

# Inland Communities Working Group

Note takers: Drs. Richard Huber and Mimi Larsen Becker

Related to the meeting of the NH Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission – Great Bay Inland Working Group held on Friday, October 24, 2014, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon in conference room D at the NH Department of Environmental Services, Portsmouth Regional Office, Pease International Tradeport, 222 International Drive, Suite 175, Portsmouth, NH 03801, (603-559-1500)

## Attendees:

Dr.	Mimi	Becker		<Mimi.becker@unh.edu>	Town of Exeter and Chair
	Steve	Bird		<s.bird@dover.nh.gov>	City of Dover
	Sherry	Godlewski	Alt	<Sherry.Godlewski@des.nh.gov>	NH Dept. of Environmental Services
	Richard	Huber	Alt	<huber@acm.org>	Town of Exeter
Rep.	Chris	Muns		<Chris.muns@leg.state.nh.us>	Representative - District 21
	Kyle	Pimental		<kpimental@strafford.org>	Strafford Regional Planning Commission
	John	Rice		<jrice@tateandfoss.com>	Seacoast Board of Realtors
	Cory	Riley		<Cory.riley@wildlife.nh.gov>	NH Fish & Game, Great Bay NERR

**10:00 a.m. Action on template that we will use. [Do we add the 4 extra columns to establish the baseline context from which we will work:**

***Extent to which Strategy is Planning Related***

***The Nature of the Risk***

***The Severity of the Problem***

It had been previously suggested that columns might be added to the left side of the template indicating: 1) Risk/Hazard, 2) Severity of Risk/Hazard, 3) Probability of Risk/Hazard occurring (if known), and 4) Risk mitigation strategies for this Risk/Hazard for planning consideration. The attendees reached consensus that our work group could add the columns under the rule that it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.

**10:10 a.m. Reports and Discussions on Lessons Learned Relevant to Inland Communities from the following sources:**

## **FEMA Report**

## **Key highlights and insights**

**Peter Kinner**

Peter was not available for this meeting, however the content of his presentation was made available. We need to revisit this information.

## **Vermont Law Study**

## **Key highlights & insights Rep. Chris Muns**

Rep. Chris Muns provided the group with Handout #1: An Executive Summary of the Vermont Law School Land Use Clinic Report June 2012: "New Floodplain Maps for a Coastal New Hampshire Watershed and Questions of Legal Authority, Measures and Consequences" and a 16-slide presentation to summarize the findings.

Recommendations include:

- There is no need for towns to take any specific action related to municipal liability from adopting or failing to adopt floodplain maps.
- Identify and clearly state which enabling statutes authorize the sections of your ordinance.
- Check the language of the statute to make sure specific authorizations are not being exceeded.
- Identify in an ordinance the reason you are adopting or referencing a map.
- Make the basis for floodplain regulation clear in the master plan and the hazard mitigation plan.
- Provide flexibility in zoning & regulations in order to preserve some economically viable use of the land.

The Town of Lee is engaged in a study to apply lessons learned from this VT Law School report.

Potential actions:

- 1) Test proposed actions against enabling statutes
- 2) If enabling statutes are missing, new enabling legislation may be needed  
(Send requests to legislative research office for advice.)

## **Georgetown Study: Key highlights & insights      Cory Riley & Sherry Godlewski**

Cory Riley provided the group with Handout #2: An Executive Summary and excerpts taken from the study: "Adaptation Tool Kit: Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Land Use."

This study presents analysis of the applicability of 18 sea level rise adaptation tools. Tables provided show a breakdown of the applicability of these tools for resolving issues related to economic, environmental, social, administrative or legal considerations. The tools are evaluated as to how they address sea level rise adaptation by relating to protecting people, retreating, accommodating, or preserving ecosystem habitat. Also the tools are categorized with respect to how they address sea level rise in relation to land use: critical infrastructure, developed areas, developable areas, or undeveloped areas.

Once a sea level rise risk or hazard has been identified and characterized, this study should be consulted to assist in finding applicable tools to help address the mitigation of the risk.

### **Any additional insights?**

There was discussion of conflicting issues with layered easements and rolling easements related to real estate disclosures (e.g. flood plains vs wet lands affecting development rights on specific properties)

Site-specific issues are too specific for the commission's focus.

### **Key Lessons/Findings:**

Proactive actions require fewer engineering solutions than reactive actions.

In formulating adaptation goals, we should not re-invent the wheel.

NH is not a home rule state: municipalities cannot do things on their own without enabling legislation. Recommendations should be directed to agencies rather than towns. A gap analysis is needed to determine places where existing authority is inadequate. Our workgroup's focus in this area has overlap with the State Agency workgroup. We could request the commission to begin this gap analysis research or wait until the end of our process where specific actions are proposed and we need to determine if these actions are enabled. But, if bills are not considered by Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, they wait until the next Nov 15<sup>th</sup> for consideration.

### **11:00 a.m. Reports from Towns: Dover and Exeter**

#### **Dover Case Study: Steve Bird**

Steve Bird provided the group with Handout #3: The Executive Summary of The New England Climate Adaptation Project Case Study for Dover, NH. The goal was to raise public awareness among a diverse set of residents about climate change risks and adaptation opportunities in Dover and build support for local adaptation efforts.

Risks to Dover include: increased precipitation, increased extreme precipitation events, temperature increases, more days of extreme heat and fewer days of extreme cold, sea level rise, and increased flooding. These conditions could threaten Dover's population, buildings, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Dover has been working to improve its physical infrastructure and emergency response services.

Polling indicated that 64% are concerned about climate change impacts, especially ecosystem impacts, severe storms, flooding. Responsibility for preparing should fall to individuals (33%), federal government (21%), state government (18%), local government was not mentioned. This indicates a lack of confidence about Dover's ability to prepare for climate change. Climate change should be taken seriously (81%), but action would be somewhat significant (34%).

#### **Key finding from the workshops and role-play simulations:**

Increased awareness and concern about local climate change risks and adaptation.

Increased sense of local-level responsibility.

Support for incorporating climate change planning into everyday decision making.

Increased confidence in the City of Dover's ability to address climate change risks.

Perceived barriers to action: lack of agreement on action, financial resources, public support

Pathways forward: undertaking a collaborative problem-solving process with stakeholder engagement.

Usefulness of role-play simulations as a tool for climate change adaptation education.

#### **Durham Climate Adaptation Chapter in Hazard Mitigation Plan: Kyle Pimental**

Kyle Pimental provided the group with Handout #4: Six slides that summarize the contents of the work in progress. For now the chapter is planned to be contained in the Hazard Mitigation Plan. It may later be a part of the Master Plan. Topics addressed on the slides include:

- The Purpose of the Study

- Land Use Planning

- Construction and Natural Resources

Outreach and Education  
Energy

## **Draft Outline of Climate Adaptation Plan for Exeter (CAPE): Mimi Becker**

Mimi Becker provided the group with Handout #5: A draft outline of the Study Results, Modelling Design, Assumptions, Results and Categories of Proposed Plan Recommendations.

Introduction  
Climate Change Science  
Community Engagement  
Vulnerability Assessment  
Adaptation Plan  
Recommendations for Policy, Planning, and Regulation  
Glossary  
Appendices

It is expected that the CAPE study, when completed, will provide an inventory of vulnerable town assets, an accounting of the risks and hazards they face, with modelling that will help determine how to prioritize risk mitigation strategies, to assist in filling out the commission template. The funding to support the study has been extended to June 2015. Some preliminary information may be presented in December 2014.

## **Planning for Climate Change: What are NH Communities Doing? Mimi Becker**

Mimi Becker provided the group with Handout #6: Nine slides from a report by Chris Keeley (UNH) that provides an overview of activities currently underway that address planning for climate change in Dover, Portsmouth, Durham, Newfields, Exeter, Rye, Hampton, Hampton Falls, and Seabrook. Most towns are at a similar point: learning, discussing, and building capacity.

### **11:30 a.m. What Next?**

The group discussed how to share asset data. What is in it? How do we use it? A global database is a political issue.

We need to cogitate on stumbling blocks

We don't want to suggest things that are not applicable.

We need to resolve missing representatives from inland towns. Perhaps involve Cliff in this.

We need to review the task list.

How has what we have done so far addressed the task list?

Cory Riley has volunteered to be the Scribe for the Inland Communities Working Group.

Mimi Becker will be stepping down as Chair of this group when Peter Kinner returns. As Vice-Chair he has agreed to step in to the Chair's position.

### **Homework for November:**

To be determined

**Vulnerability Assessment Data**

**CAW Insights?**

**Preliminary Findings from Local Communities**

**Threats/Risks and hazards Vulnerabilities**

**Adaptation Strategies in place**

**Gaps and other needs**

**Tentative Recommendations**

**12:00 Review assignments and deadlines for November**

To be determined

**Date for November meeting**

The workgroup decided to meet at the same location (if available) on Friday, Nov. 14, 2014 from 8:00 to 10:00 AM. (The State Agency workgroup meets on the same day at the same place from 10:00 AM to noon.)