

Sea Level Adaptation Working Group (SLAWG)
Meeting Minutes
Date: 5/24/2011
4:30 – 6:00 pm

Attendees: Steve Zeeman (Biddeford), Lucy LaCasse (Scarborough), Peter Marks (Saco), Jeffrey Hinderliter (Old Orchard Beach), Jim Walker (Old Orchard Beach), Ken Beuchs (Biddeford), JT Lockman (SMRPC), Peter Slovinsky (MGS), Bob Barris (Saco Planning Board Member)

SLAWG Maine APA Award

“Award for merit” given to the group. Winners in Maine get submitted to NNECAPA pool for potential additional awards. A presentation of the award will be made on Friday, June 17, 2011 in Brunswick.

Latest Events

The Biddeford Coastal Area Committee (CAC). The CAC is being considered for disbandment by the City of Biddeford Council. Potential fee proposed to appear before CAC – CAC officially has no authority, but is a recommending body regarding coastal issues in Biddeford. Many groups have been trying to get rid of the CAC for some time now. CAC created 13 years ago when Biddeford Pool tried to secede from the City. As part of settlement, CAC was created with an ordinance to help provide another review of City ordinances, etc. that affect coastal issues in Biddeford. SLAWG reports have been submitted to the Biddeford City Manager, but have not been distributed widely amongst the Council to keep them up to speed on issues. Would it be helpful for SLAWG to approach the Council and state that the CAC is vital? Might do more harm than good since it is a Biddeford only issue.

Maine State Planning Office and Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 208). Darrell Brown was appointed by the current Administration to direct SPO. There was a discussion with Land Use Team staff on Comp Plan inclusion of voluntary planning for sea level rise at the community level. This stemmed from a year-long stakeholder report to the Maine Legislature in 2009 that came up with many policy recommendations from the local to state levels. The Administration gave an executive directive on review of all regulatory changes reviewed by Administration. Decision was made that the Comp Plan change had to exclude references to sea level rise and wildlife corridors.

Sea Level Changes

Latest projections are for 0.9-1.6 m by 2100; may need to think about using a scenario of 1 m instead of just 2 feet for planning efforts. Rulemaking at the State level is required to change existing projections of 2 feet.

Using LiDAR to map Shoreland Zoning

Old Orchard Beach. Review of the new OOB shoreland zoning mapping technique. This was just recently adopted by the Town last week. Notification of properties did occur.

Saco. SZ since 1979. The resource was mapped accurately, but had not had an accurate 250 ft buffer for over 30 years. The Code Office has been issuing permits based on an incorrect map. Maine DEP required correction of the map. Review of the newer map showing new SZs based on a 6.3 ft NAVD highest annual tide elevation.

One issue continues to be that the HAT varies from year-to-year. Text would need to reflect that, while maps would show a static elevation for a period of a certain number of years (e.g., 5-10) before remapping would need to be done.

There is pushback from citizens in Saco in being remapped within a shoreland zone. Suggestion by JT to do a GIS effort to determine what the average lot coverage is running in the shoreland zone (e.g., under and over 20%) = already completed. Request to DEP to relax the regulations, but DEP will require rezoning. One key is that although the map is changing, the text-defined zone is actually not changing. The CEO is now implementing based on the text-defined zone.

Individuals are concerned with changes in proposed lot coverage with inclusion in SZ buffer zone. Some structures become non-conforming due to being included in the SZ; and now, no addition is permitted. Saco is looking at changing conforming laws. In many Maine towns, building up is not viewed as a non-conformity (i.e., not increasing the footprint). Map needs to relate to the text that defines a shoreland zone.

Biddeford. 15 months ago, made considerable changes to the SZ. No one has access to the revised maps. Ordinances and maps are currently out-of-date for anyone looking to access the revised text or maps.

Portland Society of Architects. Conference on sea level impacts to Portland waterfront.

Future Efforts

JT and Pete were going to work on using LIDAR to document SZ maps in the 4 communities. No more meetings were scheduled for June, July and August. Is there anything we need to do over the summer? Meet over the summer? Focus on Baileys Dam and bringing Wright Pierce (Ryan Wingard) into the conversation on anything relating to New Salt Road. Were supposed to meet with public works individuals to update them on efforts – may need to do this in the fall. Need to follow up with PACTS and transportation efforts. Can always email on any maps that are created. May need to meet at least once over the summer to catch up on a variety of issues. Beaches conference is July 15. Lucy will not be available in fall.

Bob – no matter what legislatively happens, efforts need to go to planning boards in each of the towns. Key is information that is being provided. Not taking into consideration flowing water or storm events. Statistics of the storms. Patriots' Day storm was worse in riverine areas – is there a way to include information on this? How can we work to address these issues? Potentially look at a combination of the worst possible scenarios,

i.e., the highest surge, the highest rainfall, the highest water level, and sea level rise.
Would like to see more on statistics in terms of the changes to events.

Minutes by P. Slovinsky, MGS.