

The Coastal Resiliency Action Committee
MEETING MINUTES - TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020
Old Water Department, Falmouth Town Hall, 4:00 p.m.

Present: Charles McCaffrey, Chair
Melissa Freitag, Vice-Chair
Jamie Mathews
Andrew Ashton
Paul Dreyer
Ed Schmitt

Mr. McCaffrey opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Discuss schedule for community meetings and Discuss use of Town staff to apply the model to the risks to non-Town assets

Mr. McCaffrey: We have the final draft report of the Vulnerability Assessment (VA) from Woods Hole Group (WHG) for comment on our website and on the CRAC Webpage on the Town website. Surf Drive is also on the website. The draft report is not readable. You can't see the elevations. The resolution is not good enough and we need that. We are working with WHG to do some additional presentations but should add to it the rudiments of private development exposure. Bob Shea doesn't know how to do this. We could take their data and the model as they have it and feed in the private development and get some assessment of the risk. Perhaps not in detail but at least to know that some private development is exposed to elevations, etc.

Ms. Lincoln: Unless you read the report you won't understand what you're looking at.

Mr. McCaffrey: We can use it to compare some aspects that are similar to Surf Drive that was well received.

Ms. Lincoln: It concerns me that you're dividing the Town up into 13 different segments.

Mr. McCaffrey: North Falmouth and West Falmouth have different issues – we can't combine them.

Ms. Lincoln: We could have a general discussion of risks?

Mr. McCaffrey: New Silver Beach has 100 houses at 1 foot above sea level.

Ms. Lincoln: We should be thinking of neighborhoods.

Mr. McCaffrey: North Falmouth could include Megansett, New Silver, Old Silver and Wild Harbor

Ms. Lincoln: Another could be West Falmouth to Gansett. Woods Hole could include Penzance to Trunk River.

Mr. McCaffrey: We should get WHG working with us on this.

Ms. Freitag: I suggest we work on the VA as it is right now and ask for a new contract with WHG looking at community outreach. I don't know if we need to work with WHG with as much intensity. It could also be a grant money thing.

Mr. McCaffrey: We need to get most of this done before May 20th. We need more information on Falmouth Harbor through Bristol Beach. Another grouping could be Great Pond, Green Pond and Bournes Pond. We can bring the information to the communities similar to the way Surf

Drive was. Some of it will be done in house. We can bring the work of the VA to these neighborhoods but augment it with some more information.

Ms. Lincoln: You have a report due to the Selectmen. How about we make one of these the report and we can recommend in the report that we should start holding these meetings.

Ms. Freitag: We could hold something similar to the Hermann Room (at the public library) presentation again and have that as a reminder to the Town. Maybe we could have another one in a larger venue and make it specific to where they live.

Mr. McCaffrey: I don't understand what's different about that.

Ms. Freitag: We can talk about the study and go through the communities a little more specifically. If we do it again with the people understanding that the report is out there and that we're adding another layer to it. We can pick up on this VA and inform the Selectmen that we have to have these neighborhood presentations. Only one Selectman was at the presentation at the library.

Ms. Lincoln: They were well aware. The information was sent to them and put on the website.

Mr. Mathews: What is the theme of these meetings?

Ms. Lincoln: The trouble with doing this is that we don't have as valuable information on private sites as we did on Town assets.

Mr. McCaffrey: We have general elevation information.

Ms. Lincoln: When we drill it down to a community you won't have all the elevation information.

Ms. Freitag: We can identify a neighborhood and do it to that level. We can focus in one community specifically and let everyone else know that their information will be coming.

Mr. Ashton: We do have these maps. We can have the map of their community and go through their map with them.

Ms. Freitag: We can start out with a big meeting – have four of the communities' maps around the room for them to look at. Find out what they think are the issues. Have them be able to go to a map and start taking ownership of their community.

Mr. McCaffrey: The maps already have all of the structures faintly in the background.

Mr. Dreyer: We have four months to finish this report. We can't have all of the community meetings prior to the report. We need to get more information on non-Town private assets. We should be engaging MBL and WHOI in Woods Hole.

Mr. Schmitt: We're not involved with them.

Mr. Dreyer: It's something we should be aware of.

Mr. McCaffrey: We need to get some assessment of the risk to non-Town assets. I think we need to bring WHG in to work with Bob Shea on that.

Mr. Ashton: I understand it's a technical issue. I don't think they sent all their data to us.

Mr. Mathews: That information may already exist.

Mr. McCaffrey: We could create similar information based on the information we have.

Mr. Mathews: Is there a piece Bob Shea is missing. It's something we can get WHG to do – not a whole new study – take what they have and give us more information.

Mr. Schmitt: Google has elevation data on their maps and I couldn't get into it. It would be helpful to people in Town if they could get into the information for themselves. Perhaps a series of steps on how to get the elevations from WHG.

Mr. Ashton: WHG has the elevations somewhere. It's just getting into it.

Ms. Lincoln: What we need to do if we are to further engage with WHG is to make the VA one more step beyond where we are now and help Bob Shea, etc. We could use it to create outreach material. We should have a conversation with them.

Mr. Mathews: It's a good idea to have one more step in a more general sense. The meetings could be more generalized and we'll feel we've done something.

Ms. Lincoln: If you're going to do that with different departments you have to be prepared. The information is not live yet. Bob can't find a way to display it without scaring people. Bob may have to work with Elise LeDuc or Kirk Bozma.

Ms. Freitag: They had data at the Hermann Room presentation.

Ms. Lincoln: They can put up the information.

Ms. Freitag: We can have WHG come to the next big meeting and include the hospital, the Council on Aging, etc.

Mr. Mathews: We can invite them. They may or may not come.

Mr. McCaffrey: They have the map with sea level rise projections and how many houses are in the area.

Ms. Freitag: This would be a specific meeting speaking of private assets as opposed to Town assets. What happens when we start saying there are X areas that are in danger?

Mr. McCaffrey: We already did that.

Ms. Freitag: We know that one neighborhood is more at risk than another.

Mr. Mathews: Maybe we need to talk about general areas instead of a specific neighborhood. We need to get people engaged. Talk about North Falmouth or West Falmouth and give them an overview of the area.

Mr. McCaffrey: This information is clear in the maps. We will have to write some regulations.

Ms. Lincoln: It's not clear to the general public.

Mr. Ashton: This is a technical problem with Bob and unless he has the right kind of data he can't do it. It might be easy. The secondary information would be nice to have. We need a better way of explaining these things.

Ms. Lincoln: I understand your desire to have public meetings but we can't have them until we understand the data and can communicate it correctly. Otherwise we're doing a disservice.

Ms. Freitag: We still need to take baby steps.

Mr. McCaffrey: We have enough data to make general policy decisions.

Ms. Lincoln: Coastal resiliency is really important. The Selectmen want the Town, during the strategic planning retreat, to dedicate a staff member to coastal resiliency. This is gaining traction. Our report is important to drive this home. The Town needs a dedicated person looking at this.

Mr. McCaffrey: We have to help them make the distinctions.

Mr. Dreyer: The whole premise is that Bob can move ahead with help from WHG. We need to get a contract extension with WHG. They provided a lot of information for the size of that budget. We have the money to move forward. Most of the people in West Falmouth aren't even here now and couldn't participate in a meeting.

Mr. McCaffrey: We need some of that data to justify what we are going to do.

Ms. Lincoln: We can extend the VA to work primarily with Bob Shea.

Mr. McCaffrey: And the risk to non-Town assets.

Ms. Lincoln: I will talk to Elise.

Mr. Dreyer: **Move to seek a contract extension with Woods Hole Group to continue the Vulnerability Assessment for certain areas, including assistance to the GIS Coordinator and the IT department on the presentation of the model; continue to identify non-Town assets and assist in the interpretation of the model results.**

Mr. Mathews: **Second.**

Mr. Ashton: How much money will we need?

Ms. Lincoln: I'll talk to WHG.

Ms. Freitag: We need the information in a timely fashion.

Mr. McCaffrey: We also need examples and specifics.

Ms. Lincoln: You don't need to be specific in your report.

Mr. McCaffrey: I was hoping to draft regulations.

Ms. Lincoln: You can propose them, but not draft them.

Mr. McCaffrey called for the vote.

Mr. McCaffrey: **Unanimous, so moved.**

Discuss outline of report to Board of Selectmen

Mr. Mathews: How detailed or specific does the report have to be? Can we take general recommendations and make them specific. Maybe we don't have to be real specific.

Ms. Freitag: The Committee will be continued in a similar capacity.

Mr. Mathews: They have to.

Ms. Freitag: We now have a budget.

Mr. Mathews: We can say we created this.

Ms. Freitag: In the report we can come up with broad strokes and say that we want the Committee to continue. I will work on it. This will be the first draft.

Mr. Mathews: We will have to give some recommendations. Give them some broad ideas and/or if there is anything specific to address.

Mr. McCaffrey: We have much better policy recommendations than the Coastal Resiliency Working Group (CRWG).

Ms. Lincoln: They need to know the hard truth. The CRWG recommendations were broad with no legal ramifications.

Mr. McCaffrey: We have to go beyond this as a taking. Need to understand the scope of the issues. The State has to get into the legal part.

Ms. Lincoln: You'll hear these conversations on acquiring properties. They throw out the ideas without knowing the ramifications. There is a property on Penzance Point that the Town could buy for \$25 million dollars.

Mr. McCaffrey: In 25 years the property won't be worth \$25 million.

Ms. Lincoln: Unless the Town protects the property. They should have been doing this planning 25 years ago, but the Town has been progressive in looking at these issues.

Mr. McCaffrey: Our job is to get good information to the Selectmen.

Ms. Lincoln: The community meetings are a good idea. We can take the model and apply it to all the communities showing them that this is where we can see the flooding pathways.

Ms. Freitag: Insularity is why we should do a generic meeting before our report to the Selectmen and before Town Meeting.

Mr. McCaffrey: We need more information first.

Ms. Freitag: We can be doing both at the same time.

Mr. Dreyer: We are trying to get the process for beach nourishment written down and we need that generic valuation for the report.

Ms. Lincoln: I will talk to Greg Fraser and Mark Kasprzyk about that.

Mr. Dreyer: The 13 Town segments need to be broken down into groups. I'm not sure what the groupings are. Can we have that at the next meeting?

Mr. McCaffrey: We are only grouping them for the presentations. There are still 13.

Ms. Lincoln: I will bring the maps to the next meeting. I will reach out to Elise LeDuc tomorrow morning and ask what kind of proposal they could put together to help staff apply the model to non-Town assets.

Mr. Ashton: No ranking stuff.

Ms. Freitag: We could bring Heather Goldstone in to talk to us. She might be somebody who could give us a little tutorial.

Ms. Lincoln: Please find out if she wants to be paid. Greg Berman could help us with that for free.

Ms. Freitag: Let's go to Greg Berman first and I'll check with Heather later.

VOTE MINUTES

12/5/2019

Mr. Mathews: Move to adopt the minutes as written.

Mr. Dreyer: Second.

Mr. McCaffrey: Unanimous, so moved.

The next meeting will be on January 28, 2020.

Mr. Mathews: Move to adjourn.

Mr. Ashton: Second.

Mr. McCaffrey: Unanimous, so moved.

The meeting adjourned at 5: 16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Cronin, Recording Secretary