

Islesboro Sea Level Rise Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 12/12/24 3 pm Town Office & Via Zoom

Attending in person & via zoom: Chloe Joule, Sue Stafford, Donna Leone, Lauren Bruce, Nancy Alexander, Peter Rothschild, Fred Porter, Shri Verrill, Michael Gardner (GZA), Chery Coviello (GZA)

1. Call to Order at 3 pm. Quorum Established.
2. Approved minutes from [November 14th meeting](#). Motioned by Peter Rothschild, seconded by Nancy Alexander. Unanimous approval.

3. Presentation of 30% Preliminary Design - GZA

- [Alternatives Analysis & 30% Design Materials](#)

- Cheryl & Michael gave a brief overview of the 30% design at the Narrows.
- They presented the square foot impact of the proposed design environmentally. Phase 1 would have approximately 15,000 sq ft of new impact in raising the road. Impact of low and wide revetment & reef ball is approx. 37,500 sq ft.
- There are mapped sand dunes on east side on the north and the south end of the Narrows that will impact final design.

4. Discuss Agency Feedback and Next Steps

- [Pre-application meeting with permitting agencies Notes](#)

A Pre-application meeting with permitting agencies staff was held 11/21/24. 10 attendees including Shey, Shri, and representatives from DEP, USACE, DMR & Maine Geological Survey.

- It was very helpful to have a conversation with the relevant agency staff, understand their questions and concerns. We should expect changes to the design to get the project permitted.
- There was general concern about the sq. ft impact of the low & wide revetment option on land below HAT, which strongly suggested that we will want to consider changes to the design.
- Should we consider relocating the road at the middle narrows to the west as Phase 1, to reduce the impact on land below HAT, at the middle Narrows. (should at least evaluate the impact).
- It will be very important to do a habitat assessment of the proposed impacted area. This is more important than core boring at this point. It doesn't seem like there may be any value in core boring until we get to evaluating bridge footings.
- We need to review old aerial photographs to help argue that the southern narrows section is not a sand dune. The onus is on us to prove that it is not. Otherwise the assumption from permitting agencies is that it exists there or did at one point before the

existing revetment/road, which will severely limit what is possible to permit on the southern section.

- There may be a way to alter the design to qualify for exemption for a NERPA permit. We should prioritize changes to the design that would allow us to fit within this exemption. Rob Wood will be very important in helping us determine how the design needs to be altered to qualify for the exemption.

- There were a number of questions, comments, concerns about reef balls. Much of what was raised was because they have never been used in Maine. But it is clear that we need to do more research in their configuration and deployment design to address the questions raised. As we do this investigation, we may decide that they do not benefit the project at this time. We should continue to explore to understand if they will provide a benefit in habitat creation and increased grant funding competitiveness. Or if piloting them will end up costing us more money. If the latter we should abandon.

- Several agency staff are willing to come out for a site visit, and to participate on an advisory committee. It will be very important to continue engagement with agency staff to have them help inform changes to the engineer design. ASAP we will host a site visit and advisory committee meeting before GZA does any design work beyond 30% to inform changes in the continued engineering work.

- Advisory committee meeting held 12/5/24. Devin Domeyer – Maine Coastal Program, Julia Kemnitz – US Fish & Wildlife Service, Nate Robbins – Maine DEP. They are willing to help advise the project, particularly the nature-based solutions, and provide letters of support for future fundraising.

5. Other Business

Discussion about timing for moving forward Phase 1 & Phase 2. This is a good discussion for January meeting.

6. Adjourn. Next meeting date 1/9/25.