

Coastal Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Town of Marshfield, Massachusetts

Hearing Room 3 — Marshfield Town Hall
2016 February 4

COMMITTEE PRESENT:

- Ben Cowie-Haskell (Chair)
- Thomas Fleming
- Jack Sullivan
- Sean Robinson (Clerk)

ALSO PRESENT (in audience):

- Greg Guimond (Town Planner)
- Cindy Castro (Town Beach Supervisor)
- Libby Bates (Town Assessor)
- Pam Kieth

1. Call to order

Mr. Cowie-Haskell called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

2. Approval of Clerk's Minutes

Mr. Cowie-Haskell called for objections or corrections to the minutes of the 2016 January 12 and 2016 January 19 meetings of the Committee. Seeing none, he declared the minutes approved as distributed.

3. Discussion with town assessor about coastal property valuation and effects of sea level rise.

Ms. Bates (Town Assessor) made two short presentations to the Committee about the effects of coastal impacts on property valuation.

The first presentation showed a very rough approximate calculation of how much a certain amount of sea level rise would effect tax rates in the Town. Specifically, she stated that she used maps from the 2013 Kleinfelder study with daily tidal flooding projections from the year 2038. The study says

that would be about 1.1 feet of relative sea level rise. Taking one area in Fieldston as representative of the coastal areas, she added up the lost property valuation from removing the structures in the daily inundated areas from the tax rolls and lowering the land value there to that of coastal marshland. Extrapolating from this sample area, she determined the net loss of property value for the coastal areas as a whole. Then, she calculated the new tax rate that would be necessary in order to keep the tax levy constant for the whole Town. She determined that if the Town's net valuation were to go down by the calculated amount, the current tax rate of \$13.88 per thousand would have to increase \$21.00 per thousand.

Ms. Bates emphasized that this increased tax rate would affect everyone in Town equally, not just the coastal areas. Thus, she continued, dealing with sea level rise now is everyone's problem, not just coastal property owners' problem.

During questions, Ms. Bates said that there are about 900 "second homes" in Marshfield.

In her second presentation, Ms. Bates briefly discussed the effects of FEMA NFIP mapping on property values. Her conclusion was that as of yet, there have been no detectable negative impacts on property values in the areas of Marshfield effected by the recent FEMA flood map cycle. On the other hand, she stated that there *has* been a "leveling off" of sale values in these areas, whereas everywhere else in Town continues to go up with the rest of the market.

As an aside, Ms. Bates suggested the the Committee look at the way houses are built on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Mr. Robinson asked how future loss of beaches would effect property values. Ms. Bates's indicated that the answer is too difficult to predict.

4. Discussion with beach manager about history of and changes to Rexhame Beach.

Mr. Cowie Haskell asked Ms. Castro to inform the Committee about the history of Rexhame beach, its restoration, and data that have been measured there.

In the discussion, Ms. Castro stated that Rexhame Beach contains an area of about 40 acres which was sold to town by Searivers Trust around 1950, and that the "numbered roads" were developed in 1920s.

Ms. Castro presented a number of historic photos (dating from the middle nineteenth century to the early twentieth century) of beaches in Marshfield, at several points from Rexhame to Green Harbor Beach, many of which included notable landmarks still identifiable. The Committee expressed fascination at the images in the collection and at the degree of coastal retreat that they demonstrate over the past century.

No motion or votes on this agenda item.

5. Adjourn

Mr. Fleming moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion. No further discussion. The Committee voted 4–0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Robinson
Coastal Advisory Committee Clerk