

Old Orchard Beach Conservation Commission MINUTES

January 13, 2025

Old Orchard Beach Town Hall, 7:00 PM

Members Present: Kimbark Smith, Irv Paradis, Mary Pat Donnellon, Cynthia Nye

Guests: Arnie Vasiliauskas, Tim Fleury, Tammy Tuareg from OP Committee

1. Election of Officers

- Kimbark Smith, Chair
- Mary Pat Donnellon, Vice Chair
- Cynthia Nye, Secretary

2. Tim Fleury - Executive Assistant and Town Council Secretary Coastal Planning and Resiliency

- Mary Pat welcomed Tim. Goal to tighten the connection between ConCom and town.

A. Update from Tim on OOB Coastal Resiliency projects underway:

- a. Project One: Awarded a grant of \$33,500 from the Community Resilience Partnership (state funded) for an energy audit of town buildings. RFP for proposals; Bureau Veritas won. They have looked at Town Hall, Police Department, Fire Department, Library, Public Works, Waste Water Plant. Lights, heating, cooling, what's plugged into outlets. Then they gave a plan for improvements, e.g., LED lights, proposed heat pump for Town Hall, more efficient heat controls, zones, motion sensors for auto shut off for lights. Potential is there for saving energy and money. OOB will host a workshop to share results with the community.
- b. Project Two: Marsh Resiliency: Coastal Community awarded a \$50,000 for marsh resiliency study and tide gate repair; StanTech vegetative survey. Worked with Wright Pierce to set up a monitoring plan. Kimbark found the Onset info to use an existing credit to refurbish 11 Hobo sensors for the tide gate and get new Hobo salinity monitors and temperature and depth monitors. Tim showed us Wright Pierce's plan for locations where they'll be put out for at least a month, collecting data that Tim will then send to WP for analysis. Is salt water making its way all the way into the marsh to help get the marsh closer to its natural state, reduce phragmites, and absorb more water in flood conditions. Public Works will get them placed

in a couple of weeks. An action plan for opening and closing the tide gate will be based on findings.

- c. FEMA Beach/Dune Restoration, \$11 million price tag, so far no funding. Irv noted that the dunes aren't the source of flooding; the tide gate is. Tim explained that Southern Maine was designated a FEMA disaster area due to erosion. Plan to bring the sand back - from inland seems better practice than dredging. FEMA doesn't touch "natural beaches". They will help with "engineered beaches." Tim is working with Grant White at FEMA to help us get the money to help restore Old Orchard Beach from Goosefare to Pine Point (town line to town line). Engineered B beach would allow us to put in an emergency berm, small amount of sand. If we classify it as a G Beach, tons and tons of sand for \$11 million dollars. We're partnering with York and all Saco Bay towns to make a better case to the federal level.

B. How can we plug in?

- a. Q: How can people plug in with the town plan? A: plan not written down anywhere - need a plan for two weeks after a flood event; and a plan for a once-in-a-100- year storm - how do we restore what was sucked out into the bay; how can OOB access funding that's available?
- b. Q: Is Climate Resilience in the Ten-Year Plan? A: Probably not.

C. How are we communicating with residents?

- a. Mary-Pat - Can we write up our questions, concerns, and recommendations and to share with Tim, so he can get back to us on behalf of the OOB? Irv and Mary-Pat will partner and write a short piece. Arnie will stay in touch with Irv.

3. Project Updates by Members

- a. Time to order beetles - ConCom \$3,000.00. OPA \$1,500.00. Cynthia will order with Finance Department at Town Hall. Delivery late May/June.

4. Good and Welfare

- Arnie V brought photos of flooding from last year's storm on 1/13/2024. Highest tide ever recorded in Portland. First time water from the Saco side of Goosefare came into Ocean Park. Advocated for monitoring gates and letting out the water faster after high tide. Advocated for dredging out some points in the marsh and West Grand. The culvert that runs from Randall under Temple and Ancona Marsh is too small. The berm on West Grand is too low and allows water to flow toward the pumping station. Tipping point seems to be 12.5 feet with wind. Are the houses being torn down and rebuilt affecting the situation? Tim - those houses

may have flood vents. Footings have to be 4 feet deep and on virgin ground, not fill. Arnie wants to see Randall dredged because there's water on Randall during normal high tides. Also berm on West Grand and New Salt rebuilt. Pilings for the dummy railroad are now not visible due to sand build up.

- Irv noted that the primary issue is when water is high and goes over the flood gate, not just normal operation of the tide gate. The new OP Environmental and Natural Resources Committee wants a public information event. The roadside bank between bridge and tide gate along guard rails is severely eroded. Irv wants an engineering study - Kimbark will help write for a grant if we can find one. There's a proposal to build a storm drain at the corner of Sandpiper and Seaside - a duck-bill valve- so water will drain back into the marsh. Tim applied to Army Corp - now has to go through a full process because part of it is Rachel Carson and they want to stay in a natural state.
- Tammy Tuareg concerned about loss of trees and increase of pavement.
- Tim will come back in a month or so.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by Cynthia Nye, Secretary

Kimbark Smith, Chair