

# **St. George Resiliency Committee**

## ***Meeting minutes for 1/18/2023***

Minutes Approved: 2/15/2023

Attendees:

Onsite: Richard Bates, Meg Rasmussen, Van Thompson, Leticia vanVuuren, Hannah Baranes, John Maltais (recording)

Zoom: Dan Verrillo, Susan Ellis, Jennifer O'Donnell, Alison England, David Bruce

Meeting opened @ 5:03 PM, @ St. George Town Hall

Follow-up requested regarding prior minutes topic: MEMA grant for the Drift-In Beach Road. Richard Bates to clarify.

Richard called for any additional comments/revisions to last month's minutes. None offered. Minutes accepted by team.

Hannah Baranes (visiting from GMRI/Gulf of Maine Research Institute) invited to speak with committee and shared a brief introduction.

She explained benefits of installing tide sensors, such as the one recently deployed at Southern Island (SI). Generally, the SI Sensor is not helpful for measuring sea level rise, which requires both many years of data gathering and more precise measurement sensitivity. Nevertheless, when sensor data is combined with tide gauge monitoring on the peninsula, especially during weather extremes, collected data can be useful forecasting local flooding, as well as supporting community hazard planning.

Increasing the number of deployed sensors, paired with observational data collection (volunteers) can improve climate model accuracy and enhance the effectiveness of impact predictions. GMRI (Hannah) and students (lead by Alison England) will be taking measurements on Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> (next predicted extreme high tide).

A small pilot grant supports current events, and applications for additional funding are expected to be approved in coming month of Feb, to expand local weather forecasting to include tide predictions and other climate change metrics. Hannah noted a goal is to be able to predict 1%, 10% likely extreme events. Prediction capabilities are expected to change over time, for various reasons.

Richard Bates and Van Thompson are seeking to link GMRI activity with the Sebago Project, and this collaboration is still pending. Van to introduce Hannah to Sebago team.

The committee noted that housing development planning could benefit from enhanced predictive capabilities developed by teams such as GMRI.

Richard Bates noted that flood plane assessments could be reassessed.

Jennifer O'Donnell noted that flood zone changes could impact community tax rates or valuations, which are influenced by FEMA maps. Flood models developed in coming years will become more important as a reference. Various groups such as MCOG, UNH, Woods Hole, Maine Coastal Flood are collaborating to develop risk models, expected in next 2.5 to 3 years, likely in phases.

Jennifer and Hannah to sync on model research, as Jennifer explained she has experience developing/using predictive models.

Jennifer noted she analyzed data from December storm (provided by John Maltais) and found Southern Island Sensor unhelpful. Possible reasons: excessive wave action at that location, movement of dock in extreme weather reducing accuracy of measurement.

Hannah explained that newer/improved hardware will improve sensor performance. But choosing another location may of greater benefit.

Richard noted that Port Clyde is being considered. A location (town owned) should be considered to avoid possible removal by site owner. Jim Barstow may be a candidate to approach.

Jennifer noted that possibly moving or adding a sensor at another location should be considered to enhance data collection, rather than to continue collecting additional, similar data.

Hannah and Jennifer briefly discussed options; pros/cons. Hannah is eager to have input from Jennifer on suggested locations. Hannah explained that even similar data collection can be useful in supporting education and weather augmentation.

John Maltais to assist Jennifer access Hohonu Sensor data directly via website.

Hannah also reported that tide staff elevations at 5 locations were measured this day, although Turkey Cove staff measurement was complicated by overhead trees, so an alternate method had to be used. Hannah will send details in a follow-up.

Hannah shared a flyer, including QR code (online/printed survey) to be issued to those Interested in contributing to community science flood monitoring.

The meeting proceeded to the topic of Community engagement plan, presented by Meg Rasmussen.

Care of Richard, here's [a link to Meg's draft community engagement plan](#) that was discussed at meeting.

Meg has a comprehensive plan. Each initiative was reviewed in some detail.

There was a question about possibly using the town website for outreach.

Dan Verrillo was asked if he could assist with hosting content, and he kindly agreed. He will consult his web team to explore expanding the conservation site to include a dedicated section on climate change and sea level rise.

Another option could be to issue updates via Ben Vail's newsletter. It was agreed that Ben would need to be asked to consider expanding topics on his newsletter, should we go forward with that. No one was assigned nor volunteered for this task.

A question was raised with regard to holding additional stakeholder meetings – what more do stakeholders need to know? Meetings held 4 years ago were highly attended.

Regarding Item #3; One thought is to seek to combine St. George and Thomaston to expand perspective and encourage new folks to get involved, offering in person/zoom meetings. Host small groups, sponsor exercises, sessions, or resource offerings.

Hannah suggested seeking a cross section of community.

Van Thompson feels the Engagement Plan is aggressive. Susan Ellis said a group approach is a good idea.

Richard: GMRI has done exercises to foster engagement; board game (prototype) was used prior. This game has been updated since.

Meg: wondered how prior exercises fit our needs.

Richard mentioned that High School students (recommended by Alison) were asked to join the committee and declined. Try Again?

Regarding Item #4; Meg recommended somehow getting more participants.

Item #5 discussion led to Van relaying that he will be consulting Sebago on this topic. Van explained that a phased approach, where Sebago will present to Saint George when ready. Van to confirm details. Presentation will then move on to Portland, but Saint George is to receive details first, expected to occur at Grange in Martinsville in June timeframe. Sebago plans to present to Portland in late June/early Aug. Committee shared some concern about a Sept timeline as fewer summer residents will be available.

Van/Meg to sync on this topic; use Saint George as an example case prior to presenting elsewhere.

Richard said he would follow-up with updates on this topic.

Richard happily reported the library approved installation of electric vehicle (EV) charger outlets at Jackson Memorial Library (JML) location.

2 outlets planned. We will know more by end of Jan on grant monies to fund EV stations. They will not be Tesla type to keep installation costs more conservative.

The committee is very happy with this news.

Hannah reminded group that Monday (Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>) is planned for community science flood monitoring.

20 – 30 students are expected to participate thanks to Alison England, using the online/paper survey shared by Hannah shared at this meeting.

Meg asked for help convening a meeting with Stakeholders. It was recommended that adjacent landowners should be invited.

Next meeting: Wed. Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, @5:00 PM

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM

Minutes taken by John Maltais

January 18, 2023