

Sea Level Rise Committee Meeting 11/28/2023

In attendance:

Shey Conover, Fred Porter, Chloe Joule, and Nancy Alexander

On Zoom:

Lauren Bruce, Donna Leone, Shri Verrill, Peter Wilcox, Sue Stafford

- Established Quorum
- Minutes from 11/17 and 11/9 approved
- Shey introduced the schedule, which is brief
 - Next steps with GZA engineering
 - Planning for 12/14 meeting
- Shri announced that GZA has accepted the offer and the contract is being reviewed by the town secretary
- Peter addressed his comment from the notes about how he would like to confirm that a bridge is or is not the right solution before we sign on an engineer
 - Shri said that determining if a bridge is a viable option is a part of the “Risk Assessment and Tolerance” meeting that will be held at the kick off meeting with the engineers
 - Sue said that we should also consider that a bridge may be taken off the table because it is too expensive. A bridge may be a viable solution, but if it is too expensive it will not be a viable solution for us.
 - Shey noted that Shri, a salt marsh ecologist, has said that creating a free exchange of water between the Narrows would deteriorate the marsh further.
 - Shri shared that introducing a channel would deteriorate the salt marsh. It is not a question that can be answered further until we have engineering alternatives
 - Nancy said that she would like to “adapt farther than protect”, she would like to create a free exchange of water in the belief that this will enhance the marsh long term. She would like Mother Nature to be allowed to do what she wants to do
 - Shey noted that she doesn’t want to shoehorn the alternative that we ask for because it will limit the breadth of knowledge and ideas that we are paying an engineering firm to give us
 - Fred clarified what taking down the sea wall, aka the Granite Bulkhead, would look like and how it would be done. He clarified that it would happen after a bridge or alternative design was implemented
 - Shri clarified that it is a functioning and healthy marsh. It faces a wide array of challenges, due to global warming, but it is no different than other marshes on the East coast
- Shey spoke to the cost clarifications that the Project team has been working to get with GZA
- Shri and Shey shared a request to update the Project Team and Org Chart.

- They would like to meet with the project team and possibly create a survey for each committee member to individual give feedback on their appetite for risk and make sure there is productive conversation to get us all on the same page
- Nancy asked about GZA's question about Big Tree vulnerability, it was determined that GZA is just making sure that our committee is not looking at the Narrows project in a Vacuum
- Shri shared an updated Org Chart to look at how we will work together moving forward
 - Shri and Liv have a standing meeting to make sure that Liv, as communications manager, is able to directly communicate with the SLRC and Project Team and establish clear pathways between us.
- They transitioned the discussion to speak about the 12/14 meeting with Funders
 - A founder from the Maine Coastal Program and some colleagues (senior planner for Maine Coastal Program) will be coming to the island to discuss our project, our project goals, and meet the committee. This will help make our future applications highly competitive
 - This meeting will take place in daylight hours, presumably between the hours of 11-4. Shri envisions going to the Marsh in the morning with the SLRC and then meeting with the project team to discuss additional funding and next steps.
 - Lauren asked for some guidance on the kind of questions that should be asked.
 - They will take the 10 am Ferry and depart on the 3:30
 - Liv will contact Sue and Lauren about the communication side of this event. Current funding, projected timeline, cheat sheet, and things the funders are looking for.
 - The committee will be able to ask about their timeline to make sure we are aligned in our efforts and project/funding symbiosis.
 - Liv will work with the school to identify a student who is willing to photograph and film the 12/14 marsh walk
- The next committee meeting will be determined depending on progress with GZA. Details will be emailed to committee members
- Liv will schedule a meeting with the project team, via email in the coming week
- Motion to adjourn