

West Newbury MVP Core Team Meeting 12/10/2019 7 pm Town Offices

Present: Ellie Baker, Chip Wallace, Patricia Reeser, Wendy Reed, Nancy Pau, Liz Callahan, Paul Sevigny, Rick Parker, Elisa Grammer

Survey

It was decided to keep the survey open until shortly before the workshop, with the QR remaining at the Town Offices door, but we will not actively solicit more responses.

Ellie noted that we had a pretty strong response and power issues were the most significant concern, with problems like animal/insect borne diseases coming in somewhat surprisingly high on the list. A large number of responders have their own generators and they were divided almost 50/50 but slightly in favor of receiving personal benefits from backup power at the municipal campus.

The survey will be included in materials discussed at the workshop.

Interviews:

Ellie is working on the interviews now. She will prepare and share with the Core Team notes of individual interviews and compile the notes into a large overview showing vulnerabilities and potential preparedness actions. This will also go into the workshop presentation.

Elisa Grammer will interview Mike Gootee of the Water Department and Theresa Woodbury of the Council on Aging, and will let Ellie know when the interviews take place in case Ellie can participate.

Ellie described the interviews completed to date:

- Pentucket Superintendent Justin Bartholomew and Facilities Manager Greg Hadden stressed that Page School is falling apart and is costly to maintain. Power outages are highly disruptive and a larger back up generator would be better. The south side tends to become very hot in warm months and this may worsen with climate change. Because of its many problems, Page School would not be suitable as a shelter. There may be an issue with the septic system as groundwater rises. There was no discussion of potential flooding as they plan to build a new high school/middle close to the Merrimack River.
- Longtime resident Rick Thurlow and Health Agent Paul Sevigny discussed the power outage problem and also focused on drainage issues as West Newbury has become less agricultural and more residential with more impermeable surfaces and more homeowners who don't know about drainage ditches and swales which, when clogged, can alter runoff patterns. They suggested better education of townspeople about maintaining swales and drainage ditches. Wendy Reed, who is on the Conservation Commission, noted that these drainage features may also be wetlands resources that cannot be cut or altered without ConCom approval. This makes an education program complicated. The town's storm water management program that is part of the MS 4 project is limited to the densely populated parts of town around town center.
- Town Manager Angus Jennings discussed his qualms about West Newbury's MVP participation because 1) he is very busy and so is town staff and it's doubtful that they have time for this and 2) this is a narrow process focused on climate change preparedness when the town really needs a broader master plan. He identified the following issues: 1) power

outages, 2) drought and adequacy of water supplies, and 3) invasive species, particularly Asian bittersweet. Nancy Pau pointed out that Japanese knotweed is a greater concern and explained that unlike other neighboring areas, West Newbury still may be able to contain these invasive populations. Nancy agreed with Liz Callahan that DPW mowing may spread invasives and Wendy Reed said that the Open Space Committee and DPW are working on a mowing plan and this question of invasives management could be considered in that plan.

Workshop Logistics

Invitees: The group went over the list of invitees and suggested additional stakeholders. Elisa Grammer agreed to add in as much contact information as possible and to allocate invitees among the Core Team so that Core Team members can follow up to try to assure attendance.

Invitations: Since Angus Jennings will not be sending out invitations, Rick Parker would see if the Selectmen will do so, and failing that Rick Parker could do so in his role as Core Team member and Selectman. It was agreed that we would 1) have an email “save the date” type send out using Rick Parker’s email, 2) follow up with an evite email invitation (with mailed or hand delivered versions to those without email) to be sent just after the New Year, and 3) have Core Team members personally follow up with each of their allocated stakeholder invitees.

Ellie will circulate a draft of the “save the date” and evite invitations. As to the content of the invitations, Ellie will remove reference to a “Community Development Plan” and will clarify that this MVP process will build on and not repeat prior town planning activities such as the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Hazard Mitigation Plan (which the Core Team noted is regional and not meaningfully focused on West Newbury) and the Comprehensive Plan (which is 20 years old).

Time and Place: The town annex, February 29, 2020 from 9- 4 pm. Elisa Grammer will reserve the Annex for February 28 and 29.

Workshop mechanics:

- Ellie will send a draft of her presentation to the Core Team
- Ellie will ask Mike Morris of Newburyport Storm Surge (and a West Newbury resident) to make his presentation
- Ellie will send the Core Team a more detailed description of their roles during the workshop
- Elisa will see about using the Garden Club coffee pot, etc
- Patricia will arrange lunch from Panera