

Nantucket Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee (CRAC)
Tuesday, August 13, 2024
Via Zoom

*Meetings are audio- and video-recorded

Members present: Gary Beller, Peter Brace, Dr. Sarah Bois, Tim Braine, Matt Fee, Rachael Freeman, Dr. Jen Karberg, Christy Kickham (joined at 10:36), Joanna Roche

Members Absent: Abby De Molina, John Kitchener, Doug Rose

Staff present: Leah Hill

Scheduled Speakers: Alan Bartels, Kim Starbuck, Leslie Snell, Paul Murphy, Ava Rollins

Members of the public: R.J. Turcotte of the Nantucket Land & Water Council (NLWC), Gerry Connick, D.Anne Atherton, Sasha Bischoff, Laura Mire (Barrett Planning)

Recording available here: <https://youtu.be/xeZQNLqddUk?si=-XOUan03W-EE82NN>

Packet available here: https://www.nantucket-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_08132024-14149

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
 - No public comment
4. Approval of minutes
 - No minutes for approval
5. Introduction and discussion on Planning Board and Town regulations with coastal resilience in mind by Leslie Snell, Town of Nantucket Director of Planning, and Paul Murphy, Town of Nantucket Building Commissioner
 - Snell:
 - She gave a history of the zoning by-law: its creation in 1972, changes in early 2000s, adoption of master plan in 2009, changes reducing density made since 2005 in vulnerable areas, creation of harbor overlay, flood plain overlay, height regulations when lifting a structure.
 - She explained that the Planning Board has hired Barrett Planning Group to help update 2009 master plan. It will take coastal resiliency into account in a big way for the new plan.
 - Planning board also hired a consultant to revise subdivision regulations which will look at how roads are built, drainage systems, etc with coastal resilience in mind.
 - Murphy:
 - He explained that building code requires buildings to be elevated in flood zones and can increase building height accordingly

- o Also explained 50% rule for raising existing structures that have major renovations. Historic structures are exempt from this.
 - o Nantucket can't make stricter building codes than the state requires without petitioning the state.
- Snell: you can't have local regulations that contradict existing state codes.
- Joanna Roche: Asked if Murphy has done an internal review regarding possible resilience-related rules and pain-points.
- Murphy: Finds that people try to avoid lifting their house because of the expense; very few people voluntarily do it. No one has come to his office concerned about sea level rise.
- Brace: CRAC's main focus is public outreach that will precipitate people being concerned. Madaket, Brant Point and other areas will have problems, but there isn't an urgency to address it coming from homeowners. CRAC is longest range planners and is trying to lay the groundwork for people to come to town departments for help.
- Snell: State legislation has passed allowing secondary dwelling units; Nantucket can't do anything to change that.
- Beller: Noted that in packet there are recommendations by Arcadis of minimum changes in the zoning law. Has she looked at these recommendations? These changes would be required for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Snell: Acknowledges this needs further research and probably an environmental planner gather information on how to address this.
- Karberg: Noted that ConCom is one commission that can have a stricter rule than state environmental rules. Asked if there are discussions at state level to make new rules? Also, like the flood hazard overlay district, would a resilience overlay district possibly be a useful tool, to avoid risks like pools, parking garages, etc in these areas?
- Murphy: He hasn't seen anything from the Building Officials Association about adopting increased state standards.
- Snell: Creating some kind of coastal resiliency district with stricter regulations is something worth discussing. Should also see what other coastal towns are thinking.
- Hill: Asked for an explanation of building height restrictions and specifically what is the current height regulation in the FEMA areas and which areas does this occur in.
- Murphy: He believes it applies to any structure in a flood plain; you are able to build to a height of the flood elevation plus the allowable height. This allows building without reducing house height.
- Snell: There are different height restrictions in different neighborhoods.
- Fee: Should focus on the easy and the medium changes; how do we ensure that these will be included in the master plan? And how do we build the public momentum? How do we get people to understand that it's a real mistake to build in a flood plain?
- Snell: One good step would be to have a joint meeting with the planning board which makes most of the recommendations and is most familiar with the requirements. Would encourage that.
- Brace: We should get our ideas together and then meet, like we did with the Harbor Plan. Leslie, is there a time line?
- Snell: Not sure. Will be kicking off meetings soon. CRAC is on the list.
- Brace: We should probably look at the current plan and look for places we think need updating.

- Beller: Don't know why we have to wait for the master plan. We need to put it on the planning board agenda. We know the recommendations—Arcadis has described them.
- Brace: The master plan is the way to do this; it should be in that.
- Beller: It takes too long with the master plan—it could take years—it should go to the planning board and then to town meeting.
- Brace: I agree with you. Asked for comments from the public.
- Atherton: Need to look at the risk to the town and look at what's being spent and built in these areas. The town has to provide services. The taxpayers are at risk of incurring these costs. Also how long does the town have responsibility for maintaining roads? Maybe need hold harmless agreements?

6. Discussion and edits on the coastal resilience section of the Nantucket and Madaket Harbors Action Plan Update with Urban Harbors Institute staff: Alan Bartels, Kim Starbuck and Kristin Uiterwyk.

- Kim Starbuck narrated the first part to the presentation (See packet). Noted there's a public meeting August 19 at police station. Alan Bartels went through Goals and Objectives. He concluded with a list of questions for discussion:
 - *What issues, goals, objectives or recommendations would CRAC want to enhance, add or edit?*
 - *What climate impacts or resilience strategies (existing or future) does CRAC want to highlight?*
 - *Are there any data or information that would strengthen the CR section?*
- Brace: Thought it was thorough; looking for comments from the committee
- Hill: recommendation: For the background section add descriptions of the Coastal Resilience methods; under funding, add a line : incorporate coastal resiliency recommendations within the capital requests or capital program
- Christy: Is there any guidance on how to engage the public ?
- Brace: Maybe there should be regulations
- Fee: The way to do it is to include the public by asking for their feedback. An example is how Washington St work group succeeded in changing peoples minds and getting more buy-in. Public meetings, asking for input...how we engage is important. This approach also worked with downtown sidewalk changes.
- Brace: Asked for public comments. There were none. Asked Starbuck if there is a deadline.
- Starbuck: Sometime this fall. Then there will be a 60 day comment period.
- Beller: What does "Municipal approval" mean? Select board or town meeting?
- Starbuck: Select board vote.

7. Discussion and highlights from the Downtown Resilience Planning Community Open House held on August 7, 2024 at the Whaling museum

- Hill: Reported on the event: 49 community members in the morning session and 61 in the evening session. Explained the format and setup. Got a lot of community feedback on how the event worked. There were two Spanish interpreters; there were no Spanish

speakers attending the event but she feels there should nevertheless be interpreters in the future.

- Freeman: Praised the turnout and the format of the event. Thanked the people who planned it. An impressive event.
- Karberg: Agreed with Freeman. Liked the format and the interaction with people. Wondered if they should send out the feedback forms for those who attended and might not have filled out the forms there on site.
- Hill: She plans to send out emails to direct attendees to the site for feedback.
- Brace: Was at the morning session and impressed with the diversity of people. Felt it should have been longer. His feeling is that whenever we're leading up to a feasibility study or project we should do an event like this beforehand.
- Beller: Felt it was successful because there was a lot of pre-publicity for the event. We usually don't have the opportunity to advertise in advance.
- Braine: Agreed with the others. Noted a comment from a friend who attended: It's a complex subject and difficult to understand from viewing the posters. A live presentation would help. It was terrific but had some limitations. He was impressed with the number of town staff that were there to explain things. Really well done.
- Hill: She heard the same thing about the difficulty of absorbing the material. She plans to upload a video and the poster boards online. Fortunately they had money from the grant to pay for the advertising. It is not cheap to advertise.
- Brace: Asked for comments from the public. There were none.

8. Public outreach ideas/strategies from committee members: Acclimate's social media report for CRAC by Ava Rollins

- Rollins: ACKlimate engaged her to look at ways to enhance their social media as a channel of communicating with the public. They're prepared this report. She had a positive experience with Leah and the town to present enhanced messages. Interested in how well this worked and if you want them to continue. Presented report. (See packet)
- Brace: Fitting that you followed the previous topic. Talked about the CRAC Thursday posts. Wondered if CRAC should hire an intern to post a reel every day. The Whaling museum event was well publicized and lots of people showed up. People need to know what were working on and that we meet every two weeks. Should be a reel on instagram every day. Need to get everybody on board now.
- Rollins: People are starting to see what's going on and need to continue. Doesn't agree that an intern can accomplish this. It would require hiring creatives, artists and photographers—not necessarily at market rates. Should explore how residents can gather content. Would help get community engaged. Offered to sit down and brainstorm.
- Bois: Liked the idea of empowering the community to help. Would like to see a marriage of the kind of work Ava presented, along with the posts we're doing. Sometimes our posts are long. She liked a project "Works in Progress" that Ava did that used video interviews. Every time we're doing something there should be reels posted. Citizen-made reels are a good idea—people respond to people they know.
- Hill: Ava please tell us how we can help you help us.

- Rollins: Discussing how to proceed with ACKclimate. Should have a conversation about how to use “sticky” content to entertain people and get attention. And how to incentivize people to make content.
- Brace: Asked how do members feel about doing that? There were many thumbs up.
- Bois: How do we know what to do next?
- Rollins: Would like to continue working on it and will discuss with ACKclimate what they want to do and how to be subsidized.
- Hill: CRAC doesn’t have funding so it would be helpful if we could go through ACKclimate. CRAC has been trying to get coverage from newspapers without much luck, so ACKclimate could be a great outlet.
- Brace: He would like to have a short video created that could run before movies at the Dreamland and on the Ferries, including interviews with the CRAC members. CRAC previously applied for a grant to fund it but didn’t get it.

9. 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

- Braine reported that ConCom is getting into the process of discussing and amending the Order of Conditions for the SBPF/TON plan for Sconset bluff protection. Presentations are completed. It will take several more meetings. Making some progress.
- Hill: Reported that she attended the Community Association presidents breakfast and explained coastal resilience districts. Many of the orgs are working on local plans.
- Karberg:
 - o She announced a meeting on Sept. 12 at 5pm NCF and the Trustees are consultants for the Refuge resilience work and will be doing a public meeting discussing to present where they are on potential work. Wednesday September 4 at 4pm Clair and Jen are doing a Climate Summit at the Great Harbor Yacht Club. It will be an update on what the adaptations and changes are relating to climate change on Nantucket.
 - o Also there will be a panel of different organizations on Nantucket will discuss what they’re seeing and planning re: Climate change.
- Freeman: Charles Johnson is doing a storm water feasibility study open house and presenting ideas at the sewer facility tomorrow from 10 to 2. Good opportunity to see what ideas the town is looking at.
- Brace: He confirmed that New Business is the correct place to announce calendar items like these.

10. Discussion of upcoming meeting dates and topics:

- No meeting August 27
- Next Meeting is Sept 10, 2024, on Zoom

11. Motion to adjourn:

- Moved (Bois), seconded (Braine), approved unanimously (9-0).