

**Meeting Minutes
For APRIL 28th, 2014
RI DEM • Room 300**

Report Development

In attendance: Janet Coit, DEM, Council Chair
Michelle Burnett (for Jamia McDonald), EMA)
Dr. Michael Fine and Julia Gold, DOH
Kevin Flynn, DOA/Planning
Grover Fugate, CRMC
Marion Gold, DOA/OER
Michael Lewis, DOT
Richard Licht, DOA
Jack Leyden, State Building Code Commissioner
Hanna Morini (for Marcel Valois), CommerceRI
Vladimir Ibarra (for Elizabeth Roberts, Lt. Gov.)

Director Coit called the meeting to order at 11:14 a.m.

Director Coit discussed the schedule for next steps. A meeting with the governor has been scheduled on Friday, May 2nd. when he returns from a trip. At this time, she will submit a draft version of the report, with the Draft Action Plan, which the Governor is expected to release for public comment a week later. The report will be finalized towards the end of May, following a brief comment period. She asked Director Licht to report on last week's Climate Change Commission meeting. Director Licht reported that at that meeting there was agreement that the Executive Council should continue to meet, which may be accommodated by legislation that has been introduced. Director Coit also noted that at the Commission meeting, Dr. Timmons Roberts of Brown University—an original organizer of the Commission—presented on the apparent opportunity to transfer the efforts of the Commission to the active Council.

Hanna Morini noted that CommerceRI is nearing completion of its recommendations for the state economic plan and that she believes there will be opportunity for that plan and the state energy plan to support one another.

Director Coit noted that this would be a working meeting to discuss recommendations for the report, at least at the level of goals and objectives. She asked Council members to work with their staff to review the more detailed recommendations (developed from previous versions based on discussions, presentations and agency comments) by close of business on Wednesday, April 30.

Jan Reitsma provided an overview of the report outline. Proposed **goals** included: 1. Lead by Example, 2. Partner with Local Government and Private Sector, 3. Accelerate Vulnerability Assessments, 4. Increase Resilience through Mitigation, 5. Increase Resilience through Adaptation, 6. Coordinated Scientific and technical Support, 7. Effective Communications.

Director Licht proposed adding a goal to stress economic opportunities. Dr. Fine also suggested noting the cross-cutting impacts on (or benefits to) public health. Directors Licht, Coit, Lewis, Fine, and Ms. Morini discussed the way in which economic opportunities should be addressed under a separate goal.

Jan Reitsma next presented proposed **objectives** under each goal.

Hannah Morini commented that, wherever possible, existing systems or programs should be used rather than creating any new ones. For instance, regarding Goal 6 (Coordinated Scientific and technical Support), the [RI Science and Technology Advisory Council](#) (STAC RI) is an existing networking group that could meet many of the objectives within that particular goal. Director Coit agreed, noting her preliminary remarks that the overarching goals of the Council was to work within existing structures and with existing resources as much as possible.

Director Fugate noted that, when assigning responsibility to local or state systems to meet any objective, we need to factor in the ability or inability of that system to function in the event of a major storm event, which may preclude individuals from being able to leave their homes, for example.

Director Coit again noted that comments on the draft recommendations/report must be provided to Jan Reitsma by close of business on Wednesday. She also asked for members to consider if new members should be added (noting the previous additions of Jack Leyden and the Lt. Governor's Office), so that this can be added to the recommendations..

Jan Reitsma asked Council members for their own perspective on what they see as the most important points to make in the report, based on the presentations and discussions of the last two months. Council members responded with a variety of examples, such as how Council meetings have already improved overall coordination and awareness; the apparent need for an appropriately authorized overseer outside of a particular agency; the concerns of local communities, such as Cranston, North Kingstown and West Warwick, and of many private companies, such as FM Global; the possibility of a statewide catastrophe should Rhode Island be hit directly by a hurricane; and the many ways in which Rhode Island has already taken the lead, such as in coastal planning.

Director Coit opened the meeting to public comment.

Representative Arthur Handy expressed his appreciation for the Council's understanding of municipal needs (especially related to adaptation, which most communities understand on a practical level), and acknowledged the benefits of including cross-cutting recommendations that can be incorporated into existing regulatory reform efforts.

Dr. Vanderslice urged the Council to consider the specifics of inter-agency coordination. He suggested making that a first priority, instead of requesting new or more resources as a condition for incorporating climate change into existing agency efforts. Director Coit noted that it was not her intent to suggest the latter.

Meg Kerr suggested that the proposed science and monitoring recommendation(s) include tracking the success of statewide climate change response efforts.

Kendra Beaver of Save the Bay urged the Council to seek new resources, especially given recent cuts in state agencies. Hannah Morini urged the Council to prevent increased costs to Rhode Island's business sector. Director Coit noted recent conversations with Director Valois to have her attend economic development forums, thus helping to incorporate environmental considerations into economic

discussions, and vice versa. Julia Gold noted that some existing efforts that will provide secondary benefits related to climate hazards already have fees attached to them, and that we need to be careful not be perceived as suggesting a blanket prohibition. James Boyd noted that some efforts would come with increased short-term costs but that the long-term benefits would be cost-neutral or even provide cost reductions. Ms. Morini agreed that the timing is important when seeking to quantify cost-benefits analyses.

With no further comments from the Council or others, Director Coit repeated her request that Council members/agencies submit comments by the end of business on Wednesday. Director Gold motioned to adjourn the meeting. Kevin Flynn seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.