

**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 17, 2015**  
(RIDEM, Room 300)

**In attendance:** Janet Coit, DEM, Council Chair  
Marion Gold, OER, Vice Chair  
Peter Gaynor, EMA  
Kevin Flynn, Planning  
Julia Gold, HEALTH  
Meredith Brady, DOT  
Mike Walker, Commerce RI  
Alli Rogers, DOA  
James Boyd, CRMC

Director Coit (DEM) opened the meeting at approximately 1:10 PM and briefly reviewed the agenda.

The first order of business was the minutes from the June 26, 2015 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made and unanimously approved.

Director Coit (DEM) offered opening remarks and introduced a few members of the Advisory Board & Science and Technical Advisory Board present for the meeting. She thanked all EC4 members and their staff for providing updates on the 'EC4 Implementation Priority' chart to the Governor's Office in time for today's meeting, and highlighted some specific areas where she and other members know some progress is needed (e.g. communications and outreach).

Sheila Dormody (Chair, EC4 Advisory Board) was invited to brief the Council on the Advisory Board's progress over the summer. She highlighted the following in her remarks: 1) the need to revamp communications and outreach efforts; 2) educating the media; 3) tracking the progress of the state agencies on action plan assignments and larger projects as they relate to the EC4's priorities; and 4) the Advisory Board's desire to work collaboratively with the Science and Technical Advisory Board (STAB) as chaired by Dr. Peter August.

James Boyd (CRMC) briefed the Council on a proposal URI will be submitting in October for a 'RI Research Alliance Collaborative Grant Award' entitled "Simulating the Impacts of Climate Change on a Watershed-Riverine System Using an Integrated Cloud to Coast Approach: Case Study, Pawtuxet River, RI." He provided details on how this proposal links to the inland flooding/Pawtuxet River project the Council approved in June 2015, and asked for an endorsement from the full Council for the new proposal. Julia Gold (HEALTH) put forth a motion to approve and all voted unanimously in support. Mike Walker (Commerce RI) and James Boyd (CRMC) abstained. After debate about the number of EC4 members that may need to abstain from the vote, Julia Gold withdrew her motion, and it was determined the topic will be added to the October EC4 meeting agenda for reconsideration.

Director Coit (DEM) turned the attention of the Council to the EC4 Implementation Priority chart for a discussion of progress and key items. She indicated that she is considering seeking public comments on the September 2015 updated chart later this fall.

Director Coit (DEM) and members of the Council highlighted the following items in the Implementation Priority chart for updates/discussion:

- 1) James Boyd (CRMC) provided brief update on StormTools and discussed attempts to “simplify” the website to allow beginners to engage with the tool. He discussed the HUD proposal to develop a pilot project re/ Coastal Index (CERI) – a vulnerability and exposure index for the coast line.
- 2) Kevin Flynn (Planning) introduced Kirsten Bryan, a new member of his staff, who is undertaking a project to identify households and buildings & examine current socioeconomics of populations vulnerable to projected sea level rise scenarios. He also discussed recent guidance developed by his office (for Comprehensive Plans) for cities/towns regarding natural hazards, sea level rise and climate change. He explained that the state is not asking municipalities to create new data, but to use the best available data (e.g. from CRMC) when developing their Comprehensive Plan updates. In addition, he also provided updates on a number of legislative proposals being considered by Planning in 2016 focusing on: 1) variances issued after a natural disaster, and 2) a streamlined development review process.
- 3) James Boyd (CRMC) discussed the new (still pending) FEMA requirements for new construction (if federal monies are provided). The benefit of extrapolating that same requirement to all state projects was briefly debated. He also provided an update on the FORTIFIED program, and their coordination with the RI Builders Association and Commerce RI.
- 4) Mike Walker (Commerce RI) offered comments about the recently completed ‘2015 Rhode Island Clean Energy Jobs Report’. Marion Gold (OER), who partnered with Commerce RI on the report, commented on the report’s solid results, and how OER was now undertaking a “needs assessment” to determine what types of skills employers look for in the clean energy sector. Director Coit (DEM) suggested that maybe Scott Jensen (Director - DLT) should be invited to any future EC4 meetings where job skills/needs/priorities are up for discussion. He also commented on plans to engage the business community on vulnerability assessments & the convening of a resilient economic collaborative.
- 5) Marion Gold (OER) offered comments about the \$600,000 grant her office received from DOE to work with other New England and Mid-Atlantic States regarding off-shore wind development. She also offered comments about the ongoing work relative to centralizing/organizing state facility energy data, and provided (in coordination with Director Coit) an update on RGGI. In addition, she offered an extensive update on the status of the State Energy Plan and their desire to engage stakeholders to assist with implementation, OER’s coordination with the RI Infrastructure Bank (e.g. on the Efficient Building Fund), and progress on the GHG emission reduction RFP. An announcement about the outside party being brought on-board to help perform that study (due Dec. 2016) should be coming soon.
- 6) Meredith Brady (RIDOT) provided an update on upgrades of streetlights to LED’s (streets and park n’ rides) and the energy savings the state is already seeing.
- 7) Director Coit (DEM) discussed the efforts to engage senior level policy makers in each state agency on climate/resiliency priorities, the Governor’s sustainability agenda, and the recent arrival at DEM of 10 plug in hybrid vehicles (including new charging stations). She also highlighted the \$3 million bond for flood mitigation grants (approved last fall; DEM developing regulations), RIDEM’s recently rolled out ‘Energy Savings Trees Program’, and progress on the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Task Force (in coordination with OER).
- 8) Peter Gaynor (RIEMA) provided an update on local hazard mitigation plan completion in RI’s cities and towns (only 2 municipalities currently don’t have plans).

Director Coit indicated they were running low on time and didn't want to run out of time for the Clean Power Plan discussion and public comments. Hence, she committed the council to finishing the updates related to Adaptation at the October meeting and having a panel discussion focused just on adaptation priorities/projects.

Director Coit (DEM) then invited Doug McVay, Chief of DEM's Office of Air Resources, to give a short presentation on the President's Clean Power Plan (CPP) as announced in August 2015, and discuss options for how RI can comply with the elements of the CPP. He discussed the linkages between the CPP and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and how the probable option for Rhode Island is to submit a multi-state plan based on our continued participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). There was discussion about ratcheting up the RGGI reductions in future years and recently enacted energy efficiency legislation in California.

During the public comment portion of the agenda:

- Eugenia Marks commented on the need to focus discussion on the needs of Newport.
- Information was offered about Representative Lauren Carson's Commission on the Economic Effects of Sea Level Rise (first meeting next Thursday – Elizabeth Stone will distribute specifics about that meeting via email).
- Jan Reitsma inquired about 1) transportation emissions; 2) local hazard mitigation plans; 3) technical assistance to cities/towns; 4) the need for vulnerability assessments (coordinated effort); and 5) the RIIB, and the need for adaptation money.
- Timmons Roberts (Brown University & member of the EC4 Science and Technical Advisory Board) acknowledged that progress has been made on numerous priorities but wanted an update on where work still needs to be done. In addition, he inquired about the stakeholder/public elements of the GHG emission reduction RFP.
- Caroline Karp (Brown University) asked about how DEM and other agencies are coordinating with federal partners re/ rebuilding requirements post-disaster and coordination with David Vallee on the Pawtuxet River project.
- Sandra Wyatt (Barrington Land Conservation Trust) asked for more specifics about the inland flood modeling/Pawtuxet River project. James Boyd addressed her questions.
- Marilyn Shellman (Westerly, Town Planner) inquired about maintaining infrastructure (especially storm drains).
- Abel Collins (SK Town Council President) pointed out the importance of communication with and getting information out to town officials/decision makers. He suggested coordinating with the RI League of Cities and Towns.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:40 PM.