

Town of Northport
Climate Resilience Committee (NCRC)
Notes, 15 Nov 2023

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 13, 2023

PRESENT: Tinsley Morrison, Dave Cameron, Gordon Fuller, Molly Schauffler, Peter Spotlett, James Kossuth, Susan Conard, Celine Bewsher, Janae Novotny.

AGENDA WITH NOTES ON PROCEEDINGS (in green):

- A few words about why I volunteered to chair this committee:
 - Not a climate scientist or an engineer, but I am able to listen, learn, organize information, perform committee administrative duties, run meetings, and summarize and communicate research/findings.
 - I'm excited for this opportunity to serve our community, but if at any point someone feels the desire to take it on because of better qualifications or for whatever reason, I will happily step down.
 - Thanks, everybody, for your warm support. I will always welcome any notes and suggestions.
- Let's get to know each other, and talk about how we envision our roles on this committee. What strengths do we bring? What limitations do we have?
 - **Dave:** has a deep background in energy use and efficiency, having worked for CMP/ Efficiency Maine. He is going to pursue putting together a high-level outline of the steps we can take toward improving the energy efficiency of town infrastructure/buildings. He will start with a list of town structures (to include Edna Drinkwater Elementary School) from James and then begin the process of getting energy audits for them.

He asked: what is the town willing to invest? There is a wide range of improved efficiency opportunities with variable upfront costs and return on investment time. Regarding these costs, NCRC will focus on applying for and receiving available grants/federal support to implement the recommended improvements. Celine pointed out that we should work closely with [MCOG](#) for funding.

- **Gordon:** worked for the State of Maine DEP for 30+ years. He is a generalist in the field and has worked with hazardous materials management as well as for Parks and Recreation. He is familiar with government bureaucracy. His interest is primarily on the waterfront and the Village of Bayside. He still has contacts within the DEP. His experience living where he does has given him an understanding of the

erosion that continues to worsen. His strengths are not in technology but he is a willing participant and will certainly be a valuable contributor.

- **Molly:** Has a highly applicable background as she works for the [Climate Change Institute at UMaine](#) and has a deep resume in science and education. Her interest lies in energy efficiency and infrastructure. She is also participating with the Northport Recycling committee (NRC) and sees potential for overlap with NCRC efforts: bringing power to the transfer station, possibly installing a solar array at the transfer station. She is interested in long-range planning and positioning for the future.
- **Sue:** Has a similar background and interest range to Molly. Her training is as an ecologist. Her interest over the last 15 years has been in climate change science modeling and opportunities for adaptation and mitigation. She is very interested in exploring all of the options for transition to free energy and has experience with doing so to her home. Her forestry background gives her knowledge of wildfires, though we are all really hoping this will not be an issue here.
- **Celine:** comes today with two main points in mind in terms of how she would like to contribute 1.) that we make sure we keep the success that we have already had with grants and to be sure we are on top of the two coming rounds of grants. **We need to have engagement with the community and make sure we are hearing their priorities and identifying next priorities.** One way can be through creating public forums in which we hear residents' input and respond as appropriate. 2.) There are many grant opportunities that we don't want to miss out on. **Because there is so much deep work required to both dig into grants and reach out to/educate/inform the community, she suggests that subcommittees will be useful.**

At this point Sue asked: What is the role of the Northport town office (NTO) in terms of grant writing (and that kind of stuff)? James answered that in the past the NTO has worked collaboratively (and successfully) with people on grants to both identify opportunities as well as work on ones that have been identified. Sue then went on to say that we have members with grant application experience; herself, Molly, Celine, and James. And so it seems the grant writing sub committee has been identified. :)

Celine mentioned another individual with deep grant writing experience who may be willing to assist—Paul Hamlin (sp?), Portland.
- **Janae:** her background is as a lawyer, which she humbly underplayed, but I think the rest of the committee sees this as a huge asset to our

efforts. Her interest is and has been to strengthen the ties between the Village and the rest of the town, and to counter the impression of separateness. She has deep working knowledge of the Village, including the utilities. She is kept busy with her Village work but offered that she is good with organizing and outreach.

Molly pointed out that Janae had already been quite helpful in making sure that the meeting room was available and ready for our meeting.

- **Peter:** This is where we learned that the Zoom setup was not working well at all for Peter, that the voices of the people at the table were unintelligible. Janae will work with whoever set us up to have it fixed for next time.

Peter's early background is in sales and marketing, and more recently in property management, which gives him some familiarity with roads and runoff and basic community infrastructure.

- **James:** A lawyer and the town administrator with time and advice, including deep knowledge of town policy and grant writing procedure. He can "be here, and do stuff." :)

- Go through the list of current priorities for Northport as established in the June 2023 Self-Eval List of Community actions. Identify natural first steps and note any ideas for implementation.

- E8 Adopt policies that prioritize natural, nature-based or ecologically enhanced shoreline protection for coastlines, rivers, and lakes.
- E9 Identify and protect sites for living shorelines and saltmarsh migration areas.
<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/assistance/index.htm>

Re E8 & E9 Tinsley asked for the status of the shoreline stabilization study. James gave the update as of 11/14: he received a call from one of the companies interested in bidding on the project and they asked for more time, extending the deadline from Wednesday 11/22/23 to Friday 12/08/2023. The proposals that are received will then be opened at the Select Board meeting on Monday 12/11/2023. There are four engineering firms pursuing the work, so this seems like hopeful news that we will receive good bids and can get started soon after that. Molly noted that we have two years to get the work done because the funding is a two year grant. Tinsley asked what shoreline stabilization means and looks like, and we had a discussion about the possible options which can include native plantings in addition to seawalls and combinations that are suited to the different areas. The grant intended is to address publicly owned shoreline, focusing on Auditorium Park, Bayview Park, places at risk along

Shore Road, and Kelly Cove. Janae asked if the shore area behind the school is being considered, and Gordon agreed that this is an area to keep in mind for stabilization as erosion there (especially toward Brown's Head) is significant. Tinsley asked if Saturday Cove is included and the answer is no.

Ideally, the proposed stabilization will consider privately owned shoreline—which cannot be addressed by the study, but which may already be receiving work from the owner—and strive to work as a whole system of solutions. Private property owners should be informed of the work that is being done by the town, and the engineering firm doing the design work can communicate with the property owners adjacent to the public properties and propose opportunities for tying-in their work. We should let people know that the USDA has grants available for this type of work for qualifying private (primary) residences but not for seasonal homes.

*At this point, Sue raised the point that this meeting's agenda, specifically the priorities listed, did not match the previous meeting notes. There was some back and forth about whether that was correct or not and why, but essentially it boiled down to the fact that Tinsley did not include the priorities that we had landed on at the last meeting, specifically:

- Priority H (generally): Increase public awareness of climate change impacts and opportunities to take action
- Priority B1 Adopt and execute a plan for energy efficiency and building envelope weatherization improvements for municipal/tribal buildings.

Oops.

- E10 Identify and protect open space in the floodplain to increase flood buffers and community resilience.

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/assistance/index.htm>

E10 is concerned with inland flooding and drainage. The first step will be to create a map of such. Tinsley will work with Amon Morse, the Northport Road Commissioner, and Bill Paige (of Northport Village Corporation [NVC]), and Christine Anderson-Moorehouse (who is familiar with the roads thanks to her running) to map all the public areas vulnerable to flooding. Tinsley will get a large paper road map from the NTO (who will get it from MDOT), consult the FEMA floodplain map, and schedule a time to meet with Amon, Bill, and Christine. Tinsley will have this ready for our next meeting.

- F1 Conduct a community vulnerability assessment that identifies climate risks and vulnerable populations and includes a review of existing plans and policies. Adopt a climate resilience plan

that describes high priority strategies for reducing risk and vulnerabilities (may be a standalone plan or included in a comprehensive plan).

Molly suggests that this is a priority that we can circle back to once the committee has worked together for a bit and has gelled. This topic will require a lot of probing and research. * Sue (later in the meeting circled back to this and) pointed out that in the meantime, we can start to identify which issues are coming that will initiate vulnerability. She also mentioned that the Belfast Climate Resiliency Committee has probably identified a large part of what this entails and we can be advised by their findings. Sue will collate this list as a document in our shared Google Drive (once I share it with everyone.)

Now is a good time to focus on:

- **Priority B1** Adopt and execute a plan for energy efficiency and building envelope weatherization improvements for municipal/tribal buildings.
 - Because we have a real focused interest in planning and building the new town office, and making it as energy-efficient as possible. So, concurrently with that, energy audits of the existing town buildings and energy accounts would make sense.
- G1 Conduct a vulnerability assessment for critical community infrastructure that includes: 1) the climate hazards to which infrastructure assets are exposed and how the intensity and likelihood will change over time; 2) the susceptibility to damage or failure given location, design, age, condition, and state of repair; and 3) the consequences that impairment or failure of the infrastructure will have on the community.
 - List town infrastructure assets with locations and details (map layer?)
 - Bayside has the Community Hall, the wastewater treatment plant, a pump station, (something I didn't catch), a fire station building, And the whole town has the school, another fire station, the town office, the salt and sand shed, and the street lights.
 - *This is not a complete list, however, Dave will work on compiling a comprehensive list of town energy accounts and 2 years of usage/billing history (getting the lists and data for the village from Janae and for the town from Vicky Eugley the town finance director) and then develop a plan/outline for energy audits and steps that can be considered for improved efficiency.
- G2 Develop a Capital Investment Plan that a) identifies vulnerable municipal/tribal facilities and assets, and b) prioritizes resilience in improvements and/or new construction.
 - Other than pursuing grants, this priority is something we can keep in mind as but there probably are no actionable steps at present. We might be able to get help with some kind of capital campaign from Margerie Crowley, who has expressed interest in helping in some way.

- Establish a meeting schedule. How often? Schedule our next meeting.

Given the holiday season, our next meeting should be in a month, after we have had a chance to do the work that we identified at this meeting, (map of flooding issues, compiling the energy accounts)

*Sue wants to see a shoreline map, which is accessible within the RFP for the shoreline stabilization study. Molly or James will send a link. I looked in the RFP and found it has the maps in Appendix A:

<https://northportmaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Northport-Shoreline-Stabilization-RFP.pdf>

There was some discussion about town liability and resident responsibility. It comes back to educating residents of their changing responsibilities (like keeping culverts cleared,) as climate change is upending everything we knew and expected to have to do. We are all in this together.

We began to wrap up by summarizing what I will do in terms of making the NCRC Google drive folder available to everyone, and to call Peter and check in re: the meeting and the bad sound that he had to contend with, and making sure that we have a directory of members with contact info. Gordon might have some tech challenges with the drive, but we think we can help as needed and that he will find it simpler than he expects. (*I didn't mention this at the time, but I would be happy to sit with Gordon at his laptop and just give a tour of our Google drive and make sure he can access what he wants to, or simply print any of it for him and hand deliver.)

We identified Wednesday, Dec 13 as our next meeting target. And we will meet in the same place, the Zoom reception will be fixed.

- Suggest subscribing to newsletter: <https://www.resilienceworks.info/>