

SELECT BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of September 14, 2021. The meeting took place via remote participation using Zoom Webinar. Members of the Board present were Jason Bridges, Matt Fee, Kristie Ferrantella and Dawn Hill Holdgate. Melissa Murphy arrived later in the meeting as noted.

Town Manager C. Elizabeth Gibson introduced the meeting topic, noting that this project with Arcadis began in February of 2021, with a goal of long-term planning for Baxter Road and the immediate area. She said this is the last stakeholder meeting of the process with all 12 identified stakeholder groups. She noted that a list of options as prepared by Arcadis was made available to the stakeholders last Thursday and posted on the Town website last Friday. She urged all participants to be open-minded to a path forward.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bridges called the meeting to order at 3:32 PM. He read a prepared statement as to how the meeting would be conducted via remote participation and the ground rules for any discussion and called roll for those present. The Coastal Resiliency Advisory Committee called to order at 3:33 PM.

II. WORKSHOP MEETING WITH COASTAL RESILIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, TOWN STAFF AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS WITH ARCADIS REGARDING BAXTER ROAD LONG-TERM PLANNING

Chair Bridges stated that this Workshop will not feature Public Comment and reviewed the agenda items as follows:

1. Ground Rules for Discussion
2. Goals, Objectives and Mission
3. Recap of Alternatives
4. Recap of Evaluation Criteria
5. Recommendations
6. Adaptation Pathways Discussion

Jennifer Lachmayr of Arcadis provided an overview of each agenda item. She reiterated that public comment be restricted for this session as it is intended for stakeholder discussion only. Ms. Lachmayr reviewed the most recent Conservation Commission (ConCom) actions regarding the Siasconset Bluff Preservation Foundation's (SBPF) erosion control project, noting there is a current enforcement order to remove the project, which is expected to be appealed. Dr. Keren Bolter of Arcadis reviewed the alternatives examined that were reviewed and discussed extensively with the stakeholders. She emphasized the need for toe stabilization of the bluff, and reviewed important coastal processes as related to the bluff stability. She said a major, main concern is a serious storm that involves wave erosion at the toe of the bluff. Dr. Bolter proceeded to review additional types of coastal structures and tools and added that only certain protection types will be able to withstand an intense event. She noted that storm intensity and frequency are expected to increase with climate change. She reviewed the five alternatives the Arcadis team considered, as contained within the draft report, as included in the materials included in the Board's posted agenda packet. Kate Edwards of Arcadis reviewed the evaluation criteria used by the team, as outlined in the said materials. She reviewed environmental, ecological and habitat considerations, as well as cost and structural considerations. She also reviewed the need for a "shovel ready" plan in the event of a collapse of Baxter Road at various locations. She presented some concepts for a phased relocation of the road, including associated utilities. She reviewed potential impact on the Town's tax based with a loss of property in the area. She said an immediate recommended action is to start planning for and then constructing a relocated road. Dr. Bolter reiterated and emphasized that removal of the existing system without a

comprehensive retreat plan in place is not recommended and would be unsafe and put the Town and others at risk. She reviewed a recommended action plan with short-, mid- and long-term actions. She emphasized the need for regular monitoring. She re-reviewed items associated with the recommended action plan and asked for stakeholder input, specifically on timelines and what is viewed as possible. Josh Posner of SBPF said he is very concerned with politicization of the project and spoke in favor of retaining the current project and said he understands retreat but does not view it as imminent if the current project remains in place. David Kriebel, associate of the Greenhills, a property owner to the north, spoke on harm to others with respect to the current system and said he does not feel the report accurately represents negative impacts to properties down-drift of the system. He also spoke on sand mitigation and the need for it to be sufficient. He said there are many negative consequences to the adaptive management options as contained in the report particularly to the down-drift properties, especially if the current system is kept in place. Emily Molden of the Nantucket Land Council agreed with Mr. Kriebel regarding down-drift impacts. Jamie Feeley of SBPF commented on a narrow area of Baxter Road, being 35' from the bluff, has been that distance for the eight years the project has been in place. He also commented on the recommendation as to a "plan" being in place vs a plan being "implemented", saying that implementation before removal would be important. Dr. Jennifer Karberg, member of the Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee (CRAC), commented on the "tipping points" in the report and said sand mitigation should be an identified tipping point and agreed with the prior comments made about down-drift properties. She suggested another tipping point of "failure to follow next steps". David Golden of SBPF commented on the conceptual relocation of the road and whether real estate acquisition costs were included. Some discussion followed on this. Ms. Ferrantella thanked the Arcadis team for its work. She noted the need for a compromise. She said she supports the idea of working toward a plan, now. She said that with respect to Town resources and staff, those are going to be needed to develop and implement a plan and perhaps a stronger public-private partnership could be established. She said that given the Conservation Commissioner's decision to order the removal of the project, it is not realistic to get a plan in place quickly enough to get a relocated road in place. Dr. Sarah Bois of CRAC commented on the retreat plan being developed concurrently with other retreat plans in other areas of the Island. Trey Ruthven, representing the Nantucket Land Council said he would like to see additional information as to costs of retreat. Helmut Weymar of SBPF spoke on adaptive mitigation and that its purpose is to protect down-drift properties. He spoke on the design of the current system and its stability as evidenced by the lack of erosion particularly during major storms. He said that there are benefits to the current system in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Ian Golding, a member of CRAC and also the ConCom, concurred with Dr. Karberg's comments. He spoke on detrimental effects of hard armoring the bluff. He disputed some information as to ecological considerations as contained in the report, commenting that he feels it may be biased and also does not concur with his own observations. Mary Longacre of CRAC said that Sankaty Lighthouse was moved when it was realized that it was in danger and that same logic should be applied to Baxter Road, the plans for which should start promptly and instead of "shovel-ready" plans, the road should just be moved once plans are ready. Mr. Fee, also a member of CRAC, commented on determining whether or not items are "cost effective". He said he'd like to see more information as to exact amounts of sand mitigation. He added that the cost of relocating the road is enormous and the current public-private partnership has been beneficial.

Ms. Murphy joined the meeting at 4:48 PM.

Kate Shea spoke on the need for a comprehensive study which "broadens the approach". Kevin Dale representing Sankaty Head Golf Club said he concurs with Mr. Fee about working together toward a solution. Joanna Roche, member of CRAC and also the Finance Committee, commented on the complexity of the information in the report and the need to make it clearly understandable for the public, especially with

regard to items that may be going to town meeting. Dr. Karberg said that similar conversations will need to happen all around the island. Mr. Golding spoke again on the importance of various habitats on the beach and the negative impact hard armoring has on those. Discussion followed regarding timing. Mr. Posner asked about the “triggers” listed in the report and said he would hope there could be agreement among the stakeholders on these but added that he is concerned about when those triggers would be activated. He added that even once a new road is built, if the erosion control system is functioning properly, it should not need to be removed. D. Anne Atherton asked who will be paying for the on-going functioning of the system if it is not expanded as is being requested. Some discussion followed on this. Coastal Resilience Coordinator Vincent Murphy commented that if the project is brought into compliance there should be no reason why SBPF could not file for an expansion of the project. Mr. Posner responded. Dwight Dunk, representing SBPF commented on the costs as displayed in the report. Mr. Golding commented on a breakdown of the costs and disputed Mr. Posner’s comments regarding sand mitigation.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ferrantella moved to adjourn at 5:29 PM; seconded by Ms. Murphy. So voted by roll call vote: Chair Bridges – Yes; Mr. Fee - Yes; Ms. Ferrantella – Yes; Ms. Holdgate – Yes; Ms. Murphy – Yes.

Approved the 22nd day of September 2021.

SELECT BOARD
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 – 3:30 PM
REMOTE PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM
NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

List of documents used at the meeting:

- II. Baxter Road Long-Term Planning DRAFT Summary of Findings by Arcadis