

**THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RECURRENT FLOODING AND SEA LEVEL RISE
DECEMBER 19, 2014**

1. Summary of the September 26, 2014 Meeting of the Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise

The Summary of the September 26, 2014 Meeting of the Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise was accepted as distributed.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Land Subsidence Proposal

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on a proposal to study land subsidence in Hampton Roads. The HRPDC staff has identified two options, which were presented to the Commission at its November meeting. The first option is to issue an RFP for InSAR analysis. The second proposal is to work with the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct a study which would describe what has already been done and compare and contrast various options for monitoring subsidence going forward. The Commission asked for its advisory committees to provide a recommendation.

The Committee discussed the two options. With the InSAR analysis, there is some uncertainty. The data that would be used is older, so it may not work very well. A phased RFP could be used to first identify what data exists that could be analyzed, with a second component coming after the first. Another issue with InSAR is that while it can measure subsidence, it is less useful at identifying its causes. Ms. Gayle Hicks, Hampton, recommended working with USGS, since the region should know more before making a decision on a specific strategy. Ms. Ellen Roberts, Poquoson, added that the study would also allow the region to potentially establish a monitoring network for future subsidence instead of relying on historical data. Mr. Tom McNeilan, McNeilan and Associates, suggested combining InSAR analysis to assess historical subsidence with a monitoring network or strategy.

The Committee recommended moving forward with the USGS study.

4. Regional Sea Level Rise Inundation Maps

Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on the HRPDC's efforts to update regional sea level rise inundation maps. This is being done as part of a grant from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program and will take advantage of new LIDAR elevation data. The principal issue for the Committee to decide is whether to map sea level rise based on climate scenarios (as with the previous version) or use an

incremental approach. A second issue is whether or not to incorporate flooding in addition to sea level rise.

Mr. Garrey Curry, Gloucester, suggested using an incremental approach. Ms. Roberts agreed and suggested focusing on smaller levels, such as one foot or one-and-a-half feet. She also suggested using different tidal benchmarks and incorporating flooding.

Ms. Michelle Hamor, USACE, stated that using an incremental approach could help avoid confusion regarding scenarios. She also recommended looking at the storm of record in addition to or in place of the 1% storm.

Mr. Jim Redick recommended leveraging local efforts, such as those from Norfolk, Poquoson, and Virginia Beach.

Mr. Brian Batten, Dewberry, suggested looking at higher frequency storms, such as the 50-year, 25-year, and 10-year events.

The Committee recommended proceeding with an incremental approach, starting with 1-, 2-, and 3-foot scenarios. The Committee also recommended incorporating flooding.

5. ODU/Federal Pilot Project Charter Discussion

Mr. McFarlane updated the Committee on the ODU/Federal Pilot Project. So far, there has been significant involvement from federal agencies, but less from local governments. One possibility for increasing that involvement has been to have the Committee be a part of the pilot project. Mr. Ray Toll, ODU, will make a presentation to the Commission and/or the CAOs sometime in early 2015 to ask for their support. Based on discussions with the CAOs, the HRPDC staff would like input from the Committee on whether and how the HRPDC should interact with the pilot project.

Mr. Redick stated that the pilot project has grown out of a request for help from the White House and that the various efforts should not compete with one another.

Mr. Toll mentioned that there were over thirty federal agencies in attendance at a recent meeting in Washington held to drum up support for the project. The Navy has been tasked as the lead agency for the Department of Defense. ODU wants the localities to be involved in the project and to lead it. Mr. David Architzel, ODU, stated that local data would be needed to inform decisions.

Mr. Redick stated that in his opinion there was adequate overlap between the various efforts related to sea level rise.

Mr. Randy Keaton, HRPDC, stated that one of the concerns the CAOs had identified was with the “regional planning” called for in the charter as well as many of the “key issues” also listed in the charter.

The Committee recommended participating in the pilot project.

6. Update on Related State Efforts

Mr. McFarlane updated the Committee on various state efforts related to sea level rise and recurrent flooding. The Governor's Climate Change and Resiliency Update Commission met early in December for the second time. Mr. McFarlane was appointed to the Commission and has been selected as the chairman for the Transportation and Land Use Working Group. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has issued a NOFA for the National Disaster Resilience Competition, which will make available approximately \$1 billion for projects that promote resiliency.

7. Dutch Dialogues

Mr. McFarlane updated the Committee on efforts to host a Dutch Dialogues workshop in Hampton Roads. A meeting was held on November 21 for localities interested in participating. The general consensus was that it was an interesting opportunity that should be pursued by the HRPDC. For the next stage, the HRPDC staff will contact localities to begin identifying potential sites for the charrette portion of the workshop and non-governmental stakeholders that can add to the discussion.

Mr. Phil Davenport, Virginia Beach, suggested the Elizabeth River as a possible site or study area, since there are several localities directly interested. He also suggested contacting the port or military to gauge their interest.

Mr. McNeilan stated that the one of the outcomes of the Dutch Dialogues would be some sort of tangible product.

8. Resolution Encouraging Local Governments to Consider Adopting Freeboard Requirements

Mr. McFarlane briefed the Committee on a proposed resolution for the Commission to consider that would recommend that local governments adopt new or strengthen existing freeboard requirements in floodplains. The resolution draws a connection between future sea level rise, recurrent flooding, and local policies, and recommends that for localities that do not currently require freeboard that they consider doing so. It also recommends that localities with existing freeboard requirements consider increasing them. The idea of a resolution was discussed at the Committee's September 2014 meeting.

Mr. Curry asked if a resolution was necessary, since most if not all localities in Hampton Roads have already adopted freeboard requirements. Ms. Meg Pittenger, Portsmouth, stated that having the HRPDC adopt a resolution could help provide support for some localities.

The Committee voted to recommend that the Commission adopt the resolution.

9. Committee Comments

Mr. McFarlane announced that the new LIDAR data is now ready for localities. Interested localities should contact him directly to make arrangements. The HRPDC has signed on a partner for a new grant-funded study with a UVA/Virginia Tech effort looking at climate change impacts on transportation infrastructure. The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program is strongly leaning toward making coastal hazards a focus of its 2016-2020 Section 309 strategies.

Ms. Roberts announced that Poquoson has sent out an RFP for engineering services for raising up to twenty (20) houses with FEMA funds.

Mr. Redick reiterated his desire to see the various efforts in alignment. He also stated that there is supposed to be a FEMA/VDEM meeting early in 2015 that may be of interest to the Committee.

Mr. Davenport announced that Virginia Beach is raising 8 homes with FEMA funds and is finalizing a contract with Dewberry to undertake a watershed-based planning approach to sea level rise.

Mr. Curry announced that the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors will not be interested in acquisition grants for homes for the foreseeable future.

10. Other Matters

The next meeting of the Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise is tentatively scheduled for March 20, 2015 at the HRPDC office in Chesapeake, Virginia. Materials will be sent in advance for review.