

Branford Coastal Vulnerability ad hoc Working Group
Town of Branford, Connecticut

Paul Muniz, Tracy Everson, Jonathan Waters, Peter Hentschel (chairperson)
invited: Curt Johnson, Sharon Huttner, James Calderwood,



Zoom Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, February 25 2025

- Call to Order and Roll Call: 5:03 pm, Hentschel, Muniz, Everson, Huttner, Calderwood
- Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Tabled until next meeting
 - PH will email the January minutes again to the Group
 - PH will send everyone the Town website link to recorded meetings.
- Discuss status and next steps on the following primary ongoing initiatives:
 - a. **CIRCA sea level monitoring and emergency notification system trials – Branford participation**
 - Goal 1: to acquire new data on tidal sea level cycles and resulting road flooding.
 - Goal 2: to allow Branford to use their alert system to put out "micro-alerts" to neighborhoods.
 - **Update on CIRCA / CVWG communications regarding monitoring system:**
 - Hentschel shared draft of graph-outputs to CIRCA dashboard for emergency management use
 - PH made suggestion to CIRCA that time scale on all measurement locations be standardized and emphasize 24-hour period for consideration.
 - Threshold levels need to be determined to trigger degrees of potential flooding risk.
 - Suggested adding weather, wind conditions (speed, direction) and NOAA predicted tide elevation to compare to actual.
 - Suggested adding rainfall stats to Schoolground Road data graph.
 - Requested ability to look back at historic data.
 - **Review updated draft press release by TE:**
 - Everson to review with Tyler Bowne, as well as John H and Chief Mahoney
 - TE will revise release accordingly and add a call-to-action, then prepare to issue
 - **Request for a status zoom-call with CIRCA for updates**
 - PH will notify all when this is set up
 - b. **Community Reporting - "MyCoast" Application**
 - Goal 1: to engage the community in the photographic collection of roadway flooding data
 - Goal 2: to work with the MyCoast application software group in CA to facilitate uploading data
 - **Update on communications with MyCoast to upgrade system.**
 - MyCoast added filter to select dates for consideration.
 - Video recordings can now be uploaded.
 - Photo report location and date references can now be modified by the Administrator.
 - Recommended adding a dropdown menu to select locations where records have been reported.
 - Recommended color-coding map-tags for standard POV, baseline non-flood MHHW POV, flood POV

Tracy Everson
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- Update on meeting with John Hoefflerle regarding placing survey benchmarks at each of our monitoring locations to allow calibration of proposed tide-gauge markers.
 - Town Engineer is moving forward with measurement and reporting of benchmark elevations and locations for standard tide level staff calibration with laser level.
 - CVWG to consider installation methods for permanent monitoring locations.
 - Next steps – produce and place tide-gauges at each location
- Discuss how to train roadway monitors in the deployment of gauge staffs during flood events
 - Add SH as a Killams Point monitor
 - PH will send out the current monitoring location document to all
- Discuss community engagement and press release?
 - Everson to work on publicity and press release.
 - Hentschel identified the need for more MyCoast correspondents,
 - CVWG anticipates interest after press release to The Sound and individual neighborhood associations.

c. Roadway Flooding – finding protective solutions / tide walls.

Goal: to investigate possible resilience actions, consult with key regulatory authorities including DEEP, and determine DEEP's response to - protecting low roadways from nuisance flooding by use of low retention walls. etc.

- Update on meeting with John Hoefflerle to discuss his search for surveying services to support John Lust's tide wall application to DEEP.
 - Town Engineer to arrange for a current survey of the study area
- Update on request to the town engineer for storm sewer mapping at Montowese St and at Thimble Island Rd.
 - Town Engineer and DPW are evaluating storm system and existence of backflow preventers

d. WWTP vulnerability study – status of Phase 2, preliminary design of conceptual solutions

Goal: to promote the "hardening" of the town's sanitary system and treatment plan.

- Update on letter of support drafted by PM for John Hoefflerle's us in grant application.
 - Branford is shortlisted for interview for consideration of grant award
 - PM and J Hoefflerle to meet with UCONN/CIRCA next week
- Update from Paul on the Phase II RFQ .
 - Hentschel suggested confirmation of the extent to which federal funds are being used by the program.

• Discuss the status of other initiatives:

a. Zoning Regulation and Town Ordinance tools - PZC / CVWG joint working group - status

Goal: to determine actions to build resilience through ordinances and/or zoning regulations.

- Status.
 - Everson has evaluated SCRCOG,
 - Huttner and Hentschel have evaluated CIRCA website for tools related to Connecticut zoning changes.
 - SH will send PH her recent email to Loanne Cooley to coordinate a next step on approaching CIRCA

b. Cattle Crossing flood gate study – status report

Goal: to track this project and to determine how AMTRAK has responded to issues regarding flooding against their elevated track beds

- No current actions

c. Community Presentations – Branford River Neighborhoods presentation and possible marshland presentation

Goal to build public awareness, feedback, and public involvement.

- No current actions

d. CVWG page of Town Website - Q&A portal, Facebook page, FEMA page status report

Goal: to make our webpage more interactive and responsive to public needs regarding coastal resilience.

- No current actions

Peter Hentschel, Chairperson