

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, January 28, 5:00 PM

Tracy Everson
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

2025 MAR -4 1 A 10:45

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- Call to Order and Roll Call
 - Present PM, TE, JC, PH
- Approval of December Meeting Minutes
 - Minutes for November, December and January will be distributed to the Working Group via email for approval.
- 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.
 - CIRCA's 12/4 meeting (notes) with the Town and the CVWG was reviewed
 - A CIRCA video illustrating their Tide Station Website (which is under development) was shown to the Group
 - Data acquisition includes water level and wind direction/speed with visible effects on water level.
 - PH requested inclusion of an option to look at historical data collected by the system.
 - PH requested that an additional monitoring station be installed at Stony Creek Harbor.
 - CIRCA would like to correlate tide level readings with observations of the point at which the actual roadway flooding begins.
 - **CIRCA requested benchmark elevations** at the low points of these 2 roadway sites.
 - **CIRCA asked the CVWG to make these observations** (date and time of initial flooding) for the 2 tidal locations.
 - With this data CIRCA wants to establish threshold levels which would obstruct emergency vehicle access at the 2 sites.
 - The Press Release drafted by TE was discussed.
 - **TE will add text** asking readers who may be interested in participating in these projects to respond to the CVWG via our email address.
 - **TE will ask Tyler Bowne** if he would act as a contact person for public interest.
 - **TE will review the draft** with Chief Mahoney, John Hoefflerle, and Tyler Bowne
 - We could send press release to BHS AP Env. Science teacher, as well as SCSU.
 - 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
 - The group reviewed a PH proposal for a tidal water-level gauge to be used to record tide levels when photographing flood conditions
 - We need to engage more resident photographers. The group discussed how to achieve this. The press release may be a start to more public engagement.
 - We need calibrated tide gauges for each routine monitored location. **Tide gauges will need to be purchased, installed, and installation locations to be surveyed with benchmarks to allow calibration.** Water levels, tide status, and time of photo will

need to be recorded for each shot. In future, a drone could possibly inspect all locations.

- *John Hoefflerle agreed to get benchmarks set at each location*
- **PH will ask MyCoast to allow the Site Administrator more ability to edit reports**
– time, location, etc.
- *Consider legal status of any volunteer photographer, draft disclaimer*

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.

- *Hentschel, Lust, and Hoefflerle met to discuss the DEEP permitting process.*
- *Lust feels positive about DEEP's approval of this type of resilience action*
- **Hoefflerle agreed to conduct an elevation survey of the Stony Creek trial location.**
This will include mapping the storm water system in this area. The results are needed before Lust can continue project development.
- *The nuisance tidal flooding wall will likely need to reach approx. elevation 8.0' – this is about 3' above current sidewalk grade at the test site*

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 from Paul on the Phase II RFQ that the WPCA/CVWG working group is developing.*
- *Grant funding from CT Sea Grant (UConn with EPA money) is being pursued for the RFQ work*
- **PM will write a letter of support from the CVWG to be included in the application.**

• Discuss 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.

- **TE will contact SCRCOG to ask if they have any resources to help coastal communities in the development of specific ordinances and/or regulations to promote coastal resilience.**

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 action*

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

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

- *CVWG presentation on Branford River.*
- *Marshland presentation*
- *No action*

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.

- *Status*
- *No action*