

Town of Weston
Weston Flood Resiliency Committee (WFRC)
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2024 at 3 :00 PM

Present: Jim Linville, Lisa Yrsha, Will Freeman, David Raymond, Geof Brown, Deborah Granquist, Wayne Granquist, Susanna Gellert, Linda Saarnijoki, Joanne Prouty

Zoom: Michael Neff, Jenifer Probst, Travis Schwartz

Public / Guests: Alyssa Sabetto - WRC, Andy Hoak – D&K – both on Zoom

Meeting called to order at 3:05

1. **Addition/changes to the Agenda.** Will Freeman suggested adding update on FEMA and a legislative update. To be added between items #4 and 5.
2. **Approve Minutes February 28, 2024.** Jim made corrections: Raymond (sp), 2a: the letter will be drafted, 2b: Gabion wall (sp), 2e: marketplace is one word, 2f: funding not funning. **Motion to approve February 28, 2024 minutes, as amended, by Geof Brown, seconded by D. Granquist, passed unanimously.**
3. **Review of Jim Linville’s Summary Memo to Selectboard and WFRC (previously distributed).**
 - Memo provides background, context and history of WFRC, including mission.
 - Gives explanation of MTAP grant.
 - Talks about Core Foundation blocks
 - Lists what we can do and cannot do – “Can address existential threat from flooding – maximize our resilience; can’t make Weston 100% floodproof”.
4. **Review of Army Corps upcoming project.**
 - Jim reported that Corps is coming this summer for 3-5 weeks to repair damage caused by flood. Jim believes that they will be working from end of “Riverside” property where Cold Spring creek enters West River up to dam. Project is to (1) rebuild Gabion wall & (2) repair areas where rip rap was moved downstream by the flooding. (80-90% of project \$\$ is on gabion wall.)
 - Wayne reported that Ted Reeves (library project engineer) spoke to the Corps because the flood took out some of the buffer along the river. Ted wanted to understand the scope of the Corps project and whether it was more than the gabion wall. The Corps said the scope is just gabion wall.
 - Jim noted that this information is different than his information from the Corps so it will need to be sorted out.
 - Corps will store their “stuff” and equipment on the south end of Riverside property.
 - There was a question about what the replacement gabion wall will be made of – stones or bin blocks. Wayne thinks it is bin blocks. To be determined.
 - Will Freeman asked whether there would be any dredging upstream. Jim replied that any dredging would be part of RIVERS project.

4A. FEMA & Legislative Update.

- Will Freeman reported that Tim Baker, former director of VT FEMA, now with FEMA Boston, is willing to come to Weston to talk to us about quality, mitigation, etc.
- It was suggested that before we meet with Tim Baker we need to find out who in town is working with FEMA and what questions they may have. We also need to decide what we want FEMA to do and what Tim Baker can help us with.
- Lisa would like information on what is Town's deadline around FEMA and roads.
- Wayne raised need to understand the damage incurred by the Core Foundation Blocks and what monies are needed. Jim notes that it may not possible to get this information until after the hydraulic study.
- Meeting with Tim Baker to be scheduled before the end of May.
- Will Freeman also talked to Allison Clarkson and she is available to talk to us at some point.

5. Review of D&K Project by WRC. Tabled until after RIVERS project discussion.

6. Review of RIVERS Project by WRC. Alyssa Sabetto.

- The purpose of the RIVERS project is to prepare grant applications to FEMA for construction and engineering of two major projects in Weston.
- The two major projects to be considered were identified at a meeting, hosted by WRC, ANR, and other government officials, in the fall where both Selectboard, Planning Commission and Weston Community Association members were present - according to Jim Linville and Geof Brown - and tentatively approved by RIVERS, are: (1) full or partial removal of WCA dam and (2) raising the Lawrence Hill Bridge. If neither the dam nor the bridge are going to be Weston's major projects based on the science coming from the D&K study, we need to figure out pretty quickly what our project(s) will be because RIVERS money is not to be used for consideration of future projects but for actual current engineering and construction projects.
- Decision to remove dam will be made by WCA not the Town. Therefore, engagement with WCA is going to be big part of the project.
- RIVERS project engineers are Stone Environmental, who will work off D&K study.
- There may be other projects identified by D&K. WRC can help with funding of additional projects.
- RIVERS project will also look at two other towns (Londonderry and Jamaica) in connection with Weston. Meeting of selectboard members tomorrow in Londonderry to discuss.
- Schedule for RIVERS work: the two big projects have been identified and applications are to be submitted around December 2024 with grant award in 2025. Alyssa not able to comment on how long work will take after grant award but grant has to be completed within 3 years.
- WRC will assist with managing work after award.
- It is not clear whether bridge project is a town or VTrans project.
- Question was raised about relationship between D&K study and Weston projects. What if D&K study does not support the two key proposed projects? We will have to find another project(s). If so, we need to act very quickly in order to meet the deadlines.
- How likely is that FEMA will fund two projects? Alyssa responded that the pot of FEMA money is \$90mm, which includes the buy-out part, and it is more likely to get funding for two projects if they are connected. Benefit cost analysis is part of FEMA decision, which looks at damages incurred and whether it is cost benefit to use taxpayers' dollars. Complicated formula.

Move to #10 on agenda

7. Review of Consultant Maggie Foley's Proposal

- Geof Brown reported that WRC assigned Maggie Foley to Weston. Geof, Susanna Gellert and Jim met with her and are very pleased with her abilities.
- Geof explained background on Weston obtaining \$50,000 in MTAP funds.
- Maggie was able to get monies directly from Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) to pay for her work instead of us having to use any of the MTAP funds. The consulting agreement is between Maggie and VCRD.
- Maggie wants to focus on funding sources for the types of work that Weston will be doing as a result of the D&K study and the RIVERS project.
- **Motion by Geof Brown, seconded by Wayne Granquist, to accept VCRD offer to fund Maggie Foley to work with the Town of Weston WFRC.**
- Wil Freeman asked about payment of the extras in Maggie Foley contract. Presumably this will come from the \$10,500 left over from the MTAP grant.

8. Discussion and Next steps for Assessment of "Foundations"

- Wayne asked how do we conduct this assessment until we have D&K study and RIVERS project work. Collective answer was that we begin the process now to get data recognizing that many organizations will not have complete answers.
- Debbie Granquist asked if the assessment work is to be done by Maggie. Answer was yes. Jim says that we should set up subcommittee to work with Maggie.
- Geof brought up issue of how WFRC should be organized. Do we need subcommittees?

9. Establish standing meeting date and time

- First Thursday each month at 5 pm.

10. Dubois & King Flood study kick off meeting. Andy Hoak – director of environmental services at D&K. Lead engineer on Weston project.

- Andy spoke about scope of the study. He was involved in removal of dam at Cold Spring.
- First step is gathering documented information about the West River (e.g. FEMA, USGS, etc.). He is interested in getting any existing modeling information about Lawrence Hill Bridge and meeting with folks who have knowledge of flood levels during the flood e.g. documented hydraulic information. Also, any photos or videos of the flood (with locations and times) would be helpful. He will set up web portal for uploading photos/videos.
- Next step - Field investigation; topographic survey; merging with lidar. Geomorphological survey of river.
- Perimeter of study is from Burton Road on the north to 1000 ' south of LH bridge (Mill Lane). Discussion of whether this is far enough south since it does not go as far as 614 Main street. This perimeter is what was applied for in the MTAP grant application. The issue of flooding damage caused by mountain run-off and sources other than the West River is a larger study, that is presumably to be done by the State. Alyssa said that Fitzgerald Engineering is working on a River corridor study.
- What is the difference between D&K and Stone Engineering? Andy said the Stone study seems to be more about design and ours is about scoping (H&H analysis) and coming up with different mitigation methods for the Town to decide which ones they want to pursue.
- Mitigation methods -- D&K produces an existing conditions base line and then applies various storm events to those conditions. Then they modify the conditions (e.g. removal or partial removal of the

dam or raising the LH Bridge) and then test against the various storm events. They also look at ways to modify existing structures (waterproofing, raising up etc.). They will come up with a list of recommendations on mitigation and prioritize which ones they think will be most cost effective (cost benefit analysis).

- Andy – our plan is to start within next month or so. Final report will be done in about 4 months from starting date. There will also be a public presentation.
- Jim said that we can provide flood elevation levels of library, bridge, Weston Playhouse, Bridge, Fire station.
- Wayne asked a question about estimate of the high level of the 2023 flood (was it a 100 year flood or 500 year flood?). Andy said they don't really know. They use Atlas 14 Hydrological Data as baseline for information but Atlas probably does not include 2023. D&K probably will use 100 year flood level as baseline.

Move back to # 7 on agenda

Wrap up discussion items –

- Mike Neff suggested doing a timeline to keep track of all the moving parts.
- Geof said that Weston is far ahead of any other community in Vermont on this kind of work.
- Geof mentioned that we need a PR discussion on how to keep the community informed and what we need to tell the community. Message to the community has to be clear.
- Geof talked about the Town Plan amendment process and the survey which indicates that the community sees the Village as a critical element of Weston.
- Lisa noted that although WFRC is currently focused on the Village, ultimately we will be branching out. We need to make sure that our community understands this.
- Will wants a pre-meeting before the Tim Baker meeting. Jim, Debbie, Lisa, Geof will meet with Will in the pre-meeting to set up an agenda for the full meeting. Will will set up pre-meeting. Suggestion to invite Tim Baker to June 6 meeting. May 9th for pre-meeting.

11. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:10.

Next WFRC meeting June 6 at 5 PM.

Pre-meeting about FEMA May 9 at 5 PM