

Nantucket Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee (CRAC)
Tuesday, October 8, 2024
Via Zoom

*Meetings are audio- and video-recorded

Members present: Gary Beller, Peter Brace, Dr. Sarah Bois, Tim Braine, Matt Fee, Doug Rose, Christy Kickham

Members Absent: Joanna Roche, Rachael Freeman, Dr. Jen Karberg

Staff present: Leah Hill, Vince Murphy

Scheduled Speakers: Rick Atherton, Ava Rollins

Members of the public: Claire Martin, Shelly Lockwood, Gerry Connick

Recording available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_m2BVQoSrbo

Packet available here: <https://www.nantucket-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/10082024-14347>

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

- Leah Hill read a public comment submitted by Gerry Connick who could not attend.

Submitted Sept 25. He was concerned to hear that Mr. Murphy was quite a way along in defining the Coastal Resilience Districts and wanted to know when the Select Board authorized this and who is on the committee choosing the districts.

4. Approval of minutes

- Minutes for July 23, 2024 were approved with one corrected name spelling suggested by Sarah Bois.

5. Discussion on Hold Harmless Citizen Warrant Article with Rick Atherton

- Atherton:
 - o Reviewed discussions of Hold Harmless By laws for coastal residents in 2015 town meeting. Proposal was to draft a zoning by law requiring property owners in coastal zones to sign Hold Harmless agreements in order to get a building permit. It didn't pass. It was tried again in 2019 and failed at town meeting.
 - o Pointed out that CRAC recommends town consider erosion liability waivers in some form. Feels it's up to CRAC to bring this forward to the select board and planning board.
- Rose:

- Senses that there is interest on CRAC to recommend something like this and feels this is an opportunity to recommend it to Select Board.
 - Would suggest that it be extended to storm surge, ground water damage and other threats, not just erosion.
- Braine: Wondered if these waivers would include not just property damage but failure of the town to provide services.
- Atherton:
 - Felt that this is part of the discussion that has to take place.
 - The idea is to shift responsibility to property owners who choose to build in at-risk areas. He pointed out that there are many communities around the country which have already adopted such regulations.
- Brace: This would be a good thing to add to informing the realtors.
- Murphy:
 - Pointed out a problem: There is already a state law that exists and does this kind of indemnification. This might put us in a bind if we had something that is at odds with state law. We are not at risk.
 - Also pointed out that this is not a recommendation in the CRP.
 - This would be better included in a strategic retreat and relocation plan and we should hold off until that plan is made.
- Brace: Asked Vince if the state version is exactly what we want to do or is there a nantucket-specific version.
- Murphy: Not sure. He pointed out that the town has never been sued so this is a perceived risk.
- Fee: Agreed that retreat and relocation is the place to put it. Thinks that there is a nantucket version and that the state is not up to speed on climate change problems. Perhaps the building department could do this now. Should be careful what is included because it might pick up neighborhoods that we don't want to be doing.
- Rose: Asked Vince to share the specifics of the state law. .
- Murphy: Will provide that.
- Fee: Reiterated that this is important for CRAC to explore.
- Brace: Asked Leah if we can write a letter to the building department recommending they look into this.
- Hill: Needs research. But she thinks it should be in the retreat and relocation work.

6. Public outreach ideas/strategies from committee members. Discussions on how ACKclimate can help CRAC's outreach and education campaign with Ava Rollins, ACKclimate's Director of Social Communication

- Rose: Thanked Ava Rollins and ACKclimate for supporting CRAC. Feels that the work CRAC has done on outreach was good but we could use the help and would like to know more about what other groups have done.
- Rollins:
 - *Explained what she has done. Feels that Nantucket is already being affected by climate change and is a microcosm of what's happening in other places globally. Feels that CRAC members would be great messengers for outreach as members of the community.*

- *Suggest doing videos on various topics. Maybe preview videos for CRAC meetings.*
- Brace:
 - Reiterated that the CRAC members are experts in various areas on the island and are good representatives of the community.
 - Suggested that Ava give us an elevator speech with a unified message.
- Rollins:
 - Suggest she meet with each member individually and from that create an elevator pitch and make videos.
- Bois: That the committee is diversified will be a benefit in explaining the various components of resilience—science, policy. Etc. Feels also that people don't necessarily know what CRAC's areas of concern are and what are not CRAC's concern.
- Kickham: Need public to understand what the CRAC process is and what CRAC has worked on. Suggested doing a definition of the week to educate people on the language of CRACs realm.
- Hill: Suggested that the first video should be about what CRAC does. Also videos of the coastal hazards. Also asked about how ACKclimate is funded.
- Rollins: Funded through the end of the year. Wants to do the What is CRAC video and also interviews of all the members. Also get members of the public to do videos of erosion etc and what's happening around the island.
- Hill: would there be weekly videos?
- Rollins: will take cues from CRAC. Explained what CRAC meeting previews and recaps videos would be.
- Brace: Suggested that we use video of our site visits; also could use My Coast app more; also suggested napkins with CRAC messages for use by restaurants.
- Rollins: ACKclimate sponsors a coastal resilience walk and could ultimately do an app. Asked if there is any sort of call to action for community members...things people can do. Suggested collaboration with Land and Water Council. Next step is for Rollins to contact CRAC members and set up meetings. Will send a list of questions for members. Leah will vet them with the town.
- Murphy: Noted that if we do a group interview with a quorum it would have to be posted.

7. Discussion on updating the zoning by-law and regulations with coastal resiliency

- Brace:
 - Pointed out that CRAC needs to work on zoning change recommendations..it is a priority of the CRP. The plans in place in other towns are only recommendations and their zoning hasn't yet been changed, but they can serve as inspiration.
 - He suggested an idea: Use data to pick a date in the future beyond which building won't be allowed in certain areas.
- Rose:
 - Feels there is a difference of opinion on the committee between picking one idea and pushing it or spending time putting together a comprehensive plan. He has a bias toward the latter, even if it takes many months.

- Brace agreed with this approach.
- Fee: Maybe we simply need to recommend to the Select Board to implement the recommendations in the CRP. Rather than take time coming up with our own list. This would jump start the process. Or we should recommend a process getting other parts of the government involved. That will be more likely to be productive.
- Brace: Agrees with Matt but thinks we should still make sure there aren't other things to recommend that aren't in the CRP.
- Kickham: If we get going on it soon ideas will present themselves in the process.
- Hill: Feels we will learn more when Shannon Hulst from Woods Hole Sea Grant comes next meeting to present on the mandated updated Mass bylaw. This may give us new ideas and inform our process. Feels we should work with planning dept. and others to make the list.
- Beller: Agreed with Matt. Arcadis came up with recommendations in the CRP and we should be pushing them, rather than coming up with our own.
- Brace: It's up to CRAC to push this whether it's the CRP recommendations or other ideas.
- Rose: Thinks we should take the CRP list and add the six ideas Leah had sent out and give it to the Select Board.
- Brace agreed.
- Fee: Select Board needs to ask Planning...If we go directly they can ignore us.
- Brace: We should use the meeting with Shannon as a workshop opportunity.
- Hill: Asked for topic suggestions from members to give Shannon in advance.
- Brace: Suggested she explain the State's hold harmless law.
- Fee: Hardscaping, pools, etc—can she speak about those...not just houses.
- Brace: will she have HDC expertise?
- Hill: Read Gerry Connick's comments: Friday October 4...Did members do their homework? How does section 139-8 need to be modified to relate to the CRP. She's suggesting she and Peter will write a response.

8. 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

- Rose: reported on an experiment to see if Chat GPT could compose our minutes. The experiment was a failure...AI couldn't generate coherent minutes.
- Braine: asked to be reminded which meetings still need minutes.
- Fee: thanked Doug for trying the experiment and believes AI will soon develop the ability to do minutes.

9. Discussion of upcoming meeting dates and topics: Next meeting October 22

10. Motion to adjourn