

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**MADISON COASTAL RESILIENCY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Aug. 11, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Madison Coastal Resiliency Commission was conducted Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021, at 7 p.m., in a public format, through a Zoom Online Webinar, with Public Participation made available through a publicly posted webinar link and password, as well as a call-in telephone number, with a webinar identification number, and with recording on YouTube.com.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Henry Maguire, Vice Chairman Graham Curtis, and Commissioners Woodie Weiss, Wayne Rigney, Walter Welsh.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Clayton Patterson, Joseph Maco, Robert Sonnichsen, Marilyn Shaw, Shannon Lewis, David Clark, April Allen, Timothy Casey, Elaine Stangland, and Gregory Makoul.

OTHERS PRESENT

First Selectwoman Peggy Lyons and Selectman Al Goldberg.

The regular meeting of the Madison Coastal Resiliency Commission was called to order at approximately 7 p.m. by Chairman Henry Maguire.

Call meeting to order. Chairman Henry Maguire called the meeting to order.

Review and approve minutes of past meetings. This was tabled until next month.

Discussion of Board of Selectmen meeting on flood plain ordinance.

Chairman Maguire gave a brief summary of the Board of Selectmen's meeting, wherein First Selectman Peggy Lyons recused herself from the board's discussion with town counsel on the proposed flood plain ordinance; four selectmen took part in that discussion. At the conclusion of talks, the selectmen took no action on the flood plain ordinance. They tabled it, basically, Chairman Maguire stated. As a result, the town will stay with its current flood plain ordinance, which is outdated, needs to be updated, and was not written with coastal resiliency efforts in mind, according to Chairman Maguire. He sought comments from the commissioners, in relation to their views on the selectmen's action, with respect to the proposed flood plain ordinance. Vice Chairman Graham Curtis stated that he blames the commission, itself, because it did not do the outreach properly, and the Coastal Resiliency Commission needs to revisit how it disseminated this information on the flood plain ordinance. In addition, Vice Chairman Curtis stated that he views this as an opportunity to do more. Chairman Maguire stated that he and Commissioner Walter Welsh, who chairs the communications subcommittee, have talked about this; going forward, the commission needs to be smarter about leading with communication, to show what the Coastal Resiliency Commission is doing to help the town. It is not, necessarily, that the commission was at fault, but it was focused on the policy side, Chairman Maguire stated. In the future, the commission will lead with communication, he stated. Commissioner Woodie Weiss stated that he had just written his thoughts about the flood plain ordinance, which he stated that he would read to the Coastal Resiliency Commission. Commissioner Weiss stated that well over one year ago, the Coastal Resiliency Commission took on the task of updating the flood plain ordinance. It used the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) model, state mandated projections for sea level rise incorporated into state law, current building, fire and safety codes, and Madison's Coastal Resiliency Plan, which was adopted by

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the town. In addition, the updated and proposed flood plain ordinance was created using language similar to what other towns along the Connecticut coastline had written into their updated and adopted flood plain ordinances. The Coastal Resiliency Commission realized the process of adoption required modifications to the proposed flood plain ordinance, which were made, including a modification to the look-back period, according to Commissioner Weiss. Once completed, the flood plain ordinance would be much more in line with other towns along the coastline; Madison may be the only town along the coastline without an updated flood plain ordinance, he stated. Commissioner Weiss expressed disappointment in Selectman Al Goldberg, who has served as liaison to the Coastal Resiliency Commission and who had 15 months working with the commissioners during the flood plain ordinance process. Selectman Goldberg's reaction, at this point, was to see no need to move forward, Commissioner Weiss stated. To abrogate responsibility to cope with increased sea level rise is irresponsible, according to Commissioner Weiss. Commissioner Welsh stated that there was a large corps of folks who were tremendously opposed to this proposal, and the Coastal Resiliency Commission was the lone voice in supporting the flood plain ordinance. Chairman Maguire stated that he does not consider this a step back—the commission needs to be aware of where it is and build a better consensus. The commission will do what is best for the town, Chairman Maguire stated.

Discussion of establishing a coastal resiliency reserve fund.

First Selectwoman Peggy Lyons stated that there is a demand in town to address the infrastructure, and this will be helpful to homeowners. Branford has established a coastal resiliency fund, on which the legislature allows interest to be made. First Selectwoman Lyons stated that she went back and looked at the Madison Coastal Resiliency Plan more closely, and, in doing so, she found that a lot of those projects are not in the town's Capital Improvements Plan. First Selectwoman Lyons stated that she has asked the Department of Public Works to add those Coastal Resiliency Plan projects into the Capital Improvements Plan. Setting up this coastal resiliency reserve fund is a great use of Madison's undesignated fund balance; the town still has \$7 million, and this is a good use of those funds, she stated. Both the town finance director and the Board of Finance will be supportive of this, and the thought is to give \$500,000 in a special appropriation, First Selectwoman Lyons stated, adding that there are grants coming out for coastal resiliency and infrastructure projects. At the Aug. 23 Board of Selectmen meeting, the selectmen could recommend that the Board of Finance set up this coastal resiliency fund and approve the special appropriation for it, which the Board of Finance would do in September, she stated. Then planning could get under way for Tuxis and Middle Beach Road, to address some of those flooding issues in that area, according to First Selectwoman Lyons. It is an ongoing issue in a highly trafficked area of town, she stated. It would eventually be adopted into the five year Capital Improvements Plan, by getting into the planning process in November, for the next year's budget, according to First Selectwoman Lyons.

Commissioner Weiss made the motion that the Board of Selectmen create a Coastal Resiliency Fund, appropriating \$500,000 for coastal resiliency projects; it was seconded by Commissioner Welsh and unanimously approved.

Vote to have the Board of Selectmen create a Coastal Resiliency Fund passed, 5-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Maguire, Vice Chairman Curtis, and Commissioners Welsh, Wayne Rigney, and Weiss.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

First Selectwoman Lyons expressed hope that establishing this coastal resiliency fund would enable the town of Madison to obtain federal and state dollars toward projects.

Discussion of tech group projects listing.

Vice Chairman Curtis shared the technology subcommittee's listing of projects to complete. He stated that it is a working document, and by no means is it a comprehensive document. It includes construction projects, the issue at hand in each project, the priorities for completion, the timelines, and the costs; some projects are long term, going 20 to 30 years out. Two priority projects are the intersection of Island Avenue and Middle Beach Road and the seawall; a \$750,000 grant has been received to complete the seawall project. A lot of these projects fall in the purview of the beach and recreation department, according to Vice Chairman Curtis. First Selectwoman Lyons stated that they might need to take some money out of the reserve fund to hire an engineer to determine whether the road should be raised; the town would not want to put in the bridge and find out a few years later that both the road and the bridge have to be raised; the bridge is going to be repaired soon. The second page of the document is more global, societal, environmental, long range, and some are very low cost to implement, such as disseminating information on water use reduction programs and coastal wetlands, according to Vice Chairman Curtis.

Discussion regarding the communications strategy.

Communications ideas and strategies were discussed earlier, and Chairman Maguire asked if anyone has anything to add to the discussion. Commissioner Rigney stated the focus is to find a list of coastal resiliency topics and begin to gain community support, while keeping the community informed.

General discussion. None.

Adjourn. Chairman Maguire adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy, clerk