

Climate Change Resiliency Committee meeting minutes 1/4/2023, 5:30 pm

1910 Building, Town Offices, 1st Floor Hearing Room

Present: Liz Callahan, Nancy Pau, Elisa Grammer, Chip Wallace, Rick Parker. Also present: Department of Public Works Project Manager Christine Wallace.

MORIS tool

Ms. Grammer said that she had been playing with the [MORIS tool](#) that Ms. Pau had identified to gauge sea level rise. She said that in comparing data for 2021 vs. 2030, it appeared that some roads were underwater in 2030. She asked the others to look at this so that we might understand whether this is correct and what it means.

2023 Action Grant Expression of Intent

Ms. Wallace provided and discussed a draft Expression of Intent. This is due by January 20 and the earlier it is submitted, the more prompt and full attention it will receive. She said that she and others had talked with consultants at GEI and that as the proposal develops, the scope of their work needs to be reviewed—which GEI will help accommodate. In response to Ms. Pau, she said that she believes that the scope includes seepage under the road in terms of mitigation strategies, but that GEI may not be able to perform studies of groundwater flows.

Ms. Wallace said that because the focus this year is exclusively on River Road, the narrative is different from the one we submitted last year. This draft puts greater emphasis on public access on the road and recreation. The grant will help us understand flooding, erosion, etc. and allow us to develop strategies. Ms. Pau noted that as a result of the study proposed in this grant, the Town may be more aware of problems and limitations and thus be able to plan for various alternatives beyond merely trying to save River Road as it now exists.

Ms. Wallace took the group through her draft Expression of Interest form. Among other things the discussion addressed

- The importance of River Road at the Ferry Landing area in terms of access to the Rocks Bridge, which is critically important not only for West Newbury but also Haverhill and Merrimac (both with EJ communities) on the other side—and necessary for school buses and others
- Addition of category #1, emergency communications (because of the need for evacuation impacted by road flooding) as a MVP purpose met with this application
- The extent of flooding in the Coffin Street area, which extends to the bend in the road
- The importance of the study not only to help preserve River Road, but also to plan and look for alternatives such as relocation of access routes
- The need to remove references to invasive species, demonstration gardens, etc
- The Project Type as Planning, Assessment, etc—not Design & Permitting, which would come after
- The timeframe of FY 24 & FY25
- The keywords, with addition of Trees & Forests
- Priority keywords as Nature-Based Solutions; Coastal Flooding; Civic Engagement
- A “yes” to the question whether we are interested in piloting MVP 2.0 in the FY24 round—with a question whether this would help us find partners, particularly including EJ communities

The Committee agreed that Ms. Wallace would circulate another draft by the end of January 5, the committee members will submit comments as soon as possible (no later than January 8), and the Expression of Interest will be submitted on January 9.

2023 Action Grant Preparations

Webpage

Ms. Wallace and Ms. Grammer will work on the River Road Grant Project webpage next week. That will be linked to the Climate Change Resiliency Committee webpage. The final Expression of Interest will help inform the content for the webpage.

Letters of Support

The Committee agreed with Mr. Parker and Ms. Wallace that the requests for letters of support, with templates, should be sent out after we receive feedback on the Expression of Interest, as the feedback may help further shape the grant proposal. Ms. Wallace will circulate examples of templates from the grant request concerning safe routes to school.

The Committee agreed to the following assignments for Letters of Support

DPW	Christine Wallace
Emergency Mgmt	Chip Wallace
Planning Bd	Chip Wallace
Conservation Comsn	Elisa Grammer
Tree Committee	Elisa Grammer
Capital Improvements Committee	Elisa Grammer
Finance Committee	Elisa Grammer
Bicycling groups	Elisa Grammer
National Grid	Elisa Grammer
River Access Committee	Elisa Grammer
Open Space Committee	Elisa Grammer
Garden Club	Elisa Grammer
Birding groups	Elisa Grammer (with help as needed from Nancy Pau)
Park & Rec	Liz Callahan
Nearby municipalities	Mike Dacey
River Road & affected residents	Mike Dacey (with help as needed from Nancy Pau)
WN Wild & Native	Nancy Pau
Boating groups (e.g., Plum Island Kayaks, marinas)	Nancy Pau
PIERivers	Nancy Pau
Greenscapes	Nancy Pau
Gulf of Maine Institute	Nancy Pau
Police & Fire Dept	Rick Parker
Merrimack Valley Planning Council	Rick Parker
State Senator Bruce Tarr	Rick Parker
State Representative Adrian Ramos	Rick Parker
Merrimack Valley Watershed Council	Rick Parker
Merrimac River Watershed	Rick Parker
Ipswich River Watershed Assn	Nancy Pau

Other items for preparation

Additional action items in preparation for the grant application include:

- *Working collaboratively on the [RMAAT tool](#) at its next meeting (and the next regularly scheduled meeting is February 8, 2023).*
- *Working on how to use and understand the [MORIS tool](#).*
- *Urging committee members and the public to photograph water levels at River Road, sharing them with the Committee and using this site <https://mycoast.org/ma/king-tides/photos> to upload them for data collection*
- *Reevaluating the scope for GEI in view of feedback from the state*
- *Inviting GEI to our meeting in the near future—perhaps March*
- *Asking GEI to help explain MORIS for the benefit of the Town staff and the public*
- *Asking GEI to develop a more detailed and larger diagram/plan of the work planned*

Budget

The Committee determined that it does not need an FY24 budget request.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes of December 7, 2022, as amended.

Other Business

Mr. Parker explained that for reasons relating to water supplies, he is interested in learning more about how salinity may advance upstream in the Merrimack River as sea level rises. *He will be talking with people from the US Geologic Service about this. Ms. Grammer will join him.*

Adjournment

7:46 pm

Meeting materials

Draft Expression of Interest

Draft letter templates & recipient lists