

Climate Change Resiliency Committee meeting minutes 11/10/2021, 7 pm

Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting

Present: Liz Callahan, Nancy Pau, Elisa Grammer, Chip Wallace, Rick Parker

River Road Site Walk

Nancy Pau reported that the invitations were sent out and about 14 residents signed up. The plan is to start around 1 pm.

It was agreed that Ms. Pau and Mr. Parker will do the guiding. They will use the opportunity to discuss the importance of riverbank vegetation. Mr. Parker will take along a ladder; Ms. Grammer will bring a broom stick-like pole. The farmer's field and the Worth Lane areas will be on the tour. If possible, copies of large maps will be available and residents' input, particularly about flooding experiences, will be recorded.

Also, the committee agreed that Ms. Grammer will send a copy of the Pau/Jennings report of the prior sitewalk to representatives of Merrimac & Groveland.

MVP Action Grant

Ms. Grammer went over the schedule for 2022 grants, with expressions of interest beginning at the end of this month and release of the RFR likely at the end of March, 2022. Ms. Grammer will check with our state representative to see if the grant application will be much the same as prior years. Ms. Pau noted that the state's MVP staff did a tour of the Parker River Refuge and seemed very interested in nature-based solutions.

The committee agreed that getting a list of grant action items will be important and Ms. Pau committed to updating the list previously developed and circulating it among committee members. Possible additions, based in part on conversations with Town staff, could include roadside drainage, MS 4 mapping, etc. Consultants Geoff Wilson and GEI (which is more technical/engineering-oriented) may be part of developing an assessment. Ms. Grammer will circulate to the committee the proposal made by GEI earlier this year. The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission may also be a resource—the committee could share its letter of interest with that group.

Mr. Parker said that he does not expect pushback based on the use of Town resources to support the grant. As to coordinating with other towns to spread the burdens, Ms. Grammer said that the reactions from Merrimac and Groveland have been cordial but not wildly enthusiastic. *She will try to get the opinion of our Conservation Agent (who is shared with Merrimac) on Merrimac's potential interest in coordinating. Ms. Pau may also reach out to Amesbury, and the Pentucket High School students may be a means of developing inter-town coordination.*

It was generally agreed that

- 1) *At its next meeting, the committee will review a list of action items (with rough budget) to be included in a letter of interest*
- 2) *In December, Mr. Parker will have this put on the Select Board agenda.*

US Dept of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Funding

Ms. Pau said that NRCS has many different programs that could be used for invasives management, soil hydrology, etc on anything that could count as farmland (which is expansively defined). This could apply to Town land and to forests as well. A first step is to determine what land might qualify—perhaps the Open Space Committee could take the lead on this. Demand for the program is high, and NRCS staff resources are not large, so getting attention may be an issue. Ms. Pau said that Rick Thurlow knows something about the owner of the farmland at River Road; *Ms. Callahan will look into this to try to find ways of connecting that farmer with NRCS.*

Other topics?

None

Approval of minutes

The committee voted unanimously to approve the draft minutes of the 10/13/2021 meeting.

Next mtg

December 8, 2021

Adjournment

8:27 pm

Meeting materials

Prior documents concerning possible 2021 Action Grant Application, as contained in Ms. Grammer's email