

New Hampshire Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission (RSA 483-E)

Meeting Minutes

Dover City Hall – Auditorium
288 Central Avenue, Dover, NH

April 18, 2014
10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Members Present

Name	Representation
Watters, David	Senator, NH District 4
Muns, Chris	Representative, District 21
Rice, Fred	Representative, District 21
Borden, Rep. David	Town of New Castle
Bird, Steve	City of Dover
Bowman, Peter	Alternate, NH DRED – Division of Forests and Lands
Caron, David	NH Municipal Association
Cormier, Robert	Homebuilders and Remodelers Association of NH
Gilbert, Jennifer (Commission Clerk)	NH Office of Energy and Planning
Godlewski, Sherry	Alternate, NH Department of Environmental Services
Huber, Richard	Alternate, Town of Exeter
Kinner, Peter	Town Greenland/UNH Coastal Response Research
Kipp, Jonathan	NH Public Risk Management Exchange (Primex)
Kirshen, Paul Dr.	University of NH
Miller, Steve	City of Portsmouth
Morgan, Thomas	Town of Newington
Nyhan, Kevin	NH Department of Transportation
Pimental, Kyle	Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Riley, Cory	NH Fish & Game, Great Bay NERR
Scholz, Ann	Alternate, NH Department of Transportation
Sinnott, Cliff (Chairman)	Rockingham Planning Commission
Stanwood, Sabrina	NH DRED – Division of Forests and Lands
Stephenson, Roger	Town of Stratham
Winslow, Phil	Town of Rye
Wolek, Gail	NH DRED – Division of Parks and Recreation

Members Absent

Name	Representation
Stiles, Nancy	Senator, NH District 24
Becker, Dr. Mimi	Town of Exeter
Carroll, Patrick	Town of Rollinsford
Feighner, Edna	NH Division of Historical Resources
Houle, Jamie	Town of Durham
Juliano, Michelle	NH Department of Administrative Services – Bureau of Public Works, Design & Construction
Melanson, Paul	Town of Hampton Falls
O’Sullivan, Michael	Town of Madbury
Pennock, Jonathan	UNH Marine Program & NH Sea Grant Program
Quiram, Vicki	NH Department of Environmental Services
Rice, John	Seacoast Board of Realtors
Smith, Raymond	Town of Seabrook
Wood, David	Town of Hampton

Others Present

Name	Representation
Borden, Nancy	Town of New Castle
Couture, Steve	NH Coastal Program - Department of Environmental Services
Hulet, Carri	Consensus Building Institute
LaBranche, Julie	Rockingham Planning Commission Sen. Planner
Rumore, Danya	New England Climate Adaptation Project
Wysmuller, Tom	Member of CRHC Science Advisory Panel

1. Welcome/Introductions

Chairman Cliff Sinnott called the meeting to order. He began the meeting explaining the various handouts available for the meeting. These handouts included a revised agenda of today’s meeting, the minutes of the March 21, 2014 Commission meeting, a copy of Jonathan Kipp’s presentation slides, and a copy of the Steering Committee’s mission and strategy discussion summary.

Sinnott asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves. Introductions were made around the room. In the course of introductions, Sabrina Stanwood introduced Pete Bowman, Wildlife Biologist in the Natural Heritage Bureau who will be serving as her alternate while she is on maternity leave.

2. Approval of Draft Minutes of March 21, 2014

Sinnott asked if the Commission had any comments or corrections on the March 21, 2014 minutes.

The comments on the minutes included:

1. Add the following people who attended the meeting but were not included in the minutes - Ryan Fitzgerald representing the Town of Rye; Steve Bird representing the City of Dover; and Steve Miller representing the City of Portsmouth.
2. Correct the spelling of Vicki Quiram, NH Department of Environmental Services.

A motion was made to accept the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded. **All approved and none opposed.**

3. Nomination of Jennifer Gilbert, NHOEP as Commission Clerk

Chairman Sinnott asked the Commission for approval to appoint Jennifer Gilbert of the NH Office of Energy and Planning as the Commission Clerk, replacing David Wood. Tom Morgan motioned to approve the nomination. Steve Miller seconded the motion. **All approved and none opposed.**

4. New England Climate Adaptation Project – Climate Change Risk Assessment for Dover, NH

Steve Bird introduced the Project, which the City of Dover applied for and was one of four communities in New England selected for a project. One of the key aspects of the project was having various stakeholders conduct a role-play simulation about climate adaption in Dover. One of the challenges that the project team took on was to get new people involved in the process. Steve then introduced Danya Rumore, Project Manager of the New England Climate Adaption Project.

Danya presented an overview of the Project. The question the project team sought to answer was “Can science-based role-play simulations help build public readiness to adapt to climate change?” She then presented information about the Climate Change Risk Assessments that were completed for each of the four communities. Local climate projections were produced for each town and were “downscaled” to the local level using local meteorological data. She stated one of the most striking findings they found is the huge gap between the percent of people who think that the community should be addressing climate change and what they think will actually happen by the community.

Carri Hulet of Consensus Building Institute, who had been part of the Dover project team gathering stakeholder input, continued presenting information about the Project. She described the four principles of the Project:

- 1.) Our everyday decision-making TODAY needs to account for changing climate;
- 2.) We cannot know exactly what the future will bring;
- 3.) Climate change impacts will not be the same everywhere; and
- 4.) Adapting to and managing climate change risks will require collaboration and coordination.

Sinnott asked if the “downscaling” of the data can used here can be applied to other Great Bay communities and, if so, if there is some value to the other communities using Dover’s report. Dr. Paul Kirshen stated that Cameron Wake’s new report (Climate Change in New Hampshire: Past, Present, and Future) for Southern New Hampshire would be a helpful resource for the Great Bay communities.

Julie LaBranche stated that the transferability of the data to the other Great Bay communities depends on certain factors.

Representative Borden asked if the City’s hazard mitigation plan is tied to Dover’s report. Steve Bird responded that yes, the hazard mitigation plan is part of this report.

Representative Rice stated that he likes the “no-regrets” aspect of principle #2 (as mentioned above) because it is about planning now. It is about what we can do in the future with whatever changes regardless of whether it is climate change or other changes. He further stated that it’s important to plan to address inaccuracies that are here today.

Carri added that you need to look at the decision and decide whether it makes sense for the future regardless of the climate change projection ranges.

Danya added regardless of whether someone believes in climate change most people who were surveyed stated they have noticed weather changes. She also stated preparing for climate change is just doing better planning.

The next Dover workshop will be held on May 29, 2014 from 1 to 5 PM.

To view the presentation slides, please go to: <http://nhcrhc.stormsmart.org/reading-list-for-commission-members/>

To view the Dover Summary Climate Change Risk Assessment, go to: <http://necap.scripts.mit.edu/necap/risk-assessments/>

5. National Flood Insurance Program Update: the Preliminary FIRM Maps are Out

Jennifer Gilbert stated the FEMA preliminary floodplain maps for the 17 communities in Coastal NH were released on April 9, 2014. She showed screen shots of the FEMA Preliminary Map web site where the preliminary maps, preliminary Flood Insurance Studies, and the preliminary GIS database file can be viewed and downloaded. She also showed screen shots of the map index and the map panels, which both have a different appearance than the current 2005 FEMA floodplain maps.

Senator Watters asked if it was known how many properties will be affected by the new maps. Jennifer replied it is unknown at this time. Kyle Pimental stated that this is where the regional planning commissions can assist communities in determining the number of properties in the floodplain. Jennifer stated that one of the non-regulatory products of this Project is the Changes to last FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map), which will show where changes are proposed in comparison with the current 2005 maps.

To view the FEMA Preliminary Maps, please go to:
<https://hazards.fema.gov/femaportal/prelimdownload>

To view information and updates about the Coastal NH Mapping Project, please go to:
<http://www.nh.gov/oep/planning/programs/fmp/coastal-mapping-project/index.htm>

6. Science and Technical Advisory Panel Update

Dr. Paul Kirshen gave an update on the Panel's work. He stated the Panel is about a month behind schedule. Originally a draft report was supposed to have been distributed today but there has been a delay. The Commission can expect something done by the next May meeting.

Richard Huber asked if Dr. Kirshen could provide his presentation from the March 21, 2014 Commission meeting and the web site link to his recent testimony (as part of a U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs panel on the benefits and costs of coastal adaptation) so they can be added to the Commission's web page.

7. Role of Insurance in Managing Risk from Natural Hazards

Jonathan Kipp gave a brief introduction about the New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange known as Primex. Primex is a non-profit agency that helps manage insurance risk for municipalities, schools, counties, and other governmental entities. Jonathan discussed the classic risk management model and its four components: risk identification; risk assessment; risk control techniques; and risk management monitoring. He explained that insurance is a form of risk transfer and it is a limited remedy that is not intended to make things whole. Insurance is reactive, not proactive and does not prevent or control severity.

Jonathan also discussed two reports: Flood Insurance: Strategies for Increasing Private Sector Involvement (U.S. Government Accountability Office, January 2014) and the SIGMA report by Swiss Re about the economics of climate change adaptation, which stated that up to 68% of climate change generated losses can be avoided with cost-effective adaptive measures. He concluded the presentation with the following recommendations: establish appropriate parameters for decision-making; and develop control measures that are well reasoned, defensible, performance-based, and able to be consistently applied.

Senator Watters asked if the industry was looking at certain sea level rise levels. Jonathan replied that the SIGMA report looked long term. An example of the long-term perspective is what we can put in place today in regards to building regulations so we don't have to pay in claims later. It is also dependent on the customer and the education of that customer could have a long-term influence.

Representative Rice stated he believes you need to develop control methods and make "no regrets" decision as was mentioned during the Dover presentation. He asked if the statement "develop control measures" was the same as "implement control methods." Jonathan responded that although he had used "develop" he meant implement as well.

Steve Couture stated that he participated in Rhode Island insurance company webinar that

discussed not building to the 100-year floodplain standard but by the 500-year floodplain standard.

Roger Stephenson asked what role an insurance agent has in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). Jennifer Gilbert responded that the CRS program is directly tied to FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program and that the percent discount of CRS (if the community where the property is located participates in CRS) is just one of many factors that are factored in when an insurance agent rates an NFIP flood insurance policy.

To view the presentation slides, please go to: <http://nhcrhc.stormsmart.org/reading-list-for-commission-members/>

8. Steering Committee Report: Strategic Planning Results, Work Plan & Timeline

Chairman Sinnott gave an update about the Steering Committee's mission and strategy sessions, which were held in December 2013 and January 2014. The Committee invited John Gilbert, who was the former Chair of the New Hampshire Water Sustainability Commission, to facilitate the Committee's discussion. John suggested that the Commission work from what they expect to produce at the end and work backwards on the steps needed to achieve the end result.

Sinnott presented the strategy discussion questions, the Commission's draft mission statement, and what the Commission wants to produce, which will include two interim reports (due to the longevity of the three-year Commission) and the final report. He discussed the proposed content and scope of the reports, which will include inventory of risk and threats, assessments (guidance from Science and Technical Advisory Panel on sea level rise), and appropriate recommendations and actions (for state agencies and municipalities) and who will implement them. He then described the Commission's information needs in which a lot of this information is already available.

He then gave an overview of the Commission's proposed schedule and work plan. The first interim report would be completed by November 1, 2014 and include an initial fact-finding report and key recommendations for the state legislature. The second interim report should be completed by September 1, 2015 and include a complete fact-finding report and further, perhaps more detailed, recommendations. He stated he anticipated the Commission will complete fact finding by July 2014 depending on the Science and Technical Advisory Panel.

He stated the Commission needs to consider what the Commission wishes to do to gather public input. Some suggestions include partnering with the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) and reviewing input from CAW's previous projects. He suggested that the Commission begin the formal public input process after the second interim report. He also suggested the Commission establish sector-based workgroups after the first interim report. He suggested that a good item to include on the next meeting's agenda is how to organize these workgroups.

Representative Borden stated we need to take the work of this Commission out on a roadshow.

Roger Stephenson stated that one opportunity may be the June 17, 2014 workshop on business continuity planning regarding natural disasters.

Senator Watters suggested that Public Information be another workgroup. He stated that the Dover meetings (mentioned earlier) had a great turnout.

Sherry Godlewski stated that the next CAW workshop is scheduled for June 12, 2014 at the Hugh Gregg Coastal Conservation Center.

Sinnott suggested that another agenda item for the next meeting be a discussion about the approach to public input we want to take.

9. Member Communications/General Discussion

a. Report on Climate Summit III

Steve Miller gave an update about the Climate Summit III, which is about updating communities on projects and research, giving an update on topics at the state level, which included an overview of this Commission by Chairman Sinnott. Summit topics included economics, infrastructure, and eco-systems. There was also a panel discussion with five community representatives and an adaptation road trip presentation. He stated he will share a resource list from the Summit, which can be viewed at:

<http://nhcrhc.stormsmart.org/reading-list-for-commission-members/>

b. Other

Roger Stephenson stated that Michael Simpson (Antioch University), Julie LaBranche, and himself, in coordination with Senator Ayotte's staff will be meeting with FEMA staff regarding culverts on May 9, 2014.

10. Other Business

a. Meeting schedule and agendas

Chairman Sinnott stated the next Commission meeting will be held on May 16, 2014 at the Newington Town Hall. The agenda will include an update from the Science and Technical Advisory Panel, discuss workgroups and topics, and begin discussing public input.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on May 2, 2014.

b. Local Solutions Conference

Chairman Sinnott stated the Commission received a commitment of \$350 in travel grants from conference organizers (through the NH Charitable Fund) to offset registration fees for up to three CRHC municipal members. So far only one member has come forward (David Wood, Hampton). If any are remaining, the offer will be extended to other Commission members.

11. Public Comment

Chairman Sinnott asked if there was any public comment. There was none.

12. Adjourn

Senator Watters made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Representative Rice seconded the motion. **All approved and none opposed.**

Meeting Notes Prepared By:
Jennifer Gilbert
Commission Clerk