

Dover Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Development Meeting Minutes Via Zoom – March 25, 2021 at 3pm

Join Zoom Meeting

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Dial in: 929 205 6099

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Present via Zoom: Jeannette Eckert, Alyssa Sabetto, Margo Ghia, Ben Joyce, Vicki Capitani, Dave Moulton, Sarah Shippee, Jon Abel, Paul Fisher, Tabi Freedman, Randy Johnson, Randy Schoonmaker, Michelle Pinkham, Dana Sorice, Peter MacDonald, Ian Boyd, Travis Briggs, Scott Salway, Richard Werner joined at 3:45pm, Ashley Havreluk joined at 4:10pm, Kevin Stine joined at 5:15pm

The meeting was opened by Alyssa Sabetto of Windham Regional Commission at 3:00pm

1. Update of the current Dover Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

What is mitigation?

- Any sustained action taken to eliminate or reduce future risk to people and property from disasters
- Saves time and money by decreasing real-world damages
- Can take place anytime but the intent is always to reduce risk from future hazards

a) Purpose

- Holistic look at the town's vulnerability to natural hazards
- Opportunity and reason for this important discussion
- Opportunity to develop mitigation projects
- Projects in Plans have more chance of getting FEMA \$\$
- Vermont Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF) incentive for State match after a Federal declaration

b) Process

- Draft Development
 - Public input such as this meeting
 - Outreach to specific people in town
 - Background research
 - Plan writing
- Internal town comment opportunity
 - Revisions made as needed to address any comments
- Public comment opportunity
 - Revisions made as needed
 - Town advertises draft plan to the public
- Draft submitted to VT Emergency Mgmt.
 - Any needed changes are resubmitted or if no changes draft is ready for FEMA review
- FEMA Preliminary review

- Revisions are either required or preliminarily approved by FEMA
- Vermont Emergency Mgmt. is now able to make approvals
- Town adoption
 - Plan is adopted by the Town after FEMA approval
 - No changes at this point
- FEMA final approval
 - The date of FEMA approval sets the clock ticking for the next 5-year update
 - Final approved plan is required for any FEMA grant

Randy Schoonmaker asked what the difference was between this plan and the one we all attended last year with Rich Werner

Jeannette Eckert related that the prior plan was the (LEOP) Local Emergency Operations Plan which is reviewed annually

Alyssa Sabetto related that the LEOP is more of a response tool that is updated yearly by each town; resource document on responding to emergencies

2. Hazards

- a) Discuss hazard events that have occurred since the last plan approved in 2015
- In the midst of a pandemic
 - Power is out quite often in certain sections of East Dover which is a problem
 - Cell service and communication is disrupted
 - Heavy snow and ice impacting the tower
 - Wind and weather-related situations
 - Road washouts, not seeing as much but still occurs
 - Ditches widened out and cleaned out culverts to try to alleviate the problems
 - Can this be put in the plan?
 - Can't be put it down as "New" mitigation
 - But can be termed as a maintenance action
 - Culvert replacements and repairs—have been proactive in these areas
 - What are we supposed to be thinking of if we are not experiencing any big problems?

Andy McLean requested more information on this plan and what it means. Is it simply a way to access funding from FEMA? Is this required by the State?

Alyssa: State does not require this plan but it helps with financial funding opportunities; without the plan in place, ERAF drops to 7.5%; in a declared disaster, FEMA gives 75% funding, remaining 25% is matched between State and Local.

Towns must have an LHMP, National flood Insurance program, updated road and bridge standards, and LEOP, in order to qualify for the match at 12.5%; FEMA also requires it for funding

Vicki Capitani asked if this plan was what Wilmington went thru redrawing their flood plans which was a bit contentious?

Alyssa: No, that was in relation to updating flood hazard bylaw to include river corridors; not the same effort

- b) Instructions briefly and then take online survey (different from the public survey)
- At 3:35pm the survey was emailed to all participants to complete, taking about

5 minutes

- 15 responses came in from the 18 participants
- Ranking each hazard and the probability of each hazard; frequency of occurrence: unlikely (1) to highly likely (5)
- Looking for the community's viewpoint; your individual opinion
- Select top 3 concerns for impacts on infrastructure; life in town; local economy; natural environment

c) Discuss meeting participant survey results (on a scale of 1 to 5)

- Inundation flooding: 2—when waters rise and fall
- Fluvial erosion: 3—erosive damage to floodway and river corridors
- Significant ice storm: 4
- Damaging wind: 3, 4
- Significant snowstorm: 3, 4
- Drought: 3, 4
- Landslide: 1, 2
- Wildfire: 1,2
- Earthquake: 1,2
- Invasive plant: 2, 3
- Infectious disease: 2, 4
- Significant hail event: 3

More survey results:

Infrastructure, top three

- Ice and Wind
- Inundation flooding

Life in town, top three

- Inundation flooding, ice, wind, infectious disease

Economy, top three

- Inundation flooding, ice, snow, wind, pandemic

Natural environment, top three

- Invasive species, flooding, ice, wind

Dave Moulton: Believe we are experiencing more extreme weather situations

Tabi Freedman: Power and communication are key issues; effects of these hazards

d) Discuss public survey results

- 18 responses to the public survey
- Most have lived in Dover more than 5 years
- Most respondents were 51-60 years in age
- Most do not know if they live in floodplain—educational opportunity
- About 1/3 do not have flood insurance if they live in floodplain
- Natural hazards experienced: Ice Storm, Winds, Flooding
- Man-made hazard experiences: Structure fire, Hazmat, School safety issues
- Top three hazards to impact you in next 5 years: extreme weather, climate,

health emergency/pandemic, lack of full-time residents, high winds, too much snow and rust on vehicles, being “*dared to make a living in Vermont*”

- Reduce hazards: homeowner’s insurance, alternative power, remove dead trees
 - Cost effective measures the town can take: Culvert and road upgrades, improve natural stormwater mitigation, protect vegetation
- e) Brief review of existing/expired Dover Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Flood, structure fire, power failure, winter and ice storm, high winds, wildfire, landslide (rated from Moderate to Low in order)
 - FEMA only looks at *natural* hazards
 - Infectious disease outbreak is considered a natural hazard
- f) Decide what the updated Plan will address
- Comprehensive range of mitigation actions
 - Smart to discuss what you can mitigate and be prepared to mitigate what you discuss
 - Jon Abel: Invasive species--ash bore does affect the whole town, erosion, aesthetics of forest, & economy. It is a tough call to mitigate
 - Flooding and invasive species are the topics most appearing in plans
 - Tabi: Invasive species not just affecting trees but river/stream corridors also
 - Sarah: Beef up the infrastructure that could be impacted by wind, ice
 - Taking down hazardous trees, burying power lines
 - Vicki: drought would be a serious issue particularly in the north branch district; aquifer is tapped; water system study and full analysis; unsure how to mitigate
 - Rich Werner: Town spent money to do a water study done 12-14 years ago; aquifer study was put in one of the plans if there was grant money available; Vermont allows hydrants in a public water system; keep it in if funds become available; not having a public water system would stunt economic development in this community
 - Tabi: Zoning bylaws—mandate capped wells to reduce the strain? New wells need to be capped but should we address old wells also?

What to include:

- Flooding, ice, wind, drought, invasive species, pandemic
 - Increase connectivity and cell service to help mitigate ice, wind issues
 - Against adding more paperwork and bureaucratic hoops to jump through
 - Do what you need to do to pass FEMA muster & have a compliant plan
 - If we can explain it away, we will
 - 5-year plans, suggest phasing out larger scale projects
 - No reason not to include something in the plan
 - Throw it all in –at least you are not going to forget about it
- g) Mark up the Atlas with local hazard notes—will work with Travis on this

3. Mitigation Goals and Actions

- a) Review/edit Mitigation Goals
 - Reduce the loss of life and injury resulting from all hazards
 - Reduce impact of hazards on town water bodies
 - Reduce economic impacts from hazard events
 - Minimize disruption to road network, access
 - Mitigate financial losses due to disasters
 - Ensure community infrastructure is not damaged by hazard event; especially communication and cell service
 - Maintain funds in Capital plans and Capital reserve funds
 - Building, paving, equipment budget to allow us to restore essential services
 - Being proactive ---- especially on the needed mitigation projects
 - Ensure that the general public continue to be a part of the planning process
- b) Brief review of the current Mitigation Actions Table that the EMD/Town updated
 - Types of mitigation
 - Local plans and regulations
 - Land use, building codes, capital improvement, stormwater mgmt.
 - Structure and infrastructure projects
 - Modifying existing structures in flood prone areas, utility undergrounding, flood walls, culverts
 - Natural systems protection
 - Sediment and erosion control, stream corridor restoration, forest & conservation management
 - Education and awareness programs
 - Radio & television, websites, mailings, firewise communities, storm ready
- c) Create an updated Mitigation Actions Table for the updated Plan
 - Inventory of invasive species—possibly through Conservation Commission, employees or volunteers; educate people on what to look for; surveys, maps
 - Educate citizens on ash bore, Japanese knotweed identification
 - Engaging school kids or other community volunteers for projects
 - School in conjunction with Town; training for existing outdoor volunteer groups on invasives and possible control measures
 - Updating emergency action plans for dams (Dave Moulton at Mt Snow)
 - Snow Lake Dam (Dover) and West Lake Dam (Wilmington)
 - Underground fiber optics now in place
 - Wind issues
 - Clearing the power lines to alleviate outages
 - WDFD generator—remains a need pending Fed or State funding—did not qualify for previous grant
 - Portable storage for emergency supply for shelter—in Town budget hope to be done by Fall 2021

- Purchase and stockpile gallon containers for distribution during disasters—remains a need when mobile trailer is purchased
- Replace bridge by EDFD—remains high priority; pending grant money; 2022-2023
- Develop program for assessing & removing potentially hazardous trees near power lines--ongoing
- Fill salt shed--ongoing
- Install pressurized water supply for firefighting in West Dover—2022-2023
- Bank stabilization along Rock River--ongoing
- Bank stabilization along Blue Brook—to be removed as it did not directly impact the road or infrastructure but impacted private property
- VT Alert training—completed for West Dover Police & Fire Chiefs and Dispatch—remains a need for East Dover Fire Chief
- Bylaw update on floodplain river corridor—Planning Commission has begun the process of discussing/reviewing—2023-24
 - Floodplain administrator training—ZA Tabi Freedman is doing it
- Concrete bridge on Taft Brook Rd—upgrade to box culvert? Waiting on report from the State on bridges—bridge is far too small for river that goes through it 2023-2024—downstream from one that was replaced by FEMA
- Culvert upgrade on Taft Brook Rd just below Morse Rd—hydraulic study done but done years ago—2022/23
- Coordinate effort with GMP and communications networks; support GMP initiative with local permissions for burying lines and moving lines out to roads—assessment could be part of the updated Town Plan
- Educate residents about what to do when they see tree hazards over power lines—however cutting trees can remove a lot of the ecology of the river
 - Companies that provide the services need to upgrade their equipment
 - Town buildings aren't really affected by outages
- Stone line ditches - ongoing
- Robbins Rd/Holland Rd upgrade stone structure to box culvert—hydraulic study needs to be done
- Boosters for WIFI connections
- Permanent generators at Town Office and Brick Building/Town Hall
 - Benefit cost analysis by FEMA to determine need
 - Town Hall with its kitchen could be utilized as a shelter area—distributed food from there during Irene; also, Town Office was utilized
- Develop standing relationship with contractor for tree removal & debris clearing
- Update town forest management plan to include mitigations for invasive species—Conservation Commission
- Drought—large water study loan was just paid off—need to raise awareness & get buy in; put it at the top of people's minds that it's going to be a problem
 - North Branch customers--not all the Town are on North Branch
- Fees for new PUD development—developing framework for institution of impact fees to create a fund to upgrade water system, potentially to fund a water system

- Survey for older non capped wells to understand the number of wells in order to develop program for capping
- PFAS contamination at the Brick building well/septic—still in the investigation process to determine the source of the contamination—solutions may require new well location or updated filtration system once the problem is understood
 - Also detected at the Landfill well—investigation continues
- Continuity of Operations Plan for pandemic issues
- The 2015 plan is one that was well prepared by Alyssa
 - Literally able to just update it
 - If any other items come up, please do reach out to her
 - Email photos of work that has been done or existing hazards: asabetto@windhamregional.org
- Will update atlas with Travis via Zoom to markup areas of concern

d) Identify gaps and capabilities with implementation

4. Other Updates & Next Steps

- a) Discuss recent mitigation work completed by the town
- b) Discuss development trends – new developments, upcoming developments
- c) Overall resiliency concerns or ideas
- d) Review of other elements and address questions that weren't discussed

Meeting adjourned at 6:07pm

Respectfully submitted by Jeannette Eckert

Public notices of these minutes have been posted at the following locations:
 Dover Town Clerk's Bulletin Board, Dover Town Meeting Bulletin Board, Dover School
 Dover Free Library, East Dover Post Office, Town
 of Dover Website: www.doververmont.com