

**Town of South Bethany
Resiliency Committee Meeting
Monday, October 30, 2023**

In attendance: Edie Dondero, Chair; Geoffrey Kolberg, Joan Marini, Mike Powell, Tim Saxton

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Dondero at 10:08am.

1. Review of Committee Purpose and Scope of Work

Ms. Dondero reported that the committee was formed by Town Council following receipt of the Resiliency Implementation Plan authored by engineering firm GMB in March 2023. She asked the members if there were any questions about the committee's purpose or scope of work. Mr. Powell inquired if the previous study contracted by the Town in 2015 on sea level rise (SLR) were provided to GMB as it was not cited in the 2023 Implementation Plan. Ms. Dondero affirmed that GMB had access to all previous studies conducted for the Town and Mr. Saxton affirmed that some of the data from the 2015 study by AnchorQEA was utilized in the 2023 report.

Ms. Dondero reported that the Resiliency Committee has a new page on the Town website and that both the 2023 plan prepared by GMB and the 2015 SLR study by AnchorQEA are available there for download.

2. Public comment

There were no members of the public in attendance and, therefore, no public comment.

3. Discussion of 2023 Resiliency Implementation Plan

The 2023 Resiliency Implementation Plan was authorized by Council in 2022 and was funded with monies received by the Town from the federal government via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Town received multiple bids for the project and selected the firm of GMB to prepare the study.

The members provided general observations and comments about the study as a whole and Ms. Dondero distributed a summary of the plan and "take-aways" authored by Mr. Kolberg. She described her impression that the plan addressed three approaches to addressing resiliency which she felt defined the scope of work for the committee: 1) regulatory actions (e.g., code changes, new ordinances); 2) infrastructure projects; and 3) education/outreach targeted toward the encouragement of voluntary resiliency-focused improvements by property owners.

Mr. Kolberg asked whether South Bethany has reached out to the other coastal towns to inquire about their efforts toward resiliency and to assess whether there are any opportunities for collaboration and/or partnership. Ms. Dondero reported that she had connected with a member of the resiliency committee in Fenwick Island who expressed interest in collaboration. A brief discussion was then held about the resiliency study recently completed for Fenwick Island by AECOM and how it may be useful to South Bethany as the two towns have similar issues.

Mr. Kolberg raised the possibility of creating some sort of incentive for homeowners to take voluntary actions to increase resiliency of their properties. He also offered the suggestion to collaborate with DelDOT as the median in Coastal Highway could potentially be useful for stormwater storage and management.

Dr. Marini raised the issue of working on parallel projects, especially projects which would be at different stages of planning/development/implementation. Specifically, she cited the issue of raising the bulkhead, an idea that had also been one of the two prime foci of the GMB report. Mr. Kolberg and Mr. Powell felt this item was too complicated because of non-uniformity of the bulkhead (boat ramps, condition of bulkhead). Dr. Marini stressed that this is a considerable but not overwhelming level of complexity, suitable for a detailed survey given the large potential positive yield.

4. Discussion of Recently Awarded Hazard Mitigation Grant

Ms. Dondero informed the Committee that the Town in December 2022 applied through DEMA for a hazard mitigation grant in the amount of \$87,000 to contract an engineering study to assess and recommend solutions for the flooding of York Road and secondary streets. The grant was awarded to the Town on September 14, 2023 and has a 21-month period of performance. As such, assisting the Town Manager in preparing the scope of work for the study and an RFP will be the first priority of this committee. Mr. Powell offered to find examples of documents from similar projects and provide them as resources.

The committee discussed the possibility of adding an assessment of flooding and drainage issues in Cat Hill (specifically Tamarack, Cattail and Black Gum Drives) to the scope of work of the York Road study. This would require an amendment to the project scope as defined in the grant which, according to DEMA, would be permitted, but any additional cost for this work would be incurred by the Town and would not be eligible for funding under the current grant.

5. Discussion of New Federal Funding Opportunities: FMA and BRIC Grants

Ms. Dondero and Maureen Hartman, Town Manager, attended two information sessions about recently released funding opportunities through FEMA: Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC) grants. Applications for both grants are due to FEMA by February 1, 2024.

The committee discussed the need to prioritize areas of town and their respective needs for infrastructure improvements. Mr. Kolberg stressed the importance of developing a prioritization methodology that can be explained to residents.

Mr. Saxton reported that Town officials are scheduled to meet with representatives from the USACE to better understand their Section 219 program and what resources they may be able to provide the Town in its resiliency efforts.

6. Next Meeting Date and Adjournment

The committee tentatively scheduled its next meeting for Monday, November 20th. (The meeting was subsequently moved to Tuesday, November 21st at 10am).

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am.