

Duxbury Seawall Committee Minutes, February 9, 2021

TOWN CLERK

2021 MAR 24 PM 2: 01

Combined meeting with Finance Committee and Fiscal Advisory Committee

DUXBURY, MASS.

Present: DSWC Members: Alicia Babcock, Paul Brogna, Steve Callahan, Arthur Haley, Candace Martin (as part of Fiscal Advisory), Don Norris, Mary Shiebler

Others Present: Ted Flynn and Amy McNabb-Select Board; Rene Read, John Adams, Pete Buttkas, Valerie Massard, Nancy O'Connor, Chris Luttazi

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM via Zoom. Betsy Sullivan, Finance Committee read the Zoom preamble for all groups.

1. **Minutes** - The DSWC minutes of 11/23/20 meeting were approved as presented.

2. **Seawall Replacement Review**- Alicia reviewed Phasing Plan. Phase I was completed Summer 2020 which replaced 950' of seawall along ORN and Cable Hill. Phase II will replace 850' along Bay Avenue to the Marshfield line and is estimated at \$4.7M. The target for Phase II is 2022. The highest amount available through the State Dam & Seawall Grant is \$3M. Based on the \$1m the Town was awarded for Phase 1, DSWC seeks support for Warrant Article 20 requesting 25% grant matching funds from the Town in the amount of \$250k.

The storm on 2/1/21 severely compromised the wall along Bay Ave. Pictures of the damage the wall sustained were shared with the group. Steve Callahan explained that extremely low sand/beach levels contributed to the damage along with strong waves overtopping the wall in that area. Overtopping routinely occurs during high tides without the impact of storm surge wave heights. He noted that 300' of the wall had moved the wall 10" seaward last week and property on the landward side collapsed in many areas. The seawall cracked and separated in many areas and footings moved. All indicates an emergency situation with imminent wall failure likely. Steve emphasized the dangerous impact to areas behind the wall which includes homes, sewer, water, gas lines, and the roads themselves (Bay Rd. and Gurnet Rd.). This also poses a threat to the marshlands and the bay. Steve explained that the wall is critically damaged and we are in danger of losing this major piece of Town infrastructure and everything it protects. The Town acknowledged that it is 10 years behind other local towns in seawall repairs and replacement projects. Steve is pressing the 'panic button' on this section on the wall.

Pete Buttkas also expressed concern about this damage. He and Pat Brennan (Amory Engineering) toured area and confirmed wall has shifted and the toe of the wall is showing signs of becoming undermined (prelude to falling). They have been in contact with Army Corps about placing emergency rocks along this portion of the wall to create a revetment. Pete kept the armor stones that were against the old wall on ORN and Cable Hill before the wall was replaced. They are being stored in a DPW staging area for emergency use. Pete is working to fast track approvals with State/Feds/Army Corps to mitigate further damage. Once approvals are obtained Pete will move stones to the beach.

3. **Wall Replacement Planning/Funding**- Phase II has now become an emergency. The Warrant Article for a grant match of \$250,000 is needed in order to apply for \$1M State Grant. There is a better chance of receiving grant money if there is a project with a path to funding in place. This may include low interest loans. The Town has 1 year to utilize grant money and may request up to an additional year to extend deadline.

It was noted that the entire wall has outlived its projected life of 50 years by over 20 years at this point in time. In addition to the failing sections on Bay Ave, the remaining sections are also in disrepair and have been weakened. Proactive action is necessary by the Town to avoid a catastrophe and increased costs and liability. The DSWC feels that not to proactively replace this piece of Town infrastructure would be negligent. The Town

acknowledges that if they don't proactively replace the wall and wait for it to fall over they would benefit from FEMA money to subsidize the project. John Adams noted that the best way to fund this project is with a Capital Override but expressed concerns about public support.

Val noted that beach nourishment permits are required by CZM to move forward with more wall replacement. Duxbury is currently working with Marshfield on developing a nourishment plan to satisfy this requirement. FEMA also has new programs with funding.

There is a \$750k gap in funding from Phase I. The Town plans to assess betterments to cover these costs. It was noted by DSWC that no other Town has used betterments to fund any infrastructure seawall projects.

Finance Committee noted a debt exclusion betterment would be more palatable at Town meeting. There are 192 homes impacted by seawall. It was noted that they cannot carry the entire financial burden for this funding problem in addition to the high taxes they are already paying. Questions around Town liability if the wall fails were raised.

4. Beach Nourishment- Val noted beach nourishment is part of ongoing planning as required. Permits are good for 10 years (as well as the design permit for the new wall obtained for Phase I). Sand sources and the costs associated with nourishment still have to be explored.

5. Plan- Ted Flynn suggested that a subcommittee be formed with a representative from Sea Com, Fin Com and members from the Town to meet to formulate a plan on moving forward. Rene will coordinate the group and schedule a meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.