



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

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*John Bullard, Chair
Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair*

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, February 15, 2024

CRC, Subcommittee Members, Staff & Others Present:

- John Bullard, Chair
- Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair
- Michael Burris – Town Planner
- Amy Messier – Assistant Town Planner
- Jim Whitin
- Bob Daylor
- Michael Sullivan
- Joseph Ingoldsby
- Phil Weinberg
- Donna Amaral
- David Sprogis
- Constance Gee
- Jake McGuigan
- Jeff Cantin
- Mark Rasmussen
- Michael Yogman
- Sean Leach
- Delaney Ingalls
- Ray Raposa
- Kevin Curt – East Beach Improvement Committee, Chair
- Tony Vivenzio

John Bullard called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

1. Introductions: no new introductions at this time.

2. Approval of 12/14/23 Minutes:

Michael Sullivan motioned to approve the minutes of 12/14/23, seconded by Dave Sprogis, the motion carried, with Shana Shufelt abstaining.

3. Water Subcommittee Report: Presentation & Discussion:

Michael Sullivan circulated a draft Water Subcommittee Report and gave a brief slideshow presentation, which can be viewed [here](#) (10:39 – 19:43). Mr. Sullivan gave an overview of the presumed mission of the Water Subcommittee, objective, format, completion status, and broad recommendations based on the six localized drivers that have been identified. Once the presentation concluded, John Bullard opened the meeting up for commentary which included the following;

- Anthony Vivenzio: concerns over what the RCP 8.5 model is projecting vs. the Woods Hole data relating to sea level rise and the shoreline. Vivenzio suggested that it may be

important to have an appendix or note that indicates that there's a divergence and a recommendation for using an alternative of what it considered a "most likely scenario".

- Phil Weinberg: questioned the reports targeted audience and its intended function. Weinberg suggested that the report would be easier to interact with if it was converted into a Word document in order to allow edits/ suggestions. Lastly, Weinberg inquired as to whether the committee wants to propose very specific solutions/ recommendations or leave that more open to the public.
- Shana Shufelt: clarified that the Select Board will be the target audience for this report and may make specific recommendations under their control, however the report will also be for the community.
- Jim Whitin: Stated that the format of the report is great for education purposes and the citizens of the town. Suggested that the CRC should have come kind of direct recommendation relating to the dredged material by the Army Corps. of Engineers that should be used for beach nourishment or thin layer deposition of the marshes.
- Sean Leach: stated that the report lacks addressing the freshwater bodies within Town. Mentioned that the legal advertisement for the dredging of the Westport Harbor was in the paper last week, and that there is a 21-day comment period. Mr. Leach stated that he will be writing a letter as the Chair of the Beach Committee relating to beach nourishment and recommends that other committees also provide commentary.

4. Coastal Resilience Report to the Select Board Introductory Section:

John Bullard stated that a draft preface was distributed to the CRC committee with the intention of receiving commentary and suggestions from others. Mr. Bullard went on further to say that the report has to be consistent relating to what projections are used throughout the entire report, and therefore the committee will have to come to an agreement on which projections to use. It was suggested that a decision should be made at next month's meeting by majority vote on what projections to use since it's imperative that there's consistency among all chapters of the report. Mr. Vivenzio and Mr. Bullard encouraged everyone to view David Sprogis' presentation and the minutes of the last CRC meeting on 12/14/23 (minutes and linked presentation [here](#)).

5. Resilience - East Beach Discussion:

John Bullard stated that he'd like to spend two meetings on this, and reiterated that the Select Board had asked the Planning Board and the CRC for ideas on what to do with East Beach. Mr. Bullard stated that tonight he would like to discuss any ideas and reasonable approaches relating to the four storms that we have had as of recent. Michael Burriss provided context on what the CRC should be producing for the Select Board, which includes a report to the Select Board outlining the following; existing conditions; scoping out problems; defining what kinds of regulatory structures are in place on East Beach; developing a set of approaches to sea level rise, and so on. Mr. Burriss further went on to explain that the Planning Office is currently compiling a lot of information, data points, mapping, and working with various other departments to put into the report. A summary will be provided to the Select Board of prior work that was done, such as the East Beach MVP, and that the main goal of this report is to provide the Select Board a general overview of all of the forces at play at East Beach in order to provide a holistic picture. Mr. Burriss suggested acknowledging that there are some other at risk areas that aren't part of the scope of the report but could use further analysis as well. Lastly, it was noted that the report will be forwarded to the Planning Board before getting sent to the Select Board. Mr. Bullard asked Jim Whitin what the Planning Board's approach is relating to the request by the Select Board, in which Mr. Whitin stated that there's a need to compile a background of what the history is relating to what policies exist today and what the policies have been in the past in order to grasp a better understanding

before making a recommendation and moving forward. Mr. Bullard opened the meeting up to suggestions on potential ideas for East Beach, which included the following;

- David Sprogis: stated that he is under the assumption that the current policy does not allow for material (cobblestones) to be removed, and that the default position of the town would be to put back the material where it came from after a storm event and compared the policy similar to the plowing of snow. Ms. Shufelt stated that the default policy at the moment is for the Highway Department to do the best they can to shore-up the roads that are being inundated.
- Phil Weinberg: Spoke to Dave Sprogis' comment and stated that the Conservation Commission issued a letter to all the owners of parcels long East Beach that laid out what the conditions were for beach restoration. Mr. Weinberg stated that Conservation is receiving proposals from lot owners to begin beach restoration, in which one of the requirements is that the restoration has to be with compatible material (sand and cobble). Lastly due to the most recent storms, there are numerous septic tanks with varying degrees of damage that are exposed, which will require inspections by the Board of Health and reparation by the lot owners.
- Shana Shufelt: explained that the Select Board is seeking recommendations from other departments due to a string of various regulations in place that fall under different regulating bodies, and guidance moving forward for a more consistent policy is necessary.
- Anthony Vivenzio: wants to ensure there is an understanding of factual information concerning the current situation of the beach from a policy perspective, in which he mentioned the following data that should be taken into consideration;
 - Sea level rise measurements at Woods Hole
 - Overlaid shoreline survey information relating to the Causeway
- Kevin Curt: stated that he believes the coastline of East Beach and the road has been compromised and made more vulnerable by the current practices than by sea level rise itself, specifically the relocation of the cobble to other areas up and down East Beach. Mr. Curt is meeting with Matthew Armendo from the Board of Health early next week relating to septic/tight tank issues, where a walk will be performed to assess the situation and gain knowledge of what needs to be addressed going forward. The importance of coming up with a policy that is consistent in protecting the entire road versus portions of the road that are within the towns best interest was emphasized. Mr. Curt stated that he would like to see beach nourishment options, such as applying for possible grants and that retreat should not be an option.
- Mr. Bullard reiterated that it's likely that the CRC and Planning Board will come up with several recommendations to the Select Board versus one, in order to provide them with multiple options.
- Sean Leach: stressed the importance of options and listed the following items that should be at the forefront; keep the policies in place and keep doing what we have been doing; abandoning East Beach road; keeping East Beach Road.
- Mark Rasmussen: responding directly to Mr. Vivenzio and Mr. Curt relating to the Gooseberry Causeway study, that the study is in its final year of the three year duration and Buzzards Bay is approximately six months away from having revealing data from the study and a model that can be shared amongst the Committee and community. Mr. Rasmussen further went on to explain that for this specific study, a large oceanographic model will be compiled to answer the following questions;
 - where is sand going on this section of the beach?
 - why is the sand moving around and relocating?
 - What is the projection moving forward?

- What is the relative impact of the Gooseberry Causeway?

Mr. Rasmussen emphasized that this study will not help out the immediate concerns that people have regarding their lots, however it will be crucial information to help with the long term planning for East Beach. Mr. Rasmussen talked briefly on the subject of monetary buy-out and stated that Buzzards Bay does a lot of land purchasing for conservation around the bay and the MVP Program has signaled very strongly that they are actively looking for voluntary PILOT programs for Towns to try to test ideas for what works within communities. There is a significant amount of money within that program and multimillion dollar grants are not uncommon. Mr. Rasmussen expressed his idea of potentially setting up a system where anyone who would be willing to sell their East Beach lot to the Town could do so while getting paid for it from the grant funds. Another idea mentioned was having the Town buy the East Beach lots today with reserve life tenancy in order to allow for the owner to stay there for the remainder of their life. It was stated that the MVP grant deadline is in June and Mr. Rasmussen expressed his confidence in getting awarded the grant if anyone is interested in putting together a PILOT program for seeing whether or not residents are interested in selling their lots, etc. In response to Kevin Curts question regarding grants for beach nourishment, Mr. Rasmussen stated that he does not know of any grants at the moment, however, looking into repurposing the dredged material by the Army Corps that's usually dumped offshore could be beneficial.

- Anthony Vivencio: mentioned federal grants that have been issued in more southerly states for the repurposing of dredged material for beach nourishment.
- Ray Raposa: expressed that beach nourishment is a losing cause due to future storm wash out and that keeping East Beach Road open is the most important thing to focus on.
- Jake McGuigan: inquired whether other places in Massachusetts have had the ability to request or help pay (public/ private matching funds) for the repurposing of dredged materials for beach nourishment. Mr. Rasmussen stated that this practice is very common on the Cape where neighborhoods (private entities) pay for dredging.
- Constance Gee: inquired whether Beach Avenue can be addressed after East Beach Road since the most recent southerly storms have deteriorated the dunes, causing them to destabilize and wash out into the roadway. Ms. Shufelt stated that Beach Ave. wasn't specifically called out by the Select Board, however if a policy is being created and implemented, Beach Ave. could also be included.
- Jim Whitin: mentioned that last time the harbor was dredged (approx. 14 yrs. ago), the material was pumped up on Cherry & Webb beach against the dunes which was compromised by several southerly storms and high tides. The storms and high tides pushed the water over the dredged materials and dunes, creating a river that carried all of the dredged material back into the Harbor.

6. Next Meeting Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Sullivan motioned to adjourn, seconded by Leach, with all members in favor, the motion carried unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 6:52 P.M.

Accepted 3/21/24

