

Portsmouth Historic Properties Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan
Local Advisory Committee Meeting #4
October 12, 2017
Minutes

The Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting began at 10:00am with the following in attendance:
LAC Members: David Moore, Brian Goetz, Reagan Rudig, Rodney Rowland, and Jim Sanders. Project Team/City Staff: Sam Merrill, Julie LaBranche, Jenna Dunham, Peter Britz and Nick Cracknell

Peter Britz opened the meeting with a review of the flood risk map, cultural values score map, historic value score map, monetary value score map (structure replacement value not including internal features or contents), and the composite score map. It was noted that the flood risk map captures any parcel touched by flooding, assigns a uniform value irrespective of the extent of flooding on the parcel, and does not represent the extent of inundation from the 13.5-foot flood elevation.

As discussed at LAC meeting #3, the next step in the assessment would be to selection candidate sites from the four Adaptation Strategy Areas:

- North Mill Pond – mostly commercial, masonry construction

- South Mill Pond – mixed municipal facilities, mostly newer construction

- South End/Working Waterfront – wood frame residential structures and working waterfront

- Downtown Working Waterfront – mostly commercial, masonry construction

Sam Merrill began the meeting by reiterating the 4 basic categories of candidate adaptation actions – fortify, accommodate, retreat and relocation. Sam noted that wet floodproofing is not appropriate for many historic structures with porous masonry foundations. He then presented the 16 preliminary candidate sites selected for review and discussion. Four sites in each of the four Adaptation Strategy Areas were selected based on their representation of structures in each Adaptation Strategy Area, to some degree its composite value score., and the transferability of adaptation actions to other structures in the Adaptation Strategy Area. The LAC and project team discussed each of the 16 candidate sites, and revised site selections and candidate adaptation actions accordingly. Refer to attached LAC#4 Handout (revised). LAC members noted additional impacts from groundwater rise and freshwater flooding to historic structures and sites.

Sam Merrill explained that any one candidate adaptation action alone may protect a single structure or site but would not protect entire blocks or neighborhoods. Rather a multi-pronged approach would be necessary in most locations to address flood inundation from multiple directions. Because “piecemeal” adaptation solutions, property by property over time, are not ideal, one approach might be to create “incentive districts” (refer to NH SB185 legislation) to encourage actions by multiple property owners either individually or as a collective action. In areas where substantial barriers might be the only long-term solution to sea-level rise, buyout programs may be a viable solution.

Peter Britz offered the next LAC meeting would focus on review of the revised candidate sites and adaptation actions.

The LAC and Project Team did not set a date for LAC meeting #5. A meeting date will be confirmed for November.

The meeting concluded at 12:00pm.