

**The Seawall Subcommittee
SLR and Storm Surge in Watch Hill
Planning Meeting Minutes
2:00 PM, January 11, 2021**

Meeting Convened: 2:03 PM via Zoom

In Attendance: Joan Beth Brown, Elizabeth Bean, Grant G. Simmons, Barbara Knowlton, Mark Szaro, Hilary Addington, Richard H. Sayre, Richard Holliday, Georgia Jones, Dennis Algiere, Deborah Lamm, Pete August, Janice Sassi, and Jocelyn Lahey

Deborah Lamm: Welcomed participants and reviewed the charge to the subcommittee.

Jocelyn Lahey (PowerPoint attached): Reviewed SLR/Surge Initiative to date.

Year 1 was spent understanding the science of SLR in Watch Hill and how to assess risk to regions and properties. Year 1 ended by the group drafting a resolution to continue meeting and discussing the issue.

Year 2 was spent learning how other communities have dealt with SLR/Surge issues. Activities included a presentation by Jonathon Reiner (Groton Planner), RI Community Case Studies by Melissa Cote, and URI/Eastern Connecticut State University senior capstone projects on mitigating SLR/Surge in Watch Hill. Our deliberations paid off as a grant RFP was issued in the Spring of 2020 by RI DEM to mitigate SLR threats for RI communities. Under the aegis of the Fire District, a team of Conservancy and Fire District staff wrote a compelling proposal to mitigate nuisance tide flooding on the Napatree entrance and the Napatree Access Road. The proposal was approved for \$250,000 to resolve these nuisance tide issues.

Joan Beth Brown: Welcomed everyone on behalf of the Park Commission and gave an update on the DEM Resilience grant. A formal Grant Agreement has not been delivered by DEM yet. Some Grant Agreement paperwork was completed and returned to DEM in November 2020. We are awaiting the full Grant agreement.

Deborah Lamm: Noted that some of the participants on this subcommittee are new to the initiative. She facilitated a round of introductions.

Pete August: Facilitated a discussion of the Watch Hill Seawall. He reminded everyone we are targeting a 3-5 foot SLR scenario. Preventing damage from large storms is off the table. The concerns with large storms will be clean-up and restoration or retreat. Pete provided a map of the 2,200 foot long seawall and some sample elevations (see last PowerPoint slide). A spirited discussion of topics the subcommittee would like to learn about followed:

- Session #1 - The history, condition, and future of the WH Harbor seawall, roadbed, and substrate. Beth Bean and Grant Simmons will develop the overview for the current conditions

of the sea wall. They will consider asking Keith Nielsen and Rick St. James to provide information. When we talk about elevating the seawall, we also need to discuss elevating the roadbed behind it to control hydrostatic pressure and allow for drainage back into the harbor. We need to consider that there may be another solution than a seawall.

- Session #2 - What have others done in similar at-risk settings? For example, does the Boston Climate Ready project offer best practices that we might to learn about (https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2019/12/02_20161206_executivesummary_digital.pdf). At Dennis' recommendation, should we think about asking Joanne Throwe of Throwe Environmental, LLC, City of Annapolis consultant, to speak to us on her experience with low-lying communities. Grant Simmons' son-in-law, Duncan Kopp, (Jacobs Engineering) might have some insights on coastal engineering projects he has worked on. We will study Melissa Cote's RI Case Studies report for insights into who we can contact.
- Session #3 - A fresh look at the WH Harbor seawall and how to fortify it for a 3-5 foot SLR scenario. We might consider asking Bob Fairbanks to provide that perspective.
- Session #4 - Cost-Benefit analysis of expanding the Watch Hill Harbor sea wall. We will ask around for suggestions on how to have this done.
- Session #5 (or part of #4) - How are projects like mitigating SLR inundation in Watch Hill financed? We will look into this.

Deborah Lamm: Discussed best days to meet in the future. Jocelyn will launch a Doodle poll with possible times.

Adjourned at 3:35 PM

Meeting PowerPoint attached

Planning for a Resilient Future

THE SEAWALL SUBCOMMITTEE

Planning Meeting
January 11, 2021

Agenda

Deborah Lamm, Welcome and Introductions

Charge to the working subcommittee

Joan Beth Brown, Welcome & Update on DEM grant

Jocelyn Lahey, Review of SLR/Surge Initiative to date

Pete August, Watch Hill Sea Wall: Past and Future

Questions to explore (group discussion):

Engineering studies to date, advisors and professionals.

A fresh look, other engineering solutions.

What have others done? Boston waterfront?

Cost-Benefit analysis of enhancing the Watch Hill Harbor sea wall.

Financing?

Deborah Lamm, Timetable, next meetings

Adjourn

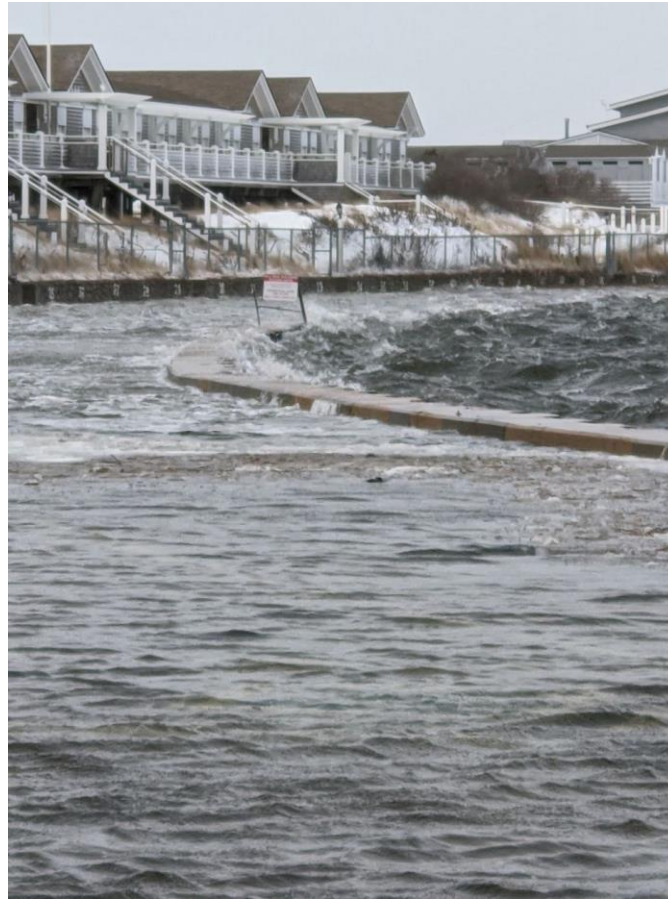


SLR/SURGE IN WATCH HILL
A COMMUNITY FORUM

Watch Hill Fire District
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DECEMBER 2020 STORM



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GOALS OF THE INITIATIVE



- Engage in a community discussion of the risks that sea level rise and storm surge impose on Watch Hill, especially Bay Street.
- Represent the diversity of interests and stakeholders.
- Review and implement solutions.



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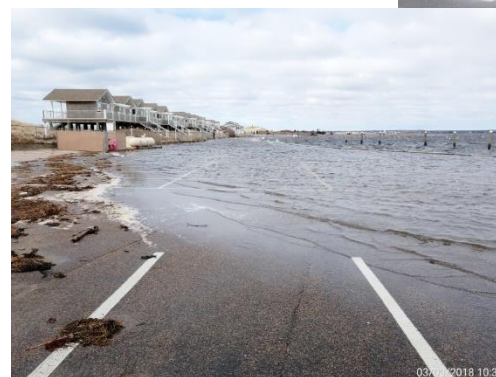
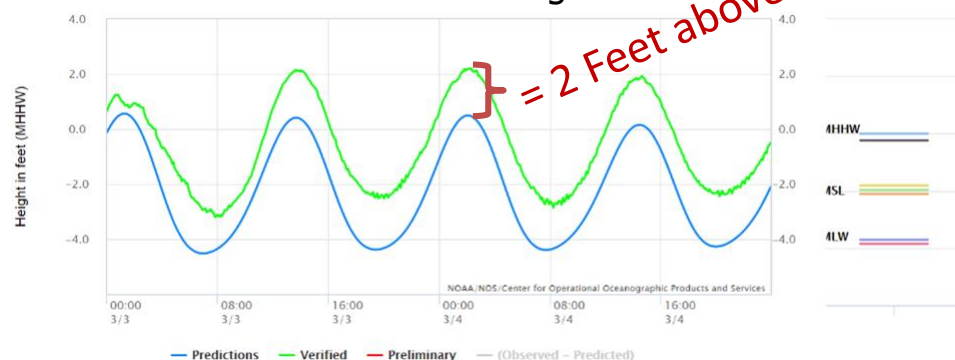
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Planning for a Resilient Future

YEAR 1 (2018 -2019)

Goal: Understand the science behind SLR and Surge, what tools can be used to assess risk, and CRMC guidelines

March 3, 2018 Nor'easter
2 Foot Storm Surge



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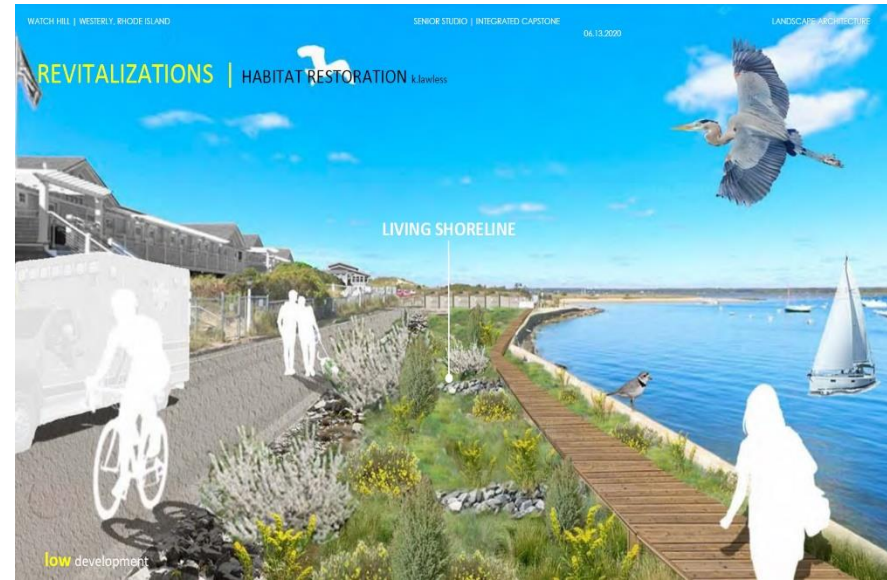
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YEAR 2 (2019-2020)

Goal: Learn what mitigation actions have been undertaken by similar coastal communities to reduce risk from SLR and Surge.



Jon Reiner, Director of Planning Groton



Landscape Architect Student Proposed Solution



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YEAR 3 (2020-2021)

Goal: Answer the question – What are the options in fortifying the Watch Hill Harbor seawall to withstand a 3-5 foot SLR scenario?



NOAA prediction for 2050: Sea level will be 2-3 feet above current level

The March 2018 Nor'easter is a snapshot of what we will see every day in 2050



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WATCH HILL SEA WALL



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