



# Minutes of Meeting

**DATE:** May 20, 2015  
**MMI #:** 2733-14  
**PROJECT:** Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience in Southern Connecticut

**SUBJECT:** Fairfield Coordination

**LOCATION:** Independence Hall

**ATTENDEES:**

David Murphy, P.E., CFM, MMI  
Jason Williams, LA, MMI  
Matt Fulda, GBRC  
Joe Michelangelo, Public Works Director  
Laura Pulie, Town Engineer  
Brian Carey, Conservation Director  
Members of the Flood and Erosion Control Board  
Jim O'Donnell, CIRCA

A project coordination discussion was held on May 20, 2015 during the regular meeting of the Fairfield Flood and Erosion Control Board as agenda item #2<sup>1</sup> from approximately 9 PM to 10 PM. David Murphy and Jason Williams were present from Milone & MacBroom, Inc. David Murphy presented the regional coastal resilience project, utilizing a power point slide show as the basis for the presentation.

The Fairfield shoreline was discussed in the context of all resilience projects. A comprehensive flood protection system is strongly desired for Fairfield, and parts of the system will be pursued as funds become available. The options for siting a flood protection system are essentially as follows: in front of beaches, behind them, or some combination. Attendees inquired about what the design criteria should be for various components of a flood protection system. David indicated that the desired objective would drive the design criteria. For example, does the town want to lessen the frequency of minor flooding, stop future severe floods, or re-map the FEMA floodplain to reduce insurance premiums? One member of the Flood and Erosion Control Board indicated that elevating some of the beaches only 1-2 feet could be significant, and that the town would accomplish a lot by getting the ground surface to elevation 13 along berms and dikes.

Potential green infrastructure projects were discussed:

- The Flood and Erosion Control Board identified the span of shorefront from Beach Road to Reef Road as the area that could most benefit from coastal resilience projects that may fit into the green and hybrid context of the regional coastal resilience project. Hard structures currently do not exist in this span of beach, and surging over the beach toward Reef Road was a significant problem during Sandy.
  - The segment west of Penfield Beach is a very narrow beach. Here, the approach could include beach nourishment followed by creation of dunes. However, this segment consists of private properties. Without making the beach wider, there likely would not be space for dunes to be created as a berm.
  - The segment east of Penfield Beach is mostly owned by the Fairfield Beach Club. A similar approach could be taken here, with some potential ease because of the limited number of property owners, and because the beach is somewhat wider.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prior to 9 PM, representatives of CT DEEP OLISP were present during agenda item #1 to answer questions from the Flood and Erosion Control Board about the town's coastal flood protection system conceptual plans and proposals.



# Minutes of Meeting

- The dunes at Jennings Beach could provide a model for the above approach. These dunes were reportedly not breached by the surges from Irene and Sandy, and therefore provided localized flood protection (although floodwaters reached around from behind).
- One member of the Flood and Erosion Control Board identified the Jennings Beach parking lot as a potential location of a green infrastructure project. The parking lot is reportedly oversized for most days of the year and therefore partly underutilized. Areas of pavement could be replaced by open space available for marsh advancement or less pervious surfaces that could infiltrate stormwater.
- Several members of the Flood and Erosion Control Board believe that opportunities for green infrastructure and hybrid resilience project may be located along Ash Creek and the lower Rooster River. This would extend the areas of green infrastructure opportunities upstream into more traditional riverine settings, which is consistent with The Nature Conservancy looking at riverine projects as part of this grant. Locations of potential projects include:
  - Tidal flat south of Kenwood Avenue
  - Tidal wetland west of Turney Road
  - Spit of land located between Ash Creek and the South Benson Marina
  - St. Mary's site (which is reportedly being studied by the City of Bridgeport)
- Joe might have some information about some of these sites, and will forward as appropriate.
- Green infrastructure opportunities may also be present at the Riverside Drive bridge/culverts and tide gates adjacent to Ash Creek, as this infrastructure needs attention.
- There may be some potential for tidal wetland projects between Veterans Park and Field Point Road.
- Laura suggested that removal of groins may be something that fits into the regional coastal resilience project. This would be considered if there was a benefit. This is something to look at further.

David asked if there were any locations that may be feasible in the long-term for acquisitions of private properties to make space for marsh advancement and a flood protection system. One potential typology for this kind of project would be Reef Road south of One Rod Highway. The homes on the west side of the road could be removed and this land could be set aside for marsh advancement while the road could be converted into a dike. This could also be done elsewhere along the margins of the Pine Creek tidal marshes and tributary tidal marshes.

David asked about the coastal flood risk areas west of Sasco Hill Road. Attendees from Fairfield indicated that these areas were not in need of extensive resilience projects, in part because elevations rise steeply from the shoreline.

Field reconnaissance was not scheduled during the meeting. David will contact Laura and Joe to discuss potential dates.