

Nantucket Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee (CRAC)

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

Via Zoom

*Meetings are audio- and video-recorded

Members present: Gary Beller, Peter Brace, Dr. Sarah Bois, Abby De Molina, Matt Fee, Rachael Freeman, Dr. Jen Karberg, Doug Rose

Members Absent: Tim Braine, Christy Kickham, Joanna Roche

Staff present: Leah Hill

Scheduled Speakers: none

Members of the public: RJ Turcotte, D.Anne Atherton, William Kinsella, Rick Atherton

Recording available here: <https://youtu.be/-e8a9UC-vNw?si=mfiOwh7C3JHZqn8e>

1. Call to Order – 10:00am

- the meeting was called to order by chair Peter Brace

2. Meeting announcements

- Script for remotely conducting Open Meetings
- Meeting is being audio/visually recorded

3. Public comment on topics not on the agenda

- none

4. Discussion on projects to apply for the Offshore Wind Community Fund (OWCF) grant submitted by CRAC

- Bois advocated for a comprehensive multilingual education/outreach package, including complete translation of the CRP and supporting video content. She also urged that data from the schools be used to determine translation priorities.
 - *From a staff perspective, Hill echoed Bois' suggestions. She clarified that \$250k would be the total pool to be allocated to TON & its committees in the initial round of OWCF grants.*
 - *Freeman, DeMolina, Brace all spoke to the urgency of a more comprehensive multilingual outreach program.*
- Rose, Beller, Fee and Karberg each suggested working directly from the list of current Coastal Resilience Plan (CRP) priorities, and focusing on projects that would make a meaningful difference.
 - *Rose suggested three CRP projects, from small to large: #1-8 Securing new monitoring capabilities (small), #1-4 Strategic retreat & relocation program (medium), and #6-2 Surfside wastewater plant resilience design (large).*
 - *Fee spoke on the need to deliver something concrete, not just more PR and planning.*
- Hill stated that none of the more capital-intensive CRP projects fit the criteria of 'shovel ready', and that all would require vastly larger grants than is likely to be available from OWCF.

- Given the relatively modest amount of this grant opportunity (likely \$50k), consensus of the committee was to pursue a grant for the multilingual education program as described above. Hill agreed to prepare an OWCF grant application accordingly.
5. Discussion on CRAC's letter regarding pools in designated flood plains intended for ConCom
- Brace explained that CRAC's letter was not submitted to ConCom on advice of NRD Director Jeff Carlson. Carlson's concern was that it would not be appropriate for CRAC to comment on issues relating to any specific property or neighborhood.
 - *Hill later added that the pool(s) in question had already been permitted by ConCom.*
 - Beller expressed concern over a staff comment at the most recent ConCom meeting relating to how the CRP is not currently addressed in the existing local wetlands bylaw; Brace confirmed that this is indeed the case.
 - Fee expressed concerns over the resistance that ConCom is facing in their efforts to update the local wetlands regulations, and over the number of permits being granted that are out of step with CRP principles. As an example, he cited the recent approval of a permit to build a pool on Sconset Bluff at 63 Baxter Road.
6. Discussion on the Chair speaking on behalf of CRAC at the Conservation Commission's updated Wetland regulation public hearing on January 11, 2024 at 5pm.
- Hill asked that committee members alert her if they intend to be present at the meeting, so as to advise on appropriate steps if there's a quorum.
 - Brace indicated that he intends to focus attention on pages 50, 58, 63, and 148 of proposed changes to Nantucket's local wetlands regulations.
 - Comments from committee members:
 - *Freeman asked if now is a time to ask ConCom to consider if and how to tie-in coastal resilience districts; Fee cautioned that CRDs could be years away, and that it's best that we not slow down progress.*
 - *Hill clarified that buffer zones will not be part of this ConCom public hearing.*
 - *Freeman suggested broad language to the effect that CRAC is concerned about ongoing development within critical areas at risk.*
 - *Bois suggested that CRAC should submit another generalized statement about vulnerable areas, and to remind the ConCom that CRAC is available as a resource.*
 - Motion to approve Chair to speak on behalf of CRAC at the upcoming ConCom meeting relating to Wetland Bylaw amendments
 - Moved (Rose), second (Freeman), approved unanimously (7-0)
 - Public comment:
 - *RJ Turcotte speaking on behalf of the Nantucket Land & Water Council (NLWC), explained that the more contentious aspects of the local wetland bylaw updates pertaining to buffer zones will be addressed at a later date so as to allow the less contentious aspects to be voted on.*
 - *D. Anne Atherton, speaking as a member of the public, stated that her understanding is that the ConCom is gathering further scientific documentation to more fully support the argument for expansion of the buffer zones. She also expressed gratitude*

to the NLWC for helping to provide that documentation.

7. Discussion on developing an informational sheet regarding coastal risks and coastal resilience issues on Nantucket to hand out to real estate agents.

- Hill provided an update on the current draft, asked that committee members provide feedback on content, and outlined suggestions for how to make it most effective.
- Consensus of the committee was to request that Hill proceed with a final draft for approval at a future CRAC meeting.

8. Update on 2023-2030 CRP recommendations that have not been started yet and discuss a prioritization list.

- Hill provided an update on near-term projects that have not yet been started.
 - #1-2 Updates to Zoning Bylaws (PLUS with NRD) – no progress to date;
 - ◆ Fee suggested that CRAC write a letter advocating that an expert group be formed to help jump start the process.
 - ◆ Freeman suggested that NRD could assume the role of champion of this project, with PLUS as co-lead. Hill concurred that this was a good suggestion.
 - #1-4 Strategic Retreat and Relocation Program (PLUS with NRD) – there's a request for capital funding for FY 2025; if that is denied, there may be an opportunity to tap Article 10 funding.
 - #1-10 Stormwater Management Plan, plus #1-12 Stormwater Bylaw Assessment & #1-13 Stormwater Bylaw Update – TON is hiring a stormwater manager; Freeman indicated that an EPA grant has been secured to develop a stormwater management plan for downtown.
 - #1-11 Sediment Budget – Hill stated this project cannot begin until the harbor sediment transport study and dredge plan is completed.
 - #2-5 Building-Scale Resilience at 37 Washington Street – Hill intends to submit a grant application on behalf of TON to OWCF to fund this feasibility assessment.
 - #3-2 Ames Avenue Bridge Resilience and #3-4 Madaket Erosion Mgt and Ames Ave Bridge Protection – a portion of the FY 2024 \$1M coastal resilience has been allocated for this project.
 - #3-5 DPW Facility & Landfill Resilience – Town Administration is pursuing this and looking at locations to relocate the DPW
 - #4-4 Numerical Modeling Study of Coatue Breaching – there may be some economies of scale building on the work that Arcadis has already done on modeling in the harbor sediment study. Brace and Karberg added that related work led by the Nantucket Conservation Foundation might be relevant to this project.
 - #5-4 Sconset Bluff Nearshore Breakwaters Feasibility Study – suggested that this be revisited in 2030 due to ongoing focus on Baxter Rd alternative access and the geotube NOI.
 - #6-2 Surfside Wastewater Treatment Plant Dune Restoration –this project is of heightened priority due to the severe erosion of the coastal bank at this location.
 - #6-4 Surfside Emergency Access Planning – this project could serve as a quick win due to its relatively modest cost (\$50k).

- #2-1 Steamboat Wharf Resilience –slated for 2030; Fee suggested that the SSA may have access to more significant funding sources than the TON, and the more that SSA’s efforts can be tied into those of TON regarding Easy Street and the downtown flood barrier, the better.
 - #3-1 Madaket Road Raising and Bridge Conversion – target completion 2030.
 - #5-1 Sconset Bluff Dune Restoration - target completion 2030.
 - #5-2 Codfish Park Dune Restoration – target completion 2030.
 - #7-2 Sand Pumping Feasibility Study - target completion 2027.
 - Hill indicated that #3-2 Ames Ave Bridge Resilience is the only project on this list that has had funding allocated to it, and agreed to send a recap via email.
 - Consensus was to revisit this prioritization at a future meeting.
9. Update on Article 10 regarding coastal resiliency funds by Leah Hill, Town of Nantucket Coastal Resilience Coordinator,
- Motion to continue (Rose), second (Fee), approved unanimously.
10. Public outreach ideas/strategies from committee members.
- Rose provided a brief update on the media scorecard.
11. Site visit discussion and determine date and time.
- Brace suggested Surfside Wastewater Treatment facility.
 - Hill will send a poll to the committee to finalize.
12. Approval of Minutes from December 12, 2023.
- Motion to approve (Fee), second (Rose), approved unanimously
13. New business, Committee & Natural Resources Dept. reports from Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board, Select Board, Advisory Committee of Non-Voting Taxpayers, and other committee members.
- DeMolina alerted the committee that the Nantucket Historical Commission will be applying for an OWCF grant to help promote sustainable building/restoration practices.
 - Hill provided brief updates on:
 - Dec. 18th storm: Sewer facility lost 40’ of coastal bank, Madaket beach, Miacomet pond lost 36’
 - Downtown Neighborhood Flood Barrier- Initial Phase project kicking off, 18 month project
 - DEP draft resilience regulations in packet
 - Beller commented on recent press regarding the rapid rise in property insurance premiums in coastal areas.
14. Discussion of upcoming meeting dates and topics: Next Meeting is January 23, 2024, on Zoom.

15. Motion to adjourn - (Rose). Second (Beller), approved unanimously.