

## MVP Core Team meeting notes 9/30/2020, 7 pm

Present: Liz Callahan, Nancy Pau, Patricia Reeser, Wendy Reed, Rick Parker, Chip Wallace, Hannah Grinnell, Veronica McDonough, Elisa Grammer

*Next meeting: October 28, 2020, 7 pm See meeting information below*

### 1) Going forward: issues to pursue

#### Improving communications

Elisa Grammer said she contacted Emergency Preparedness Director Lee Ann Delp and Council on Aging Director Theresa Woodbury, providing a list of potential actions other towns had developed using MVP action grants, such as expanded Code Red usage, a neighbor-to-neighbor communication system, etc. Ms. Woodbury indicated that it has been difficult to reach out successfully to the elderly population, particularly with COVID related information, and Ms. Delp said she appreciated the list of ideas.

*Elisa Grammer will respond to both, saying that the MVP group stands ready to assist them with efforts to obtain grants to support their actions to improve communications.*

#### Invasive plants

Nancy Pau said that her subcommittee will be meeting in the near future.

Elisa Grammer noted that she observed Japanese knotweed behind the Pentucket middle school near the new track and the new tennis courts. She posited that the knotweed could be introduced with “clean” fill soils. Perhaps construction projects involving fill could be conditioned on a requirement that for the 2-3 years following construction, the area should be inspected for invasive plants and if found, those plants should be suppressed.

Nancy Pau stressed that to be feasible, it is important that this effort focuses on certain plant species (knotweed, black swallow wort, etc) and/or certain locations. She noted that knotweed can spread if any small part of the plant is in the soil. She noted that best practices include such provisions as washing mowing equipment. She also said that the key is to treat any outbreak right away.

Patricia Reeser noted that past work had been done on drafting a bylaw definition of clean fill. Liz Callahan suggested that perhaps developers could be required to put funds into escrow to deal with invasive species outbreaks they may cause. Rick Parker said that state laws limit a town’s ability to do this.

*Wendy Reed said that she will put this issue of clean fill on the Conservation Commission agenda and will raise this with the Planning Board.*

*Elisa Grammer will look into what other towns may be doing about invasive species, particularly in terms of the question of fill soil.*

*Nancy Pau will look into other potential funding sources to address this issue.*

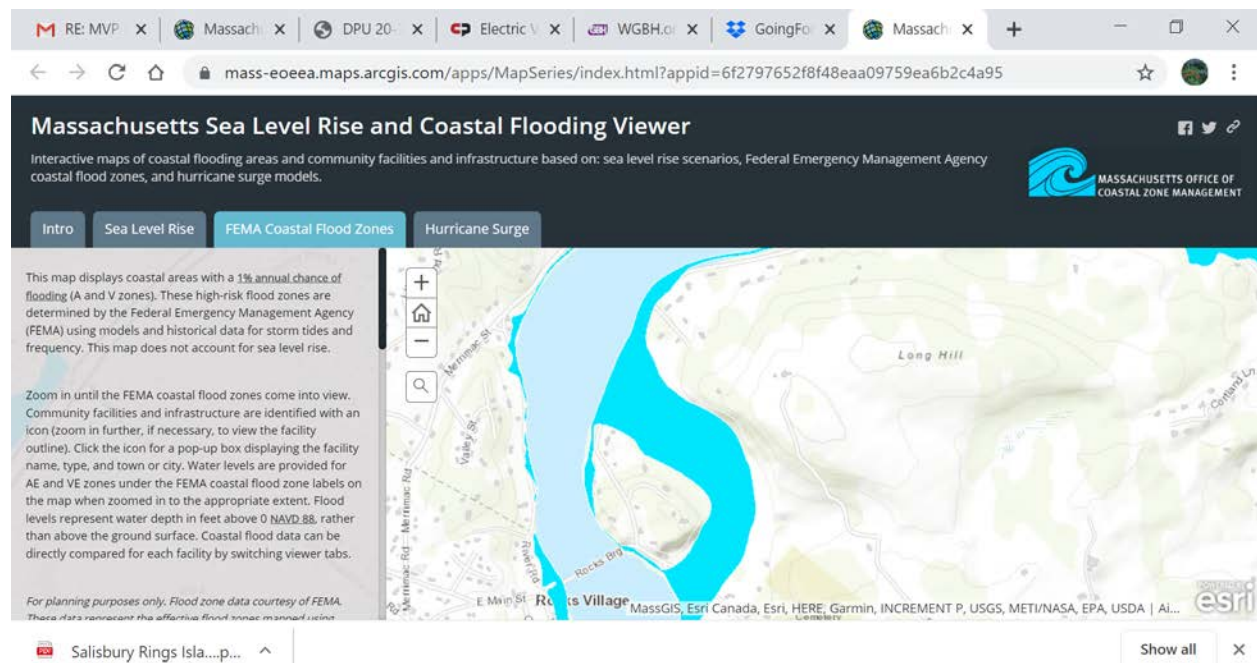
#### Storm water management

Elisa Grammer said that a towns person whose well ran dry in this drought suggested a rain barrel program. She noted that storing rainwater addresses issues of drought and storm water management. Other places use cisterns, rain gardens, etc. to both hold water and manage runoff.

Chip Wallace said that Newburyport had a rain barrel program and Wendy Reed said she had spoken with WN Water Department Director Mike Gootee. He said that West Newbury had had such a program, but the townspeople did not respond. If we want to try this again, we would need to have a publicity and educational push to generate interest. Liz Callahan said that EPA has a [Soak Up The Rain](#) working group that has put together educational materials.

Hannah Grinnell, a recent Pentucket grad, and Veronica McDonough, both Climate Café participants, said that students had been considering rain gardens, including potential development of a demonstration area. *Veronica McDonough, a Pentucket student, said that she would reach out to high school contacts about this.*

Elisa Grammer raised concerns about the section of River Road that borders fields just beyond the hill at Rocks Village Bridge has flooded historically and now has no river edge but rather repeated dumpings of riprap to hold the road from falling into the river. She is concerned that this could be a major Capital Improvements item. She spoke with DPW Director Wayne Amaral, who knows about the issue and who does not have the capacity to do grant administration in addition to other duties. Nancy Pau suggested looking into the [Coastal Resilience Grant Program](#) and consulting the MA SLR and Coastal Flooding Viewer: Zoom to West Newbury, and click on the different tabs on top to see the projections [Story Map Series](#).



Additionally, other municipalities' action grants to address the issue of endangered may be worth following:

- [Salisbury](#) just received an Action Grant to preserve roadway access to Rings Island by raising roadways and improving culverts to allow tides to wash through. According to [Salisbury's Action Grant Application](#) for this project, "this build[s] upon the FY 20 MVP Action Grant that provided funds for the initial assessment and development of concept designs to resolve chronic coastal flooding of the roads leading to Rings Island."

Elisa Grammer also mentioned that since West Newbury is working on new storm water management bylaws, she provided to the Town Manager, Wayne Amaral and perhaps others information about other towns' MVP action grant work products concerning storm water bylaws and policies:

- Deerfield got an Action Grant to, inter alia, "Improve zoning and development controls in the Deerfield River floodplain to protect flood storage areas and protect public safety and reduce future flood losses" See Dearfield Ch, 179 Zoning Sec 3720 [Erosion Control](#), General Legislation Ch. 155 **Stormwater**.
- Mendon got an Action Grant for "Integration of Low Impact Development Standards into Local Bylaws and Subdivision [Regulations](#)"
- Natick got an Action Grant for "Low Impact Development Regulation Development and [Zoning Bylaw](#) Inclusion"
- Somerville got an Action Grant for a green storm water study, benefits analysis, modeling, and a Green Stormwater Infrastructure [Planning & Guidance Document](#)

*Wendy Reed, who is on the Conservation Commission and Planning Board, will look into using this storm water bylaw information in West Newbury's work on this.*

#### Power outages

With regard to the possible microgrid to provide assured power supplies to the Town's municipal campus, Chip Wallace and Rick Parker said that a feasibility study for a microgrid has been done, but the Town is not likely to have the capacity to take on such a major project at this time. A company interested in providing canopy solar panels over the parking lots plus battery storage will be submitting a proposal, and this could be an incremental first step carrying low risk and potential economic benefits to the town.

Elisa Grammer noted that in the most recent round of approved action grants, Newburyport was awarded funding to underground power lines—though we do not know the details.

#### Protecting and developing water supplies

Elisa Grammer and Wendy Reed reported that Newburyport is in the process of [applying to West Newbury's Conservation Commission](#) for approval of a solution to the problem of the Merrimack River backing up into the Artichoke Reservoir. The point of vulnerability is the spillway, which is 4' below the earthen dam. The plan is to permanently widen the top surface of the spillway to 10' across by dumping rocks into the reservoir behind the spillway. This broader surface would allow Newburyport, in the event of a flood emergency, to temporarily install huge sandbags or a huge water balloon to raise the spillway by 4' and thus keep the Merrimack River out.

## **2) Presentation of MVP planning results to BOS**

*The group agreed to aim for a mid-November to mid-December timeframe for a report to the Selectmen at their meeting. It also agreed that the presentation would consist of i) a brief summary of the Final Report's conclusions (issue areas, potential actions) and ii) an update on continuing work the Working Group has been doing (as summarized in [September](#) & these October meeting notes)*

**3) Next Meeting 10/28/2020 7 pm**

West Newbury MVP meeting  
Wed, Oct 28, 2020 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM (EDT)

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