
Date: July 20, 2010
To: Falmouth Town Council,
Nathan Poore, Town Manager
From: Jay Reynolds, Parks and Public Works Director
Re: Slope Stability Assessment



This memo is to provide background regarding the Town's progress on the Slope Stability Assessment Project.

In the summer of 2009, the Town received a number of inquiries and concerns regarding the stability of the slopes along Bayshore and Shoreline Drives. In addition to steep and unstable slopes, there were concerns raised about the Town's storm drain and sanitary sewer infrastructure. Some concerns were that the municipal infrastructure (road) was being threatened by erosion, and that the storm drain/sanitary sewer infrastructure was contributing to a larger erosion problem. It should be noted that the slopes and municipal infrastructure are located on private properties, which are situated between the road and the ocean.

In July of 2009, the Town contracted with Wright-Pierce to provide an engineering assessment of the slopes and municipal infrastructure. In August/September, Wright-Pierce performed an inventory and analysis of the study area, which included the use of a geotechnical firm that evaluated the soils and groundwater conditions.

In November of 2009, the Town held a public meeting to update the public on its' progress, present the initial findings of Wright-Pierce's draft report, and obtain feedback/comments.

In January of 2010, the Town sent a survey to the owners of these 19 properties along the immediate shoreline. The survey was to initially 'gauge' the level of interest, participation, and support of the project. Property owners were asked if they would consider property sale, granting of an easement, and/or entering into a maintenance agreement with the Town. Results of the survey are generally mixed, with some full support, potential support, less supportive, and non-response to the survey.

On July 1, 2010, the Town held a second public meeting to update the public on some of the follow-up details of the study, as well as an overview of FEMA funding sources, and discuss next steps with the Council.

Jon Edgerton of Wright-Pierce will present to the Council an overview of the project and a summary of the report's findings.

Also, as part of this agenda item, Town staff is seeking guidance from the Council as to the direction the Town should pursue with regards to this complicated issue. The policy question for the Council to discuss and consider, is whether the Town should proceed with working with private property owners to acquire public rights in order to remediate areas of erosion and further protect the roadway infrastructure. Supplemental to this question will be the following questions: how to proceed and how the Town will fund said remedial project(s).