

Climate Change Resiliency Committee meeting minutes 01/12/2022, 7 pm

Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting

Present: Liz Callahan, Nancy Pau, Elisa Grammer, Chip Wallace, Rick Parker. Also present: River Road resident KC Swallow, and Town Manager Angus Jennings, Conservation Agent Michelle Greene, Conservation Commission Chair Judy Mizner

I. Reach agreement on the elements/projects to be included in our letter of intent to the Commonwealth (ahead of upcoming MVP grants) for discussion at 1/18/22 Select Board Meeting

- Which projects do we include?
- What is the priority?

Updates

Mr. Jennings commented that the list of areas of interest, particularly concerning River Road and related investments, is relevant and timely. He added that the Town has federal ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) funds in the amount of \$700K available, and would include stormwater management. *Whether ARPA funds could serve as matching funds for the action grant will be investigated.*

Ms. Pau provided some updates with respect to her working draft (available on [google docs](#)) for a [Letter of Interest](#) (due between January 21, 2022 and **February 1, 2022**—~~this has been changed~~—with priority given to early entries). She said that input from the Town Planner, the Conservation Agent, and the Town Manager has been helpful, particularly with the storm water management provisions, which have been inserted more recently.

Ms. Pau said that she has been in contact with several potential action grant contractors. Becky McKnight, who had worked on our initial MVP grant with consultant Horsley Whitten, could do work in mapping hotspots on River Road, identifying issues and ideally training others including interns. This is private land, but in many cases the road is the riverbank and so should be in the Town right of way. Ms. Pau said it would be important to contact the owner of the large fields closest to Rocks Bridge. Mr. Parker noted that it is permissible to enter on riverbank areas below the high tide level. Ms. Pau noted that perhaps the Town could charter a river tour with student interns; Mr. Jennings noted that West Newbury is sharing a pump out boat with Salisbury that might also be available.

Ms. Pau noted that consultant Geoff Wilson is excited to address storm water drainage issues at the new Pentucket High School/ Middle School. Another consulting group with which he works may contribute to this project.

Stormwater Management

Ms. Grammer noted that other towns, notably Deerfield, have used an MVP action grant to develop storm water management bylaws and regulations—and West Newbury could build on this work already done. She noted that [Deerfield's bylaw](#), which requires that developers allow no more runoff than occurred prior to construction, could prevent many of the problems West Newbury has been confronting. Ms. Mizner noted that a major problem is continuity of maintenance of stormwater

management facilities, and Ms. Grammer said that [Deerfield's regulations](#) specifically address this as well. Ms. Grammer suggested that separate from an action grant, the Town departments and committees with jurisdiction over this subject could review the Deerfield model and adopt/ revise it to work for West Newbury. Making an effort to prevent problems at the outset could produce a better result and conserve Town staff resources into the future. She agreed with Mr. Wallace that technical expertise will be needed to support Town decisionmakers confronting new developments and storm water problems that arise.

Ms. Grammer also observed again that the High School/ Middle School engineering team prepared extensive storm water management plans as part of the new construction and can be expected to assert that its storm water management scheme will be sufficient for new school's 50-year life. She added that taxpayers may wonder why they invested large amounts of money in a new school project built with an inadequate storm water management system, and asked if the Committee has evidence that additional remediation is needed. She said that it is possible that additional storm water management does need to be done at the school campus—and it would be good to have a sound factual basis for such a conclusion.

Ms. Swallow wondered whether the stormwater section of the action grant proposal is realistic, given that it is a major new item with a fairly recent introduction into the draft. Ms. Pau noted that Town staff recently expressed significant interest in this topic.

Interns

Ms. Pau raised the concept of using additional interns on action grant projects. Mr. Parker noted that funding for interns has been approved at Town meeting and any use of those funds should be consistent with the article the Town voted for. *It was generally agreed that new action grant funds could be used for a new purpose, particularly if interns are supervised by others.*

It was agreed that a subgroup consisting of Ms. Pau, Mr. Parker, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Greene, Patricia Reeser, Carol Decker, and Linda Schaeffer will work on protocols for day-to-day supervision of interns.

Action Items

Ms. Callahan said that the Letter of Interest would cover invasive /native plants, River Road preservation, and stormwater management. The state has a simple Letter of Interest form, and the google doc would be a more detailed attachment.

Mr. Parker noted this item is not on the Select Board's January 18 agenda, but could be on the agenda for January 31. It was not clear whether the Select Board would need to approve the Letter of Interest, which is not binding. *Mr. Parker will clarify this.* Last year a Letter of Interest was submitted, but the action grant was not pursued because the Town ran out of time.

Ms. Grammer will re-send last year's Letter of Interest.

It was agreed that:

- *Ms. Grammer will be the contact person on the Letter of Intent Form*
- *Committee members will submit comments on the [google doc](#) no later than **January 20***

- Ms. Grammer will fill out & circulate the draft Letter of Intent form by **January 24**
- The Committee will aim to consult with the Select Board at its meeting on **January 31**

II. Develop plan for 1/25/2022 meeting with Merrimac Conservation Commission

- Who presents?
- Presentation content?
- WNCCRC desired outcome from this meeting—what are we asking for?

Ms. Greene, who serves as Conservation Agent for both West Newbury and Merrimac, noted that the Merrimac Commission will have a very busy meeting on January 25th because a 40b project has just come up. The meeting is scheduled for 7 pm at the Merrimac Public Library, and Ms. Greene will give an alert if this changes to a virtual meeting due to COVID conditions. *It was agreed that Ms. Pau will give a short 5-10 minute presentation about what West Newbury is planning for its action grant proposal and invite collaboration with Merrimac. Ms. Grammer will accompany her. A successful outcome would be to continue discussions toward possible collaboration, and a mention in the Letter of Intent that conversations with Merrimac are occurring.*

III. Approve WNCCRC Annual Report FY 21

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the draft FY 21 annual report.

IV. Approve Minutes

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the draft minutes of December 8, 2021.

V. Other Matters

Mr. Parker described Newburyport's approach to the question of sea level rise: its projections are that sea level will increase by 6' at the end of this century. That would mean that the Merrimac River would rise to this level. He asked if our climate change mitigation should recognize this. Ms. Pau said that the state projections do not show that much impact in West Newbury. One thing to consider is crowdsourcing measurements of high tide levels.

VI. Next Meeting

February 9, 2022

VII. Adjournment

8:33 pm

VIII. Meeting Materials

Draft Letter of Interest attachment (available on [google docs](#))

MVP form [Letter of Interest](#)

[Emails concerning other towns' use of MVP action grants](#) to address stormwater issues