



Manchester-By-The-Sea Meeting Posting

Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by M.G.L.Ch.30A §18-28)

Board/Committee: CZM Coastal Vulnerability Steering Committee

Day & Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: VIRTUAL

Signature: Sue Croft

Attendees: Greg Federspiel, Alex Maxwell (F & O), Chelsea Zakas (F & O), Sara Morrison (F & O), Joe Famely (WHG), Nate Desrosiers, Chuck Dam, Laura Tenny, Steve Carhartt, Jessica Lamothe, Henry Oettinger, Olga Hayes, Francie Caudill, Tiffany Marletta, Sue Croft

MINUTES

- Greg Federspiel called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. He proceeded to give a brief history of the project and the circumstances that led to the Town applying for the CZM grant that is funding this project. He then introduced Alex Maxwell, the project manager from Fuss and O'Neill which is the engineering consulting firm that is managing the project.
- Alex walked attendees through a presentation outlining the project including the different phases of the project, what has been accomplished thus far, the recommendations (near-, mid-, and long-term), and next steps. That presentation can be found [HERE](#).
- After Alex reviewed all the recommendations, he opened the meeting up to discussion. Below are the comments and questions that were put forth:
 - Jessica Lamothe asked if they had considered putting a flood gate at the mouth of the harbor (out past Tuck's Point). She also wanted to know if anyone had insight as to where the Fire and Police Depts (and Town Hall) could be relocated. Alex responded that yes, they had considered a flood gate at the mouth of the harbor and through the cost/benefit analysis that was done as part of the assessment, it was removed as an option as it was cost prohibitive. Alex also noted that although their recommendations include relocating the Fire and Police stations, finding an alternative location is not part of the scope of this project. Town Hall could be used if the lower-level offices were moved to the first and second floors or moved elsewhere. Nate added that the Town is currently working on a Facilities Master Plan (FMP) which will take into account all the data and recommendations from this plan. The FMP is considering options for the relocation of the Fire and Police Depts as well as options for the use of Town Hall upper levels.
 - Mary and Jeff Peart who live near the marsh at Bennett and Bridge Streets expressed concern about adding a flood gate under the RR tracks at the Inner Harbor given that it could bring even more water into the marsh by their home. Alex explained that they

have taken into consideration the impact of hydrologic redirection (which they are trying to avoid) and that a nature-based approach should help. Greg asked if there was a culvert under the train tracks in the area of the Bennett/Bridge marsh. Joe Famely of the Woods Hole Group said that they had considered putting a tide gate/flap there and are still researching that possibility.

- Chuck Dam asked Alex to elaborate on the alternatives with the MBTA and asked what elevation would be needed to raise the RR tracks in order to provide protection. Alex estimated a 6'-8' berm would be needed to raise the tracks but that they would incorporate specifics and recommendations for the MBTA as part of the final plan.
- Jessica pointed out the interconnectedness of all the different recommendations over various timeframes and asked if the final plan would include a prioritized list in the order in which the different projects should be executed. Alex said that the short-term recommendations are already being considered by the Town and should be executed fairly quickly. The longer-term plan options all hinge on each and details pertaining to all will be spelled out in the final plan.
- Alex also highlighted the floating boardwalk that is included in the plan. With regards to the floating boardwalk, Sara Morrison pointed out that public access to water will need to evolve over time and people will need to change how they interface with the waterfront.
- Laura Tenny shared four thoughts:
 1. Flooding tolerance varies depending on location and use.
 2. The Town has an opportunity for enhancements given the changes to municipal land enabling bigger moves and associated benefits.
 3. Considerations need to be made regarding the implementation of the short-, mid-, and long-term projects to prevent overpaying and protecting the same areas multiple times over. She suggested we should consider the cumulative cost of the mid- and long-term solutions, aiming not to spend capital level investment money twice, and being financially and environmentally responsible.
 4. She noted that the MBTA solution is key given that Boston and other cities/towns are economically dependent on the commuter rail system and that reducing emissions depends on a functioning transit system.
- Mary and Jeff Peart asked for a more detailed explanation of a “floodable park”. Sara Morrison explained that, similar to folks needing to redefine waterfront access, people would also need to redefine what has historically been thought of as park space. In our area, floodable park space would likely have natural marsh boarding walkways (likely elevated boardwalks). Photos of examples from the presentation were shown to reinforce the appearance of what Sara was describing.
- Steve Carhartt promoted addressing the near-term solutions very soon. He also asked why the flood gate at the RR tracks at the entrance to the Inner Harbor had to be done along with raising the RR tracks. Alex explained that the short-term items are being looked at now as part of the FMP. The success of the flood gate is directly tied to the increased elevation of the tracks and therefore cannot be done on its own. Steve also expressed that he believes the state projections for SLR are outdated and exaggerated. Alex responded that the Mass Flood Risk Model is the model they are required to use for this CZM grant. Joe Famely added that all the models available can be used flexibly and that it is recommended to use a range of scenarios to maximize adaptability.

- Nate asked if Alex could elaborate on next steps and funding opportunities. Alex said that now that the plan and associated cost benefit analysis is nearing completion, that next steps would move toward design and implementation and that there are plenty of funding opportunities for the next steps. Potential funding opportunities will be highlighted in the final plan. Of the many grant options available, CZM, MVP, NFWF, and BRIC are good alternatives for the type of work the Town is looking to pursue next.
- Dave McKenna asked if the plan includes backflow valves on storm drains or tide gates of some kind in the area around the WWTP given that during recent storms water levels reached almost to the garage of the McKenna home. Alex and Nate explained that yes, this needs to be addressed and is part of the short-term plan. This is something that can be executed fairly quickly and easily and will be prioritized appropriately.
- At this point, there were no further questions or comments. Alex then returned to the presentation and outlined the next steps and contact/website information. He then thanked everyone for their time.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 PM.