

Approved: November 3, 2015

NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
October 6, 2015 @ 4:00 PM

Members Present: Chair Lynn McCarthy, Jim Rini, Beth Hume, Nancy Gulley, Bill Marshall, Beth Barnhorst, Planning Board Representative Darcy Horgan,

Members Not Present: Curt Gillespie

Also Present: Tracy Degnan, Julie LaBranche, Jim Cerny, Mike McHenry

Chair McCarthy called the October 6, 2015 meeting of the New Castle Conservation Commission to order at 4:06 pm.

Approve September minutes

Beth Hume MOVED to approve the minutes as written; this was seconded by Beth Barnhorst and APPROVED unanimously.

Work Session / Applications:

None

Presentation

Tides to Storms Project, maps and report for New Castle

Presented by Julie LaBranche and Mike McHenry (rep from NC to the RPC) from Rockingham Planning Commission

Ms. LaBranche introduced herself and said she has been a senior planner with the Rockingham Planning Commission for over six years and was the Project Manager on the Tides to Storms project. She said the purpose was to provide a baseline of at risk areas along the coastline for seven different communities. Ms. LaBranche said that the project resulted in a town report; which Ms. LaBranche said she would provide to the members. She noted that page four outlines the natural resources and displayed regional maps showing the extent of the flooding (mapped at three different sea level rise scenarios). Ms. LaBranche said they took those scenarios and mapped them to see what affect there would be. She noted they will be providing some town specific maps as well. Ms. LaBranche said the common theme is the recognition that the State highway system (such as Routes 1A and 1B) decisions will affect the local municipalities and home owners who connect to the roads. She said one of the recommendations in this study is the need to periodically (3-5 years) to verify the trends to see if they are occurring as predicted or are occurring less or more. Ms. LaBranche said the report has a series of 18

maps (available digitally) that are not designed for parcel level analysis or design, but are designed to show where flooding is occurring and where there is a high risk of flooding.

Tracy Degnan said that the report and maps were nicely done and points to their efforts to protect wetland buffers (impacted from flooding). She said the report shows why the regulation of increasing buffers is important and beneficial to future discussions.

Ms. LaBranche said that a standard buffer can be extended to where areas where projected flooding and high risk areas are. She said that the report is a rationale and justification for why they are needed. Ms. LaBranche noted that the buffers protect private properties as well as public properties and services.

Jim Rini discussed with Ms. LaBranche that there is an underlying assumption that is based on climate change.

Ms. LaBranche said that they would like to reach out to the Commission, Select Board and Emergency Management Director to get comments. She said they came up with uniform suggestions which included; elevate structures above the flood plain, create a coastal overlay district (incorporate FEMA flood areas and high risk flood areas), adopt stricter standards (elevate utilities above flood elevation), look at coastal approaches, update hazard mitigation plans (use this report and look toward the future and the projected impacts), create a coastal hazards chapter for a Master Plan; apply to the FEMA community rating system. Ms. LaBranche noted that the Town of New Castle has 21% of land conserved and said that the more land removed from the possibility of being developed, the less land there is to flood. She said that many evacuation routes direct residents to adjacent communities where roads would also be flooded. Ms. LaBranche said there is a planning meeting for Hampton Falls and Seabrook residents to discuss ways to develop evacuation and notification plans for those parts of the town that will flood first. She said the Coastal Commission is looking at short term legislation to look at infrastructure issues and will develop a list of recommendations. Ms. LaBranche said that Rye has several neighborhoods that become isolated, do not flood, but residents cannot get in or out and the water source is compromised. She said the understanding there is about what occurs seasonally the better off the communities are. Ms. LaBranche said there are contiguous records since 1900 that show there has been a consistent rise over time and that from the mid-70s to the early 80s to today; there has been a marked increase in that short period of a time.

Beth Hume asked if this report indicates the importance of restoring wetlands. She asked if functioning wetlands help.

Ms. LaBranche said functioning wetlands help to store floodwater.

Ms. LaBranche said that they applied to PREP in August for a grant from the Northeast Region Council to implement some of these recommendations which will allow them to provide \$6500 to each community to provide technical resources to help with implementing some of these recommendations. She said they will send out a request for

projects and provide guidance of what can be accomplished for that amount of funding. She said that many communities that they worked with already had ideas for the funding.

Ms. LaBranche said that from a conservation standpoint, there will be significant acreage impacted by floods and tides and some may convert to a tidal system and then be subject to the 100 foot coastal buffer regulation. She said they recommend that each community prepare a wetland inventory.

Ms. LaBranche said they will provide printed copies and a DVD of the maps discussed today. She noted that the Town of Newcastle is one of the least impacted from a natural resources aspect.

Bill Stewart asked if there is a risk to Portsmouth's infrastructure to move water.

Ms. LaBranche said that Portsmouth has elevated some of their systems and noted that Pierce Island is high and dry but there are issues of access. She said that when Portsmouth upgrades their facility they may move it to Pease.

The members thanked Beth Hume for her service to the Commission and the Town.

Unfinished Business

- Lavenger Creek education/outreach

Tracy Degnan distributed volunteer time sheets to the members. She noted that they will be holding a workshop on October 24th at Quarterdeck Lane (2 pm). She said it will be a walking tour that will educate those in attendance about the salt marsh ecology and why Lavenger Creek is special. She said they will also discuss the restoration projects and the IPM solar project. Ms. Degnan reported that Connie White has offered to host refreshments at her home afterwards.

Ms. Degnan said that she will be sending letters to the abutters (approximately 30 people) announcing the workshop.

Darcy Horgan suggested also doing a town mailing of a postcard to announce the workshop.

Chair McCarthy said they will also be hanging posters announcing the workshop (at the Post Office, Library, Henry's Market, the Town Hall and the school). She suggested sending the postcards in the spring to announce other workshops being held.

Ms. Degnan provided a copy of the Conservation Grant for native plantings at Lavenger Creek.

The members and Ms. Degnan discussed the difficulty some residents may have in finding the location of the workshop. It was decided that directional signage would be helpful. Ms. Degnan will post the signage.

Mr. Rini suggested also providing a simple map to the Quarterdeck Lane area.

Ms. Degnan said that she met with the PREP people and they decided to have the contract for the grant go through RCCD. She reported that the wetland scientist has completed his review of all the wetlands with the exception of Lavenger Creek saltmarsh (they are working on the prime wetland designation for Lavenger Creek).

Ms. Degnan said she prepared an outline/timeline for the grant which includes the workshop on October 24th, meeting with the Planning Board on October 28th. She said she is in the process of putting together a PowerPoint presentation for buffer health (looking for photos of wetland areas) and noted that Henry's is willing to host a meeting – (they will stay open late).

Chair McCarthy said that Ms. Degnan will create the presentation and would like a member to present it to town residents at one of the events. She said they are targeting having additional workshop in November, January and February.

Ms. Horgan said she would like to have a field trip for Planning Board members to all the wetlands and discuss what the maps show us. She said she would like to have the Conservation Commission members join them also.

- “Welcome to New Castle” packet

Chair McCarthy said that the packet is still in process. She reminded the members that they previously discussed designing a smaller, trifold brochure. Chair McCarthy asked if anyone is interested in working on that project. It was decided that after the packet is finalized they can use that information to make a condensed version.

New Business

- Green Waste

Jim Rini discussed the change in the rules regarding Green Waste Day. He said the changes have been incorporated into a poster. It was noted that Nancy Gulley volunteered to print and hang the posters. Mr. Rini will provide the dates of the Green Waste Days to Ms. Gulley.

Announcements

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions
Annual Meeting, November 7, 2015, Pembroke Academy

Chair McCarthy encouraged members to attend.

The October 6, 2015 meeting of the New Castle Conservation Commission adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sue Lucius, Secretary to the New Castle Conservation Commission