

In accordance with notice to members of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, a Joint Work Session was held with the South Kingstown Town Council regarding the Matunuck Beach Erosion Issue on **Tuesday, May 31, 2011** at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the South Kingstown Town Hall, 180 High Street, Wakefield, RI.

CRMC Members Present

Anne Maxwell Livingston, Chair
Paul Lemont, Vice Chair
Ray Coia
Donald Gomez
Bruce Dawson
Janet Coit, RIDEM
Tony Affigne
Guillaume de Ramel
Mike Hudner

Town Council Members

Ella Whaley, Chair Woman
Carol Hagan McEntee
James O'Neill
Kathleen Fogarty
Mary Eddy

Senator Susan V. Sosnowski

Brian Goldman, Legal Counsel

Staff Present:

CRMC: Jeffrey M. Willis, Deputy Director; Danni Goulet, Marine Infrastructure Coordinator; James Boyd, Coastal Policy Analyst; Janet Freedman, Coastal Geologist

South Kingstown: Dale Holberton, Town Clerk; Stephen Alfred, Town Manager; L. Vincent Murray; Ray Nickerson

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Livingston and Chair Whaley called the Joint Work Session to order at 6:15 p.m.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **INTRODUCTIONS**

CRMC members; Town Council members; Senator Susan V. Sosnowski and Steve Alfred, Town Manager

4. Steve Alfred, South Kingstown Town Manager, gave an update to both Councils advising the South Kingstown Town Council as to the steps taken so far. Mr. Alfred stated that the South Kingstown staff had met with the CRMC staff several times to determine how to obtain assents to address the public safety concerns associated with the protection of the road and public safety in that area and one result was that it was determined that an emergency assent procedure was set up in which if there were a catastrophic storm event the Town would be able to protect the road. Mr. Alfred also talked about the options for protecting private property which included shoreline reclassification under RICRMP Section 200; requesting a special exception under RICRMP Section 130; or a shoreline features reclassification under Section 220. Mr. Alfred stated that CRMC staff was recommending in their staff

report was inland migration and beach re-nourishment. Mr. Alfred stated that they did not see either of these recommendations as effective long-term solutions for Matunuck. Mr. Alfred explained the soft measure recommendation by CRMC staff which would be burritos.

Jeff Willis, CRMC Deputy Director, gave an update to both Councils on CRMC staff progress. Mr. Willis talked of CRMC setting up a process to issue wooden bulkhead permits on a temporary basis which was now available to anyone in that area of Matunuck. Mr. Willis reiterated the options of Water Type change from Type 1 to Type 2 stating that staff did not recommend this option; and changing the shoreline feature definition in this particular area to a manmade shoreline. Mr. Willis stated that the Coastal staff and the Town staff are working well together to come up with solutions. Mr. Willis explained that two preliminary determination applications had been submitted to CRMC offices regarding shoreline protection but that CRMC had not received any applications for temporary wooden bulkheads. Mr. Willis explained that there was sand in deeper water off-shore that can be used for beach replenishment. Mr. Willis explained the process of sediment transport on the southern shore of Rhode Island. Ms. Fogarty expressed the importance of keeping Matunuck village in place for economic development of the State. Mr. Willis explained that replenishment is an easily permissible project but that resources would have to be obtained. Ms. Freedman explained that sand was readily available but needed to be transported at cost to the Town. There was discussion on dredging processes, sediment availability and cost. Mr. O'Neill suggested experimenting with new systems and using this area as an experimental area. Mr. Willis stated the staff would be happy to work with the Town and private property owners on proposed options. Mr. Willis informed the Town Council that if the decision is to make a riprap shoreline for protection of this area, there will no longer be any beach front, only water against riprap.

Vice Chair Lemont asked Dr. Boothroyd if he had solutions. Jon Boothroyd, Coastal Glacial Geologist, retired from the University of Rhode Island, and the State Geologist, spoke about his ideas for shoreline solutions. Dr. Boothroyd made it clear that there were no permanent solutions only temporary fixes as the ocean is ever changing. Dr. Boothroyd's first suggestion was to build a rubble mound seawall explaining that there would not be a sandy beach associated with this option and quite a bit of maintenance associated as well. Dr. Boothroyd's second suggestion was beach replenishment stating that sand would have to continuously be put on the beach. Dr. Boothroyd stated that the most cost effective way would be the beach replenishment and then he explained the process of movement of sand. Vice Chair Lemont asked Dr. Boothroyd to give one short term solution and one long term solution. Dr. Boothroyd stated he would suggest burritos and for the long term he suggested moving the road but also offered more information on the rubble mound seawall and beach replenishment. Mr. Willis stated that burritos and trucking in sand are permits that can be issued quickly. Dr. Affigne expressed his thoughts that changing the definition of the shoreline might not be the scientific way to go and also that the hardening of the beach did not appear to be within the scientific realm of the program either. Ms. Eddy asked Ms. Freedman to give the status of the burrito placement to the west of the beach. Ms. Freedman stated that the burritos have been very successful as the houses are still there with the exception of one that was moved back further away from the water as deemed necessary by its owner because land was available. Ms. Freedman stated that the shoreline keeps migrating seaward creating an island for the houses, but that if it weren't for the burritos, the houses would have been damaged. Ms. McEntee responded to Dr. Affigne expressing the frustration of the residents at not being able to solve this issue and save the road prior to a catastrophic storm event.

Audience comments

Fran O'Brien, part owner of Tara's Family Pub on Matunuck Beach Road, spoke about an alternative temporary solution similar to a gabion basket frame with a recyclable inner fiber liner with no bottom.

Mr. O'Brien explained that they are put on the beach and filled with sand. Mr. O'Brien figured that the cost for the 675' of beach would be in the area of \$20,000 for temporary protection.

Mark Melick of 929 Matunuck Beach Road spoke about a system that is meant to capture sand and that the company he is talking to is willing to bargain as that want to have their product shown in this area for experimental purposes. Mr. Melick also suggested using a barge to transport sand to the area.

Jane Austin of Save The Bay urged the Coastal Council to strive for a balance strategy expressing that while seawalls provide temporary protection for some property owners, they have negative impacts as well. Ms. Austin talked about the Council looking into a new Special Area Management Plan. Ms. Fogarty answered Ms. Austin by saying that the time constraints call for action now.

Mike McKenna, 1044 Matunuck Beach Road, talked about the benefits and detriments of burritos and how he has watched their effects on the beach. Mr. McKenna also talked about the economic impact of losing the businesses in this area.

Lauren Russo, on behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the Surf Rider Foundation, made a formal comment stating that permanent structures should not be permitted in this area as it will accelerate beach loss and eliminate beach fringe. Ms. Russo talked of safety -- the recreationists need a safe place to exit the water. Ms. Whaley answered Ms. Russo by saying that if the road breaches there will not be a public access point available for surfers to reach the surf.

Mr. Kevin Finnegan, owner of the Ocean Mist, talked in favor of hardened shoreline structures. Mr. Finnegan talked about the economic impact of the Matunuck tourist season and that if you invest in the area, Rhode Island will benefit. Mr. Finnegan expressed his concern for the 675' of shoreline.

Mr. O'Neill talked about the growing tourism dollar. Mr. O'Neill called for support from the Army Corps of Engineers.

Senator Susan Sosnowski expressed her gratitude for the cooperation between the State and the Town and the progress that has been made on this issue. Senator Sosnowski also stated that a Special Area Management Plan is a very good idea for a long-term solution. Senator Sosnowski expressed concern for what would happen if the road breaches.

Ms. McEntee expressed her discontent that the Town has to wait until a catastrophic storm event occurs before the Town could apply for an emergency permit to construct a hard shoreline protection structure. Ms. McEntee expressed the need for a solution soon.

Mr. Willis explained to the Council that staff had been working on solutions to when a structure could be built and one solution is in the event that a catastrophic storm event wipes out the structures there is in place a pre-permitted emergency permit for the Town to build a revetment along that area. Mr. Willis stated that a second solution was mitigation of this area in the way of policy changes looking for ways to protect the structures that would also protect the road.

Ms. Coit asked for clarification on the first 200 feet, Phase I. Mr. Willis stated that the two staff were working on the initial first segment. Mr. Alfred stated that the reason for this is that there are no structures and it is close to the wall. Mr. Alfred talked about the effects of the breaching of the road into the salt marsh and the inundation of Seaweed Cove and Sea Dart Cove.

Mr. Gomez stated that at this point the Council can only act on something if the Town submits an application so that we can move forward with the issue. Mr. Gomez stated that he believed that the bigger picture was important and following up with a SAMP process is a good idea.

Mr. Alfred stated that the Town needed to submit a formal application for SAMP amendment and that they still need to provide the CRMC with the application for the emergency assent, but also for the protection of the first 200 feet. Mr. Alfred stated that due to the rate of erosion in this 200 foot area a permanent hard structure would be applied for. Mr. Alfred explained to the Council what happens during storm events in this area and the loss of beach front over the past 50-60 years. Mr. Alfred stated that the Town is hiring a marine engineer to provide the design.

Ms. Whaley thanked the Council members for attending and congratulated the new Council members on their appointments. Ms. Whaley thanks all for attending.

In discussing timeframe, Mr. Alfred stated that they hoped to have an application before CRMC staff within four weeks time.

7. **ADJOURN**

As there were no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa A. Turner
Recording Secretary