

Portsmouth Historic Properties Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan
Local Advisory Committee Meeting #1
June 27, 2017
Minutes

The Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting began at 7:00pm with the following in attendance:

LAC Members: Eric Spear, Reagan Ruedig, Adrienne Harrison, Rodney Rowland, Richard Shea and Brian Goetz.

Project Team/City Staff: Sam Merrill, Julie LaBranche, Jenna Dunham, Peter Britz and Nick Cracknell

City Staff Peter Britz and Nick Cracknell opened the meeting with introductions of the Project Team and LAC members, and presented an overview of actions by the City to address climate change related flooding and impacts. They reviewed the project, its goals and outputs, and role of the LAC in guiding the project.

Sam Merrill reviewed the project elements and provided a comparison of the geographic extent of the Historic District compared with areas most vulnerable to flooding as identified in the Climate Resilience Initiative Report.

Jenna Dunham reviewed the proposed methods for conducting the vulnerability assessment including prioritization and selection of “candidate sites” and “building types” to evaluate.

Julie LaBranche led the LAC through an exercise to solicit input based on 3 key questions. LAC responses are recorded below.

Question 1:

What would be the most damaging impacts of coastal flooding on historic resources?

Loss of access to resource (isolation). Water damage undermines structural integrity. Can no longer be occupied/has to be demolished. Inaccessibility of access roads. Washing away wooden structures on the waterfront. Pervasive rot of wood structures. Economic loss from fewer visitors, less access. Basement impacts, structural stability, utilities, mold, object/housing loss. Street and utility loss or disruption. Deterioration of historic fabric over time.

Question 2:

Based on the introductory information presented tonight, what are the most important types of adaptation actions you think might be worth deeper investigation as we develop this adaptation plan for historic resources in the City?

Sea walls, walls and flood gates. Block the river. They were all good ideas. Dry techniques (sea walls, elevation of structures, gates). Flood storage capacity. Spaces that connect people to water, public parks that embrace higher tides. Fortification of foundations and raising structures. Elevate, changes to basements to accommodate water.

Question 3:

How can the City most effectively communicate risks of these impacts and the need for substantial actions that might be necessary to address them?

Have Strawberry Banke staff wear waders or hip boots all the time ;-). Make a disaster movie. Neighborhood focus groups (i.e. FOSE). Computer simulation, 3D map. Visualize a “coastal flood day”. Direct communication with building owners. High water marks on historic resources of concern. Hold public meetings and virtual meetings. Examples of cumulative flood impacts.

For members not present, feel free to submit responses to the above questions to jlabranche@rpc-nh.org to capture your thoughts and perspectives as we move forward with the assessment.

The LAC and Project Team scheduled the following LAC meetings from 10:00am-noon: July 20th, August 24th, and September 21st. The meeting concluded at 8:40pm.