

Coastal Resiliency Advisory Committee
Tuesday, January 24, 2023
Via Zoom

*Meetings are audio- and video-recorded

Members present: Mary Longacre, Peter Brace, Ian Golding, Jen Karberg, Joanna Roche, Rachael Freeman, Matt Fee, Sarah Bois

Members Absent: Christy Kickham, Gary Beller, Joe Topham

Staff present: Vincent Murphy, Leah Hill

Others: D. Anne Atherton, William Kinsella, Doug Rose, Elizabeth Trillos

YouTube Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUy2JgMcqv8>

1. Call to Order

10:00 a.m.

2. Meeting announcements

Script for remotely conducting Open Meetings, read by the Chair

The meeting is being audio / visually recorded

3. Updates and Announcements

Update on new Coastal Resilience Coordinator appointment and start date: Leah Hill is the new Coastal Resilience Coordinator, and she will be beginning this position on February 20, 2023. Leah has worked with the Natural Resource Department at the Shellfish Hatchery since 2014. Vince Murphy will be fulfilling the role of the Coastal Resiliency Coordinator until Leah's start date and assisting while she transitions into the position. Although Vince is still the official contact until Leah begins her position, please include Leah. Leah's email is lhill@nantucket-ma.gov.

4. Committee members brainstorming next-step options for the Town regarding 'Sconset Bluff.

Ms. Longacre provided background information on the status of the Baxter Road and 'Sconset Bluff Projects. She also reminded Committee Members that the jurisdiction over the removal of the geotubes was squarely in the hands of the Conservation Commission. Ms. Longacre requested that Mr. Fee set the stage as he requested this agenda item. Mr. Fee suggested that there is the potential to end up with lot-by-lot applications because once the Town beach has eroded, it won't be possible to examine this issue at a neighborhood level, which is much easier. Prior to this point, the homeowners along the 'Sconset Bluff were willing partners who were willing to pay for the project. Now the issue is going to fall on the taxpayers because the Town must provide utilities and access, but it is unclear where the funding will come from. Mr. Fee considered the loss of policies in place for the 'Sconset Bluff project stating that as an abutter, you have to financially support the project if you receive benefit and that your benefit cannot be detrimental to your neighbor. He had numerous questions about next steps for the project that included "What is the right thing to do?"

Ms. Roche requested that there be a fact sheet developed to clarify the history of the ‘Sconset Bluff project as it is long and complicated. Mr. Murphy added that the Select Board has asked for a decision tree that he is working on producing.

Ms. Karberg suggested that the CRAC’s role should be to advise the Select Board and that the Town could facilitate neighborhood collaboration on resiliency issues. However, she added that the Conservation Commission utilizes individual parcels for their applications. Mr. Fee continued and said that the Land Bank’s Washington Street project is a good example of looking at areas holistically. He also stated that all project planning should include how to cover the costs of implementation.

Ms. Bois introduced the concept of fairness, and that fairness is whether or not a project is a high priority and that may not feel fair to everyone. She also suggested that the decision tree begin broad (island-wide) and then move towards focusing on individual neighborhoods. Ms. Longacre reminded the group that the Strategic Retreat and Relocation Plan, which is a recommendation of the Coastal Resiliency Plan, would be a good place to start as it will be a big picture plan. Mr. Fee pushed back against that idea as he felt that not all areas can wait while a plan is developed, or studies are completed. Ms. Longacre mentioned that there is a need for multiple approaches. It may be necessary to examine some issues on an island scale while also responding immediately to localized threatened sites.

Ms. Bois asked what CRAC was being asked to do. Ms. Longacre responded that there are three projects being discussed: the relocation of Baxter Road, island-wide policies, and the protection of ‘Sconset Bluff. Mr. Murphy reminded everyone that the geotube removal was the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Golding indicated that he would abstain from any CRAC vote relating to this issue but will continue listening to the discussion.

Ms. Longacre asked Mr. Brace and Ms. Freeman for input. Ms. Freeman stated that she agreed with what Ms. Karberg said in that there is power in neighborhoods and that retreat was an uncomfortable topic. Mr. Brace stated that we need to be comfortable discussing retreat. Mr. Golding added that there is a need to update state regulatory laws.

Mr. Fee laid out a road map for including abutters in the planning process as well as emphasizing the immediate need for updates to zoning if Nantucket is going to seriously consider retreat as a strategy.

Ms. Karberg suggested that the CRAC should have focused conversations on topics such as laws and zoning, facilitating neighborhood outreach, and areas of immediate risk. Ms. Roche agreed and suggested that the CRAC break into smaller work groups that can then present information to the larger group. Mr. Murphy and Ms. Longacre explained that there are logistics issues with minutes and public meeting postings etc. in this format but that the Select Board could approve groups of 3-5 people and the groups would have to be checked for quorum issues. Mr. Brace recommended that the committee meet as a whole and have workshop-style topic meetings to eliminate the issues that Mr. Murphy

and Ms. Longacre raised. Ms. Bois agreed and suggested that clear topics be defined for the workshops.

Mr. Fee returned to the issue of ‘Sconset Bluff and asked whether the CRAC agreed with the recommendations made by Arcadis and is wondering how the Town will pay for it. Ms. Longacre asked that this topic be moved to a future meeting where the topic could be: How to protect the bluff and the houses above if the geotubes are gone and the road is moved? Mr. Murphy suggested that the ‘Sconset bluff dune restoration project in the CRP is both expensive and short-lived. Mr. Brace added that the bank erodes from the top during rain events as well as at the bottom and this needs to be considered. Ms. Longacres asked for final comments and stated that this topic will be continued in a more focused discussion.

5. Review of draft 2022 4th Quarter Report to Select Board – See packet

Ms. Bois asked about the Select Board’s Strategic Planning meeting and commented that the Select Board was showing a lack of support for the CRP by excluding the specific 40 recommendations from the plan. Mr. Fee stated that the group was looking to pare down what they have on this list. He also recommended that the CRAC present inspiring resiliency projects to the Select Board instead of written quarterly updates as it may be more engaging. Mr. Murphy agreed to try and trim the 4th quarter report before submitting it to the Select Board.

6. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Longacre stated that minutes were not distributed and therefore will not be voted upon.

7. Begin discussion of 2023 priorities for Coastal Resilience Plan recommendation implementation

Mr. Murphy showed a table of CRP recommendations highlighting the status of each project. Ms. Roche commented that we need a column for cost associated with each project. Ms. Bois asked for clarification regarding the status description “In Development” with respect to the Tom Nevers field project and suggested that these progress categories may need to be defined. Mr. Murphy stated that the Retreat and Relocation Plan would be very helpful to prioritize locations. Ms. Longacre, Mr. Murphy, and Ms. Roche discussed where more information could be added to the table and places that would be challenging.

Mr. Brace expressed interest in beginning to work with the Steamship Authority while Ms. Longacre listed the Strategic Retreat and Relocation Plan, adopting the new numbers for SLR, and community outreach as her areas of importance. Ms. Roche mentioned that ACKlimate may be willing to help with outreach.

8. Response to public comment questions from previous meetings

Ms. Longacre requested that Mr. Murphy explain the status of the Sediment Transport Study in response to a letter from the Nantucket Land Council. Mr. Murphy explained the review and award process. Mr. Murphy stated that the bidding closes Thursday, there is an internal review process where the preferred candidate is selected and that can take up to three months, the bids are opened and reviewed, the lowest bidder is matched with the preferred candidate and awarded the bid.

Ms. Longacre addressed Mr. Rose's question, should CRAC be involved in disaster recovery? Mr. Murphy answered that the police handle the immediate response and medium- and longer-term actions are addressed and assigned in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). He also mentioned that the HMP is going to be revised this year and that the CRP came from the HMP.

9. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

10. New business, Committee & Natural Resources Dept. reports from Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board, Select Board, Advisory Committee of Non-Voting Taxpayers, and other committee members.

Mr. Murphy was invited by Provincetown Environmental Planner, Tim Famulare, to present remotely to Provincetown's Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee on January 18th (no recording available). Mr. Murphy explained the purpose of his meeting with the Provincetown CRAC, in which he covered topics such as hazard mitigation, risk assessment, and historic preservation. Provincetown is working with FEMA on a program called Silver Jackets that provides advice on coastal resiliency projects and planning.

On February 8th, Mr. Murphy will be presenting the Nantucket CRP to Duke University students. The purpose of the presentation is to provide background such that students in different schools at the University can then examine Nantucket's CRP through the lens of their field of study. Mr. Murphy is hoping that valuable feedback will be generated from this case study.

Mr. Golding presented an update on a violation of the wetland regulations that included the cutting of over 100 Japanese black pine trees on a property in 'Sconset on behalf of the Nantucket Conservation Commission. Ms. Karberg suggested that the pines may regenerate within the next year. Mr. Brace added that Japanese black pine is an invasive species and therefore it may not be an entirely negative outcome. Mr. Murphy stated that erosion from wave action may not be an issue but that aeolian erosion may result.

11. Discussion of upcoming meeting dates and topics: Next meeting date is February 14th. Need to discuss meetings dates for February & March, some adjustments may be desirable to accommodate vacations and staff availability.

Ms. Longacre initiated a discussion on the upcoming meeting dates as many of the CRAC members and staff will be on vacation within the next month. The following upcoming meeting dates were decided upon:

February 14th, March 7th, March 14th, and March 21st

12. Motion to adjourn at 11:46 am