

Nantucket Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee (CRAC)

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Via Zoom

*Meetings are audio- and video-recorded

Members present: Gary Beller, Dr. Sarah Bois, Peter Brace, Tim Braine, Abby DeMolina (joined 10:04am), Matt Fee (joined 10:05am), Dr. Jen Karberg, Christy Kickham (joined 10:02), Joanna Roche, Doug Rose

Members Absent: Rachael Freeman

Staff present: Leah Hill, Vince Murphy

Scheduled Speakers:

Members of the public: Gerry Connick, Shelly Lockwood, RJ Turcotte, D.Anne Atherton

Recording available here: <https://youtu.be/DpurkaHQRMM?si=0IYhZosylQxWicJo>

Packet available here: <https://www.nantucket-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/05282024-13853>

1. Call to Order – 10:00am
 - the meeting was called to order by chair Peter Brace
2. Meeting announcements: Brace read abbreviated script on how the public can participate.
3. Public comment on topics not on the agenda:
 - Hill read a statement from Gerry Connick dated 5/16/24, expressing concern about a member of CRAC suggesting the development of a prototype plan before the Select Board moves to have Article 69 amend the Nantucket code, and then follow the Article 69 code to map the entire district, and break it down into so-called sub-districts.
4. Approval of Minutes: none.
5. Report and discussion on Town meeting (ATM) statuses of Article 67 & 69 by Vince Murphy, Town of Nantucket Sustainability Programs Manager
 - Discussion and responses by CRAC members on recent public comment from 5/14/24 meeting regarding Article 69
 - Murphy provided a recap of ATM actions, and likely next steps:
 - Regarding Article 67 – a Home Rule Petition which would authorize the Town of Nantucket to assess costs of certain localized coastal resilience projects to those properties that disproportionately benefit from them:
 - *Finance Committee motion was positive*
 - *There was confusion among voters over the purpose/intent of this article*
 - *Motion was made on the floor and approved 178-137 to table Article 67 indefinitely*
 - Regarding Article 69: a bylaw empowering Select Board to create a Coastal Resilience District (CRD), and then sub-districts reflecting certain localized coastal resilience projects (TBD).

- *Again, Finance Committee motion was positive*
- *This article attracted even more extensive discussion on the floor of ATM*
- *The article passed by a vote of 229 to 115.*
- Next steps:
 - *Article 69 will be added to Town Code this summer by Town Administration & Town Counsel; typically, this sort of work is completed by around September. It is likely to become Chapter 66A of the Town Code.*
 - *Article 67: need to discuss with Town Administration and at a future CRAC meeting about how and when to bring back Article 67 for a future Town meeting. Will require public outreach for better understanding.*
 - *Those interested in learning more about how the articles were received during Day 3 of ATM can watch the proceedings via this link:*
<https://www.youtube.com/live/6L-iaqkrxq4?si=P5qewFT2SR9wSTqO&t=531>
- Brace commented that the “wall of text” for these articles was intimidating, and that CRAC needs to get more regular coverage in local media.
- Beller expressed some uncertainty of his own regarding the distinctions between the two articles, and concern that the public was unclear as well. He later added that future messaging regarding 67 should include a reminder that no taxes will change without approval from Town Meeting.
 - *Murphy clarified that the distinctions between 67 and 69 were addressed at Town meeting, though perhaps not sufficiently to ensure that everyone was clear on them.*
- Bois stated that the amount of “legalese” was intimidating, and that for next Town meeting, there should be a 1-page summary in clear language, e.g., (“a yes vote means...”). She also volunteered to write in her column in Yesterday’s Island. There was also confusion as to what CRAC does vis a vis Town Administration, the Land Bank, etc.
- DeMolina concurred that a summary handout and more media coverage would be helpful.
 - *Murphy clarified that the Town’s voters’ guide did address both 67 and 69.*
- Karberg suggested it would be helpful if CRAC held a hybrid public meeting to introduce itself to more residents, and/or a “listening tour”, separate from its usual agenda.
- Fee stated that “people don’t invest in concepts, they invest in things”, arguing that the Town should pick one or two things, and show how the economics work. He also argued that CRDs are a long-term tool, and that the Town should move forward on projects using existing tools (e.g., betterments).
 - *Murphy suggested that small areas with well-defined, highly localized solutions – e.g., Sheep Pond Road, Nonantum, Baxter Road*
- Kickham pointed out that part of CRAC’s mission is to educate the public, and that the Civic League has a “Meet the Articles” session. He later commented on the need for CRAC to clearly articulate the differences in tax liability between localized projects versus island-wide projects.
 - *Murphy spoke at the Meet the Articles session regarding both 67 and 69.*
- Braine was not surprised that the reaction at the Town meeting was focused on taxes, not sea level rise (SLR) and climate change, and stated that the fact that these articles

stirred some controversy may be good, as it will ensure that they attract more media attention going forward.

- *Murphy took it as progress that there was no controversy regarding SLR.*
- Hill concurred with consensus, and suggested that public sessions this summer would be a positive step.
 - *Roche and Bois later concurred and offered support*
 - *Exposure opportunities mentioned by CRAC members include the State of the Harbor event (Brace), the Civic League event (Beller), and the Climate Change Summit (Karberg)*
- Lockwood opined that to be effective, messaging must be simplified and abbreviated as much as possible.
- Atherton asked whether betterments must be approved by Town meeting, and if yes, were the Sheep Pond Road betterments ever voted on at Town meeting.
 - *Murphy promised to get back to Atherton with a written answer.*
- Hill asked if there were any comments regarding Mr. Connick's letter and Brace's response
 - *Kickham suggested that Brace's letter should be written as a collective committee position rather than an individual position.*

6. Discussion and ideas for next site visit

- Brace suggested Folger's Marsh and Sesachacha Pond; timing late June.

7. Discussion on sharing or taking over Secretary responsibilities

- Rose advised that he's been struggling to keep up due to other demands on his time.
- Brace urged other members to consider the opportunity to take on Secretary responsibilities at the first meeting in July.

8. Public outreach ideas/strategies from committee members

- Ideas to reach out to media and aligned organizations for more coastal resilience coverage
 - *Braine mentioned that he has had some very early discussions with a contact at the I&M, and pledged to explore further.*

9. New business, Natural Resources Dept. & Committee reports from Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board, Select Board, Advisory Committee of Non-Voting Taxpayers, and other committee members.

- Braine advised that the wetlands regulations update is approaching a vote
- Hill advised that she was a co-presenter with Arcadis at Rhode Island Flood Mitigation Association conference, and spoke about CRAC, the CRP, etc.

10. Discussion of upcoming meeting dates and topics: Next Meeting is June 11, 2024, on Zoom

11. Motion to adjourn:

- moved (Kickham), seconded (Braine), approved unanimously (9-0).