

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**MADISON COASTAL RESILIENCY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Nov. 10, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Madison Coastal Resiliency Commission was conducted Wednesday, Nov. 10, 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 Joseph Maco, Shannon Lewis, and Walter Welsh.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Robert Sonnichsen, Wayne Rigney, Clayton Patterson, Woodie Weiss, Marilyn Shaw, David Clark, April Allen, Timothy Casey, Elaine Stangland, and Gregory Makoul.

OTHERS PRESENT

Selectman Al Goldberg; Town Planner Erin Mannix.

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.

Introduction – Erin Mannix, Town Planner: Chairman Maguire introduced Town Planner Erin Mannix to the commissioners, and she summarized her professional background and experience. A Madison resident, she and her husband have four children, and she stated that it is great to be able to work in the town in which she lives. Prior to becoming Madison’s town planner, which Ms. Mannix stated is a great advancement for her career, she was the zoning enforcement officer and inland wetlands agent for the town of Guilford. Her education is in biology, with environmental studies being the focus. She did work for the city of Norwalk in the land use department, went through the state of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) course for inland wetlands agents, and filled in while the environmental officer was on an extended leave. Ms. Mannix is a certified zoning enforcement officer, and she serves on the state’s organization for certified zoning enforcement officers. One of the new positions created this year in Madison’s land use department is the environmental planner, a position for which she wrote the description; it is now being advertised for applicants, with a deadline of Nov. 19, 2021. Ms. Mannix stated that she will be the liaison to the Coastal Resiliency Commission and help whenever she can—hopefully the environmental planner will be brought on to assist, as well. The town is required to update the Plan of Conservation and Development by 2023, and the goal is to incorporate the affordable housing plan and the coastal resiliency plan into the Plan of Conservation and Development. Once that is accomplished, the plan is to rewrite the planning and zoning regulations, according to Ms. Mannix. The environmental planner will be the duly responsible inland wetlands agent, certified and authorized to act on behalf of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, as well as assist the Conservation Commission as it completes its natural resources inventory, help manage conservation easements, work on Coastal Area Management applications and storm water management, and assist in drafting regulations, according to Ms. Mannix.

Discussion on Coastal Resiliency Reserve fund—process for access/use: Chairman Maguire stated that he would like to know the process involved in accessing the \$500,000 coastal resiliency reserve

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fund that was recently approved by the Board of Selectmen. Vice Chairman Graham Curtis, who is also the chairman of the Coastal Resiliency Commission technical committee, stated that the commission will have to follow the normal process; projects have to first be put on the capital improvements plan. Vice Chairman Curtis stated that it makes sense to use that money for the Coastal Resiliency Plan update, which would allow more than \$10,000 to be spent to complete the update. Vice Chairman Curtis stated that he has been told that very few towns have Coastal Resiliency Plans, so Madison is ahead, as well as Branford, with both towns having funds allocated toward the coastal resiliency effort. Selectman Al Goldberg stated that the Coastal Resiliency Commission reports directly to the Board of Selectmen, so if the commissioners have an idea about how money should be spent, they do not have to go to other town offices, first. The coastal resiliency commissioners would go directly to the Board of Selectmen with the request for funds, and then the selectmen would seek others' input, if needed, according to Selectman Goldberg. Chairman Maguire thanked Selectmen Goldberg for clarifying how funds would be accessed.

Feedback on meeting with Inland Wetlands: Coastal Resiliency Commission Communications Committee Chairman Walter Welsh stated that his committee was looking for a way to communicate with others, and the representatives of the Coastal Resiliency Commission gave a presentation at the last Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency meeting. Education before the agency included letting everyone know that coastal resiliency means adaptation, and the way to adapt is to protect, accommodate, and retreat. The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency enforces existing regulations, and it was asked for ideas on how to educate the public about sea level rise, so the wetlands can be protected, according to Mr. Welsh. Chairman Maguire stated that their presentation was at the end of the meeting, so they were able to hear the applications before the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency. Wetlands had been damaged, and the agency was talking about how to restore the wetlands area, Chairman Maguire stated, adding that the resident who owned the damaged wetlands was totally on board for restoration. It was really interesting, Chairman Maguire stated. When the sea level rises the projected 20 inches by 2050, it will inundate the rivers, lakes, and ponds, he stated, adding that the visit before the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency was well worthwhile.

General Discussion: Chairman Maguire stated that there were 18 members on the Coastal Resiliency Commission when it first started, but four have since left, and so 14 remain. With the 18 members, three subcommittees were formed—policy, technical, and communications, according to Chairman Maguire. Selectman Goldberg stated that only seven of the 18 were named as commissioners, and four commissioners would comprise a quorum. Commissioner Welsh stated that having an in-person meeting would be better, and Chairman Maguire stated that these are public meetings, so people could attend the meetings. Town Planner Erin Mannix stated that the statute does allow Zoom meetings to continue until April 2022, and the law requires that if anyone wishes to remain remote, boards and commissions have to accommodate that request. Chairman Maguire stated that he will send an email out to the commissioners to give them an opportunity to decide whether to meet in person or by way of Zoom. He stated that he will send out an email, outline the options, and based on the feedback, the Coastal Resiliency Commission will decide what to do. Selectman Goldberg stated that he had an update on the federal funds that might be headed to Madison. First, Madison's share of the American Rescue Plan appears to be \$5.7 million, and those funds go directly to the town, Selectman Goldberg stated, adding that those funds have to be applied over the next two years. The Build Back America Better Act will also be providing funds to Madison, according to Selectman Goldberg, and he stated that he spoke to Senator Chris Murphy, who told him that the money may be used to help the coastline deal with the projected sea level rise. Up to \$1 billion is expected, and there are 14 towns directly on the shoreline, Selectman Goldberg stated, adding that he thinks there will be financial resources to deal with some of the issues the Coastal Resiliency Commission is going to be facing in the future. Vice Chairman Curtis stated that the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) has \$155,000 budgeted for

an update on the WPCA facilities study; the coastal impact to sewers, on a long term basis, will mostly take place in the Neck Road area. With 20 inches of sea level rise, there will be an effect on the septic systems in the Neck Road area, according to Vice Chairman Curtis. It is more of a long range issue, as well as an economic development issue, according to Vice Chairman Curtis.

Adjourn: Chairman Maguire adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy, clerk