

Climate Change Resiliency Committee meeting minutes 2/8/2023, 5:30 pm

1910 Building, Town Offices, 1st Floor Hearing Room

Present: Nancy Pau, Elisa Grammer, Chip Wallace, Rick Parker, Mike Dacey.

Action Grant Update

Ms. Grammer reviewed our 2023 grant timeline:

- West Newbury's [Expression of Interest](#) (EOI) was submitted on January 9
- We have an appointment to receive feedback on Monday, February 13, with Department of Public Works (DPW) Project Manager Christine Marshall, DPW Director Wayne Amaral, Rick Parker & Elisa Grammer participating
- The process for grant applications will likely open around mid-March
- Applications will likely be due in May
- Award announcements will likely be made in the summer, with projects starting in the fall

The Committee penciled in a meeting date of February 16, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in case a meeting is needed to address items raised in the feedback session.

RMAT & MORIS tools

RMAT & MORIS flood projections for 2030

Ms. Grammer shared her concern that in her trial runs (done with no expertise in this subject), both the [RMAT tool](#) and [MORIS tool](#) indicate that by 2030, portions of River Road and Coffin Street at the bend may be underwater at high tide. The Committee looked at the maps she had developed using those tools. She asked about bank restoration if areas were in fact underwater part of each day. Ms. Pau noted that the GIS-based maps may well be inaccurate at a highly localized level, but agreed that they could be inaccurate in terms of either portraying a more or less significant threat.

The Committee agreed to:

- *During the feedback session, ask our state MVP representative who might help us better understand what the RMAT and MORIS tools are showing*
- *Consider asking for help from Woods Hole on this*
- *Deepen understanding of this on the part of Committee members, including familiarization with the RMAT & MORIS tools*
- *Work on developing an educational program for townspeople about this, perhaps via discussions with those in neighboring towns now experiencing nuisance flooding like Newbury and Salisbury how they are coping and what we can learn from their experience*
- *Ensure that this issue is addressed in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan update*
- *Raise the question of tidal flooding at River Road and on Coffin Street with GEI at the March meeting*

It was also generally agreed that the GEI study should evaluate two concerns with River Road

- 1) stability/integrity of the roadway in view of bank erosion, undercutting, seepage below the road, etc. and*
- 2) flooding due to high tides or storms*

Completing the RMAT form

The Committee discussed the RMAT tool, which must be submitted in connection with the grant application. Ms. Grammer said that some of the questions were very hard to answer, such as the dollar value of River Road, its useful life, and replacement cost. It was noted that we would have to make our best guesses. *The Committee concluded that*

- *Ms. Wallace would take the lead on this, with help from DPW Director Wayne Amaral and Nancy Pau, as well as other Committee members who would like to assist and*
- *Work on this can be done before the grant application form is released*
- *How to get RMAT advice should be raised in the feedback session*

Past River Road Restoration

The Committee discussed the 1998 plans to restore River Road and particularly the riverbank using natural solutions such as revegetation. *Mr. Parker will ask former DPW Director Gary Bill about this and Ms. Grammer will check the historical records.*

Community support/involvement

Ms. Grammer described the MVP webinar that discussed community outreach in Plymouth consisting of the League of Women Voters and the Plymouth Library developing a “Read Up A Storm” program in which a wide range of books touching on climate change were identified and promoted. Ms. Grammer noted that the Town Library Director was enthusiastic about this. *The Committee authorized Ms. Grammer to pursue this with the Library.*

The Committee also discussed Climate Café at Pentucket. Ms. Pau said that the students have a very good Climate Café about preparing for disaster and helping neighbors. She also suggested programs about planning for flooding tides.

The Committee noted that Letters of Support templates can be developed after we have received feedback on the EOI and have a more final narrative description of the project, which will be reflected in the updated [webpage](#).

Wheelabrator Contributions

It was noted that the email from Geoff Wilson that Nancy Pau shared said that the Wheelabrator contributions might include

- Technical assistance and project planning
- Materials acquisition assistance for both plant materials and hardscape materials
- Implementation support including light excavation and volunteering efforts
- Environmental education support including interpretive aids and signage
- Potential funding to cover unfunded aspects of the project or to help cover match requirements that can not be met with in-kind services

Ms. Pau clarified that the contribution would likely be nature-based shoreline solutions and implementation, after Mr. Wilson reviews the GEI report. These are particular areas of expertise for Mr. Wilson. She suggested that we include this in-kind contribution in the grant application. *Ms. Pau will contact Mr. Wilson and/or his colleagues to confirm the amount of community involvement and the match and obtain a description of what the contribution will include.*

Approval of Minutes

The Committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes of January 4, 2023.

Other Business

Mr. Parker mentioned that his Select Board colleague Wendy Reed had suggested that MVP grant money might be available to acquire land for water supply purposes. Ms. Grammer said that she believes this is worth pursuing. She had been in several MVP meetings where Newburyport had been asking about MVP grant money to raise the Artichoke dam for water supply reasons.

Next meeting

If needed, the Committee will meet at 5:30 pm on February 16 to discuss significant issues that may arise during the feedback session.

The date for the March meeting will depend on GEP's availability.

Adjournment

6:58 pm

Meeting materials

Prior River Road restoration plans

Nancy Pau description of Wheelabrator program

MORIS results

RMAT results