

Coastal Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Town of Marshfield, Massachusetts

Selectmen's Hearing Room — Marshfield Town Hall
2016 March 09

COMMITTEE PRESENT:

- Ben Cowie-Haskell (Chair)
- Brent Corschene
- Jack Sullivan (Mr. Sullivan was present alternatively between this Committee meeting and the CPA Committee meeting occurring simultaneously in the adjacent hearing room)
- Sean Robinson (Clerk)

COMMITTEE NOT PRESENT:

- Thomas Fleming

ALSO PRESENT (in audience):

- James Cantwell (State Representative)

1. Call to order

Mr. Cowie-Haskell called the meeting to order at 7:17 pm.

2. Approval of Clerk's Minutes

Mr. Cowie-Haskell called for objections or corrections to the minutes of the 2016 February 04 and 2016 March 03 meetings of the Committee. Mr. Robinson noted that Mr. Cowie-Haskell is incorrectly named as Acting Chair instead of Chair of both sets of minutes. This will be corrected. He declared the minutes approved as corrected.

3. Discussion with Rep. Jim Cantwell about adaptation to sea level rise and legislative remedies for addressing the impacts of rising seas.

The Committee had a broad and open conversation with Mr. Cantwell about legislative remedies for addressing the impacts of sea level rise. The following are assorted excerpts from that conversation.

Mr. Cantwell stated that coastal communities like Marshfield face a “triple threat”: rising sea level (independent of cause), more frequent storms, and crumbling coastal infrastructure.

Mr. Cantwell mentioned the existence of the nearby National Institute for Coastal and Harbor Infrastructure group, led by Mr. Bill Golden, as a resource. He noted the need for a major commitment to coastal infrastructure as a matter of importance to both national security and the economy.

Mr. Cantwell noted the need to fight for sea walls, as well as to continue arguing with state regulatory groups to pursue sand mining, WADs, and similar adaptations that are currently hard to permit.

The question was asked: How do we push these items forward? It was answered: Get the agency directors into a room and get them to hear the issues, along with federal people, too, perhaps under the aegis of a regional “Coastal Summit”, for example. Realistically, this could be made to happen in May or June.

The question was asked: what grant opportunities are available to buy back properties from a person who loses a house in a storm and wants a voluntary buyout? Answer: There is a state environmental bond, but there are a lots of good ideas all competing for that money.

Mr. Cantwell noted that anything the Committee puts in writing about managed retreat should emphasize boldly that such measures would be voluntary.

Mr. Corschene noted that for many types of adaptation, successful test programs help a lot in building credibility.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the Town has not applied for any of the annual HMPG grants because they come with management costs that are not funded by the grants themselves. (He noted that some other grants, like PDMF and FMA, come with 5% management funds built in, and other towns like Scituate have used those to fund a full time position, but that approach only works as long as the grants keep coming to continue funding this position.) He stated that in Massachusetts, those management allowances go to MEMA, but MEMA does not pass them on to the municipalities. Mr. Cantwell responded that the Committee should make an immediate goal for the Town to hire a grant manager and that a reasonable goal for a year from now is to have at least one grant under the belt of the Committee.

The question was asked as to whether Mr. Cantwell had any advice on how to write a report from the Committee in a way that impacts the most people? He responded that the Committee should get the word out via MCCC, local papers, local cable television, and go to the Council on Aging. He suggested picking a day and doing a formal role out. He stated that it would be useful to have a report that he could bring to other

legislators in the Commonwealth which demonstrates how much tax base, environmental resources, and human lives are within a threatened range of the coast.

4. Other Business

The Committee took a few minutes to bring new member Mr. Corschene up to speed on the Committee's recent work, current directions, and possible future directions.

5. Adjourn

Mr. Robinson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. No further discussion. The Committee voted 4-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Robinson
Coastal Advisory Committee Clerk