

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**MADISON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 19, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission was conducted Thursday, May 19, 2016, at 7 p.m., in Meeting Room A at Madison Town Campus.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Ronald Clark, Secretary Christopher Traugh, James Matteson, John K. Mathers, Joel Miller, Amanda Kaplan, and Thomas Burland.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Vice Chairman Francine Larson and Joseph Bunovsky, Jr.

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Brian Richardson

OTHERS PRESENT

Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson; members of the public; MCTV taped the meeting.

The regular meeting of the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order at approximately 7 p.m. by Chairman Ronald Clark.

Presentation of Draft Coastal Resilience Plan by Milone & MacBroom.

At the start of the presentation, Milone & MacBroom Professional Engineer and Associate David Murphy, senior project manager, water resources engineering, introduced Milone & MacBroom Environmental Scientist Noah Slovin, and Dewberry Senior Associate Scott R. Choquette. The draft of the *Town of Madison Coastal Resilience Plan, Presentation of Options and Plans*, created by Murphy, Slovin, Choquette, Town Engineer Michael Ott, and Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson, was featured on a PowerPoint presentation, during the talk. Mr. Murphy marked the presentation as the last public information meeting in the process of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, awarded as a result of Hurricane Sandy, which funded the study shared by the towns of Madison, Branford and Milford. This grant expires in June, but there is some time to make editorial changes in the draft report, for instance, an original Appendix F, on Middle Beach Road, has a newer version, according to Mr. Murphy. When there is a storm event, such as Hurricane Sandy, towns experience a loss, and then it takes time to recover and to return to normal; options and plans are being featured in the report in an effort to improve that recovery time, according to Mr. Murphy. Preparing and adapting, over time, reduces recovery time, according to Mr. Murphy. The goal in resilience is to become faster in recovery, with key areas to focus on being buildings and structures, communications, transportation, water, energy, and wastewater. Options in resilience include: pulling out or retreating; accommodating; and concentrating on places that absolutely must be protected. It is felt that, over time, people will be reverting to retreat and protect, according to Mr. Murphy. Accommodation can be done on a large scale, much like the Netherlands, but that

type of accommodation might be better suited to larger areas, such as New York City. Adapting could be site specific, Mr. Murphy stated. Accommodation is for the short term, while retreat and protect is long-range. Milone & MacBroom made a survey available to Madison residents, and the results, with 152 respondents, were encouraging; Mr. Murphy stated that it is that largest number of respondents they had ever received from a survey. Through the survey, residents identified what they care about, what they worry about, and the types of plans they would like to see accomplished in the area of resilience. Madison residents care about drinking water, natural systems, transportation, and communication; they worry about wind, erosion and flooding, Mr. Murphy stated. Suggestions from the public include continue to use seawalls, bulkheads, and revetments, according to Mr. Murphy. Other resilience options include forming breakwaters, nourishing beaches, and protecting dunes, according to Mr. Murphy. Potential sites for community wastewater systems should be identified, since the town is currently relying on individual septic systems, and townspeople should continue to elevate their homes, Mr. Murphy stated. Road retirement is not a popular option for townspeople, and property acquisitions by the government will always be voluntary, according to Mr. Murphy. This report includes a matrix of all the neighborhoods, mostly those affected by Hurricane Sandy, and the engineers and scientists, in examining the areas, took a stab at what options would work in different neighborhoods, according to Mr. Murphy. For instance, on Middle Beach Road, the revetment needs to be improved and maintained; septic systems should be elevated, but eventually the town will need a system for everybody nearby; Mr. Murphy predicted the town might have to examine its zoning regulations, since some would like to make their homes stronger, but zoning regulations may be preventing those options. Green Hill Road and Green Hill Place, which includes a part of Route 1, were also studied, as well as the Surf Club area, according to Mr. Murphy.

Noah Slovin stated that Green Hill Road includes Green Hill Road north of Interstate 95, and Green Hill Place includes Old Post Road, and Boston Post Road, to the south; any proposals in the report are not what townspeople should do, but instead options to consider. Flooding from the East River can flood a number of houses, and one option is to elevate Green Hill Road, either for extreme storms or just high enough to allow Green Hill Road to stay dry, but both options have different cost estimates, according to Mr. Slovin. Another option is to acquire the houses that would be flooded, or town officials could retrofit the drainage system under Green Hill Road and Interstate 95, he stated. Regarding Green Hill Place and to the south, there are a number of buildings in this area with different vulnerabilities; some of the buildings they would dry flood proof and others they would wet flood proof, and, of course, the buildings could be elevated or acquired; but all of these options would have different costs, according to Mr. Slovin. Finally, the road, itself, could be elevated. In the Smith Bay area to Oak Avenue, finger roads, as they were called, there can be damage from waves and erosion; this is a wide area with a lot of issues and challenges, according to Mr. Slovin. Options are building seawalls, restoring and protecting dunes, and installing improved drainage structures, but that does not solve the problem of storm flooding—it is just for high tides, he stated. If dunes and seawalls are not built, then houses could be elevated, he stated. One last option would be to build a levee around the neighborhood, and it would then be protected from storms and floods, but there are different costs to consider, according to Mr. Slovin.

Scott Choquette stated that regarding Middle Beach Road, the bottom line problem is that the Tunxis Road and Park Avenue revetment is in need of repair and rebuilding; the focus is on

keeping this area of the town open, and this piece of the shoreline has a lot of wave activity. Flooding is a problem; the neighborhood is repeatedly flooded. One option is that section of Middle Beach Road could be moved back a bit, but a number of parcels would be affected by that change, according to Mr. Choquette. That stretch could also be abandoned, and additional roads could be built elsewhere, but in terms of traffic that would be generated in the other areas, as well as the high costs, this is probably not a realistic scenario, Mr. Choquette stated. Another option is to fix the revetment or to elevate it above the wave action, wave run off, and the overtopping of waves, but that may not be enough, so additional engineering structures would be needed, according to Mr. Choquette.

One solution would be to restore the dune that had once been there, according to Mr. Murphy; a dune is a green infrastructure, which can be used to prevent flood damage. The previous dune ran along the wash area and went into the tidal wetlands; the idea is to restore the dune, making sure it is alive, so it is green, to try to put back what once was; there is a walk way at elevation seven or eight, and it would have to be elevated, according to Mr. Murphy.

In conclusion, Madison has a lot already in place, in terms of coastal resilience, adaptation, accommodation, and protection; Madison can adapt, and the town has competent town officials in place to do the work, according to Mr. Murphy. Next steps for Madison could be to adopt the draft plan as an amended plan to documents it already has in place, or the resilience report could be turned over to a commission or town official, where it would be retained as a live document, according to Mr. Murphy.

Chairman Clark thanked everyone for the presentation and asked the Planning and Zoning Commission if it had any questions; he then sought questions from the public.

Charles Stone of Middle Beach Road asked if a breakwater was considered as an option. Mr. Choquette stated that it would have to be a long breakwater, and there could be a variety of scenarios for the engineering designs; estimates are a breakwater could be 300 feet, or it could be 600 feet, but, then again, it might also be only 150 feet. Over time the town is repairing the revetment and the sea wall, Mr. Murphy stated. Several residents were concerned about the costs associated with some of the options and wondered from where the money would come to complete such projects. Chairman Clark stated that the town of Madison has been very proactive in obtaining grants for projects, such as the sidewalk replacement near the shops on Boston Post Road; but the town is not alone in its needs for coastal resilience efforts, since the entire shoreline, west to east, in Connecticut has this as an issue. Concerns were also raised about septic systems, but Chairman Clark and Commissioner Joel Miller stated that septic systems are under the jurisdiction of the town health director and the state; septic systems are not included in the regulatory responsibilities of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mr. Anderson explained that a variety of town boards and commissions are working on coastal resilience projects; there is a hazard mitigation plan being created; the Water Pollution Control Authority is looking toward strengthening regulations for septic systems; and the energy and efficiency commission is looking into the energy grid. Commission Secretary Christopher Traugh proposed that the drainage systems be corrected, first; this could eliminate core problems in the ground. A breakwater would not happen until a year from now, according to Mr. Murphy.

Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting, April 21, 2016

Commissioner Matteson made the motion to accept the minutes, as amended, with a correction on page 6, paragraph three, change a portion of line six to read, *builders would be allowed 11 lots, but only 10 are being proposed*; it was seconded by Chairman Clark and approved.

Vote to amend the April 21, 2016 minutes, as amended, passed, 6-0-1.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Clark, Secretary Traugh, and Commissioners Matteson, Kaplan, Burland, and Miller.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: Commissioner Mathers.

Remarks: **ACCA Liaison Report** ~ None.
 Commission Chair ~ No report.
 Town Planner ~ No report.

Adjournment

Secretary Traugh made the motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.; it was seconded by Commissioner Burland and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn passed, 7-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Clark, Secretary Traugh, and Commissioners Matteson, Kaplan, Mathers, Burland, and Miller.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy, clerk