tidal flooding, heard about a program in New Jersey that encouraged and managed voluntary relocations following Hurricane Sandy, and looked at permanent and temporary flood barriers from Europe and the US.
- The results of all this work is a series of draft adaptation concepts. It is interesting to note that at the early stages of CHAT's research, much of the discussion was about tactics: Should we build more seawalls? Should we raise the roads? As we discussed them, we learned that almost every tactical alternative we looked at had a risk of potentially-serious unintended consequences. Over time, the discussions turned more to strategic approaches. These have the ability to be modified as situations change, giving the town much greater flexibility to adapt to those changing conditions as needed.
- CHAT's draft recommendations are loosely organized in several categories: Planning; Policies & Ordinances; Data Collection & Research; Incentives; and Public Outreach.
- The following are examples of the draft recommendations. I'll read them as written, and then provide some background:
 - "Create a full time Community Resilience & Floodplain Administrator staff position. A percentage of this individual's role would be allocated to administering the floodplain ordinance and a percentage would be allocated to building climate resiliency, and educating about flood and climate preparedness options. This may be an opportunity for a regional staff person" What does this mean? Currently, the Hampton Building Inspector serves as the Town's Floodplain Administrator, with additional floodplain-related work being conducted by the Town Planner, the DPW Deputy Director, and the Conservation Coordinator. Creating this new position would enable the Town to have one dedicated person to coordinate and manage all floodplain-related work. In addition to avoiding overlaps and gaps in that work, this Administrator could be responsible for overseeing administration of the Town's floodplain ordinances, as well as improving the

Town's climate resilience and assisting with community outreach and education related to flooding issues. The Administrator could also help apply for grant funding for municipal flood-related projects, and help coordinate the applications for FEMA Hazard Mitigation funding which can help cover the cost of property owners' structure elevations or voluntary relocations. And they could manage the work required to enable Hampton to qualify for participation in FEMA's Community Rating System, which would help lower our residents' flood insurance premiums. Consideration should be given to working with other nearby towns or perhaps the Rockingham Planning Commission to hire an Administrator who would work on a regional basis. That option has pros and cons, and is worthy of discussion.

- “Require that the Comprehensive Master Plan and future updates of the Comprehensive Master Plan integrate sea level rise (SLR) impacts throughout the plan and identify strategies for effectively responding to SLR and encouraging development in safe areas.” What does this mean? It is a good reminder that we should, as we are doing currently, make sure that adapting to Sea Level Rise is a cornerstone of every future Master Plan update. It also reminds us that future development should be focused in parts of Hampton that are less susceptible to the impacts of tidal flooding and storm surges.
- “Continue and enhance public outreach efforts to engage and inform community members of flood hazards, vulnerabilities, and opportunities to increase resiliency, and to solicit input from residents.” What does this mean? The Town needs to work harder to keep the town residents and property owners informed about issues related to flooding, and to actively engage those residents and property owners to ensure they have ample opportunities to provide input on those issues. In order for the town to decide to implement any of these recommendations, there will have to be demonstrable public support, via communication with the board or boards responsible, or via warrant article support at Town Meeting.
- “Form a subcommittee to work on development of a new coastal hazard overlay district that has higher regulatory standards for areas of the community at risk from flooding and sea level rise. One requirement within the overlay would be that individuals who submit an application to the Planning Board, or the building inspector if no Planning Board approval is required, utilize the NH Coastal Flood Risk Guidance. Another potential component could be inclusion of areas of predicted marsh migration under specific scenarios and timeframes.” What does this mean? Increasing tidal flooding may make it appropriate, if not critical that the Town create an overlay district where requirements are more strict for development because of greater risks of impacts from flooding and sea level rise. One recommendation is to require completion of the NH Coastal Flood Risk Guidance, which assesses flood vulnerability for each planned new structure or significant rebuild or improvement within that overlay district. The Guidance was developed via a collaboration led by the NHDES Coastal Program, and is now a

requirement of the NHDES Wetlands permitting process. Completing the Guidance involves looking at sea level rise projections, the lifespan and relative cost of repair or replacement of the structure, and the projected impacts of storm activity and groundwater rise. Upon completion of the assessment, and with a better understanding of the potential longer-term risk, property owners and developers may choose to modify their projects to be able to better withstand those risks. Another recommendation for this coastal hazard overlay district, especially where it abuts the salt marsh, is to find a way to incorporate allowances for salt marsh migration to best ensure the continuation of the protective natures of the marsh.

- “Utilize data obtained through flood engineering studies as baseline data for future modeling efforts and studies.” What does this mean? It means that if we use the data obtained through current studies as our baseline for sea level rise, flooding frequency, depth, etc, it can help us better understand how these indicators change over time, and to what extent adaptation measures need to be modified, based on changing conditions.
- “Continue to work with out-of-compliance property owners to comply with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) so the Town can join the Community Rating System (CRS). The new Community Resilience and Floodplain Administrator can track and increase our points for CRS, and property owners who pay flood insurance can benefit from reduced premiums.” What does this mean? One of the primary reasons that Hampton does not currently qualify for joining the CRS is that we have some properties in FEMA flood zones where the structures do not comply with FEMA regulations. The Town is trying to work with those property owners, and needs to continue to do so. Qualification for the CRS program is based on a point system. At the lowest level, everyone who carries flood insurance through the NFIP would get a 5% reduction in their premiums. The more points the town earns, the higher the rate of savings. If we create the position of Community Resilience and Floodplain Administrator, one of their jobs could be to monitor and recommend ways to make Hampton more flood-resilient and to increase our CRS point totals so those property owners can save more money.
- “Establish an Implementation Committee to ensure that the various recommendations in the Comprehensive Master Plan are carefully considered and adopted in a timely manner, as appropriate.” What does this mean? It suggests some extra eyes reviewing the Master Plans with some regularity, and perhaps asking questions of the appropriate Boards if what appear to be appropriate recommendations are not being implemented on a timely basis. There will likely be a lot of new and, perhaps, challenging recommendations in the Master Plans, and this Committee could help ensure that they are addressed.
- “Initiate a discussion on how coastal properties are assessed, and the impacts of sea level rise on those properties.” What does this mean? If properties are at greater risk from sea level rise, should that risk be reflected in how they are assessed? If so, what impacts of that different assessment have on those properties in regard to property

taxes and/or resale value? There are a lot of unanswered questions about this concept. But it is appropriate that it be discussed so that if adjustments should be made, they be done fairly and consistently.

- This has been an overview of some of the 19 recommendations that CHAT has developed. As I think you've seen some are relatively easy, and some may be very hard to implement. But we think that all should be given careful thought and consideration. They are all designed to help make Hampton more flood-resilient. And they were each developed by your fellow citizens, who also have a stake in Hampton's future. So please take some time to read through them, discuss them, ask questions, and let us know what you think.

- Thank you. I'll be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

(NOTE: The following are additional CHAT recommendations (italics) provided by Mr Diener that were not discussed at the meeting.)

- Investigate opportunities to improve applicant, local board awareness of flood vulnerability by restructuring the project review process. Consider the merits of requiring Project Review Committee meeting before all Board hearings.

- *Create Capital Reserve account or [Community Resilience Incentive Zone](#) (NH RSA 79-E) with seed funding to be used for grant match and cost share for municipal repairs, upgrades, flood mitigation and/or projects identified in the Coastal Management Master Plan Chapter, Hazard Mitigation Plan, flood engineering studies, and other local or regional flood studies.*

- *Amend [Town of Hampton Code](#) Section 805-9(M)(1) to lower the threshold for authorized parking in municipal parking lots when tides are in excess of 9.7 feet (as opposed to 10.0 feet).*

- *Prohibit construction of critical facilities within high risk Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) unless the project has been reviewed using the [NH Coastal Flood Risk Guidance](#) and the following criteria are met: (a) No feasible alternative location exists, (b) the facility is designed to higher protection standards, (c) a flood evacuation plan has been developed*

- *Require that construction or substantial improvement of any structure within the SFHA (as opposed to only structures in the Tidal Wetland Conservation District) comply with the standards of section 2.4.11-C.*

- *Seek funding to continue engineering and hydrogeological studies and address flooding and drainage in vulnerable areas.*

- *Conduct an assessment to better understand and plan for the economic impacts (development, tourism, tax base, etc.) associated with SLR*

- Conduct a visioning effort to begin to identify potential positive, alternative land uses and activities for areas that are anticipated to be impacted by SLR.
- Prioritize land conservation initiatives in areas of predicted marsh migration.
- Review [Zoning Ordinance](#), [Site Plan Review Regulations](#), and [Subdivision Regulations](#) and identify opportunities and strategies to encourage and incentivize development in areas that are not vulnerable to current or potential future flooding.
- Develop a process or policy for staff and departments to follow to identify and account for climate change impacts when submitting a project for inclusion in the [Capital Improvement Plan](#)

Q & A for J Diener & discussion:

Senator. Tom SHERMAN, Sen. District 24 - awesome work - is there anything current or in the future from our new administration in DC to apply to the plan

JD - not that I know of

K HOWARD - there have been conversations but nothing specific - if there's additional funding they will require mention of sea level rise

SEN SHERMAN - in conversation with Sen. Hassan it was suggested that our master plan include the notion that we include all the towns and that may generate the interest that could lead to federal support

D MERRILL - what extra work is needed to get the town to 5% in the community rating system?

J BACHAND - the process was put on hold because of Covid and is now moving forward again - there are 6 non-compliant properties - a full time staff position in the town would help move this forward

D MERRILL - now that we have the new flood maps are there more properties in the flood zone?

J DIENER asked - once the 6 properties are in compliance do we have enough points to be rated at a Class 9 or 8?

B KRAVITZ - with all these activities - CHAT developing objectives and 2 Master Plans being developed for the town and beach, a plan for coordination would help with timelines to various recommendations, such as near-term, longer range, etc., including what the coordination with government is, has been, or will be

J DIENER - the recommendations were made with awareness of Master Plan development - they are supported by recommendations in the master plans - there is good synergy between them - they suggest which boards are responsible for each recommendation, are suggestions for what costs may be - there is more complete information of the website. Every board, commission and committee was involved in the development of the recommendations and now we are going back to each group for reconsideration so they will be aware and feel comfortable with them

N STILES would you share your opinion on the pros of regional groups' perspective always being valuable and it is a lot of work if there are too many towns involved ?

B KRAVITZ as we develop an overarching educational outreach, when we present something and have responses from the individual departments how would they share in the work relating to feasibility and impacts

J DIENER - we are still looking for input from everyone before we finalize the recommendations - we have the experts in the room, like DPW

B KRAVITZ in the near term what would you want from us?

J DIENER - most helpful would be to take a close look at the recommendations and give very specific reactions to each one - eg: this is too specific, too expensive - then get feedback to find what gives the broadest support

N STILES - thanks to Jay - the commissioners will need to decide if they will bring ideas collectively or individually. Kirsten Howard has been with us and will share our next steps in moving forward following the completion of the Coastal Resilience Symposium of February 9, this year.

K HOWARD - the next step is completing the Summary Report of the Symposium. The NH DES Coastal Program supported the HBAC in holding the Symposium in order to obtain the data for developing what we need for the next steps to developing a proposal for funding the updating the Environment portion of the HBAC Master Plan. Several approaches are available.

N STILES - we will share the report of the Symposium with the commissioners as soon as it is ready and then we will develop the scope of the update of the next portion of the Master Plan.

B KRAVITZ we thank Kirsten very much for her continued support! There were more than 100 people participating in the 4-5 hour day of presentations at the symposium. There is a complete recording of the symposium day in 3 parts available to watch - find it at:

<https://www.hamptonnh.gov/316/Hampton-Beach-Area-Commission>

It is well worth the time to watch.

Other Old Business

N STILES is in receipt of the resignation of Commissioner Rick Griffin with regret and will seek his replacement representing a resident of the town.

there will be an open period of comment on the report of the Bridge, and we should submit a letter or support.

Moved by Merrill, second by Ladd to submit a letter of support to DOT

vote unanimous from those present- commissioners should email their comments to N Stiles

J BACHAND noted a letter of support for Coastal Risk Guidance \$15,000 in kind dollars and \$5,000 requested funds - the proposal is due next week

moved B KRAVITZ

second D MERRILL

unanimous yes from those present

Next meeting: April 22, 2021 details TBA

Adjourn at:8:13PM PM

motion by: D MERRILL

second: by:B PRESTON (who joined the meeting during it)

Vote: motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Carnaby, Administrative Assistant