

Meeting Minutes**Wednesday, February 11, 2015**

(RIDEM, Room 300)

In attendance: Janet Coit, DEM, Council Chair
Peter Gaynor, RIEMA
Grover Fugate, CRMC
Dr. Michael Fine, HEALTH
Meredith Brady, RIDOT
Danny Musher, OER
Kevin Flynn, Planning
Alli Rogers, DOA
Wade Gibson, Commerce

Director Coit opened the meeting at approximately 2:10 PM.

The first order of business was the minutes from the December 17, 2014 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes (including minor modifications offered by CRMC and Planning) was made and unanimously approved.

Director Coit introduced some new members and staff from Governor Raimondo's Office who were present for the meeting (Peter Gaynor, Eric Beane, Abby Swienton, David Allard and Octavia Abell).

Director Coit offered some opening remarks and summarized progress on specific projects/reports since the last Council meeting in December. She highlighted: DEM's Wastewater Treatment Facility Vulnerability Assessment, the Vulnerability of Transportation Assets to Sea Level Rise (Technical Paper completed by Statewide Planning, January 2015), STORMTOOLS, House/Senate/Governor appointments to the EC4 Advisory Board, and progress on developing a RFP to meet the December 2016 reporting requirement for a Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Target plan. She also asked the Council members to re-read the June 2014 EC3 report with a specific eye towards the priorities assigned to their agencies. Similarly, Director Coit indicated her goal of meeting with each of the new Council members in the coming weeks to discuss resiliency and climate priorities relative to the Council and their agency.

Julia Gold and Dr. Michael Fine (HEALTH) presented to the Council the final version of the 2015 Climate Change and Health Resiliency Report as prepared by the Department of Health's Climate Change Program.

Director Coit asked Grover Fugate (CRMC) to provide an update on STORMTOOLS, and indicated that the Council would be hearing an in-depth presentation on STORMTOOLS at the next EC4 meeting on 3/31/15. The Council members discussed the impacts from climate change and sea level rise already being felt in coastal communities, with members noting that RI has experienced 4 declared disasters since 2010. Kevin Flynn (Planning) asked if there has been targeted outreach to municipalities about STORMTOOLS, and Grover Fugate (CRMC) discussed their coordination with URI on such outreach.

Director Coit introduced Janine Burke (Executive Director, Warwick Sewer Authority) to present on the economic impacts of the March 2010 floods relative to Warwick's wastewater treatment facility & sewer system. Executive Director Burke discussed estimated total damages to the facility (\$14 million) as well as the environmental harm (primary wastewater treatment was back up and running in 5 days). She highlighted that levee construction (surrounding the facility) is still ongoing (at the 500 yr. flood level), the revamping of critical pump stations, and the installation of new, high energy efficient equipment with money from the Office of Energy Resources.

Council members followed up with questions about relocating the facility, impacts to businesses in March 2010, "Continuity of Operations Plans" and the importance of Emergency Action Plans (EAPs). Executive Director Burke thanked many of the agency directors and staff in the room for their assistance during and after the March 2010 flooding event.

Director Coit then introduced Lisa Konicki (Executive Director for the Greater Westerly-Pawcatuck Area Chamber of Commerce) to present on the impacts from Superstorm Sandy on Westerly and ongoing resiliency projects in Misquamicut. Executive Director Konicki discussed the number of businesses impacted during the storm, and how a small handful rebuilt with long-term resiliency in mind (e.g. movable buildings). She commented on the impacts to the mental health of the community, experiences of interacting with insurance companies, and the assistance offered by both CRMC and the Westerly building officials post storm as property owners looked to rebuild.

Council members followed up with questions about the importance of insurance, how state agencies can encourage property owners/municipalities to make wise redevelopment decisions post-disaster, and the need for community-wide "re-construction plans."

Director Coit discussed the importance of keeping the resilience conversation moving forward between and outside of EC4 meetings, and asked the Council to vote to endorse certain lecturers and presenters (to which the EC4 can lend its support) on all matters related to climate change and resilience. The members of the Council agreed with the proposal, and a vote to endorse this proposal will be re-posted on an upcoming EC4 agenda.

During the public comment portion of the agenda:

Representative Art Handy commented on the need for proactive planning and doing the necessary legwork so municipalities are ready to take advantage of FEMA funding.

Caroline Karp (Brown University) asked about foreclosures in Westerly post-Sandy, standards for rebuilding (aka the "50% destroyed" rule for rebuilding), and retreatment options.

Jim Celenza (RICOSH) discussed resources that are currently available to first responders in the wake of disasters.

Joy Pettirossi-Poland introduced herself to the members of the Council and indicated her willingness to help expand the reach of the EC4 through the proposed lecture series (to be voted on at upcoming Council meeting) and through other online avenues (e.g. YouTube).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 pm.