

Town of Westerly HM&FMP Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting #3: Wednesday December 7, 2022 from 9-10:30am at the Westerly Town Hall (45 Broad St, Westerly, RI) in the Development Services Conference Room

Committee Members in Attendance: Alyse Oziolor (Chair), David Murphy, Max Sposato, Amy Grzybowski, Kyle Zalaski, Paul Gingerella, Fawatih Mohamed-Abouh, Michelle Pinto, Gina Fuller, Dan Lathrop, Joan Beth Brown, Marc Doherty, and Kim Jacobs – Committee Technical Advisor (TA); (*Designees Attending without voting privilege: Arianna Zurell, Shawn Lacey, Kimberlie Rayner-Russell*)

Members of the Public: Pete Ogle (Westerly); Melissa Davy (Westerly Assistant Town Manager)

Meeting Notes:

- The Chair opened the meeting at 9:02am.
- The Committee reviewed the status of following items from the previous meeting:
 - The Committee reviewed the status of the various outreach public activities: social media – information about the project and the survey have been posted on various Facebook pages and sent to various local groups via email; informational posters – have been put up around town; public opinion survey is live through 12/15/2022 and currently has gotten 112 responses; radio broadcast – Gina Fuller will be on WBLQ on 12/8/22.
- The Committee discussed the benefit of additional public outreach - it was determined that a newspaper article would be submitted to The Westerly Sun highlighting the Survey and the upcoming Public Information Meeting on 12/20/2022, and Gina would continue to discuss the project on WBLQ.
- The TA provided a brief overview of the Hazard Ranking Form which the Committee will complete at their 12/20/22 meeting. Using a scoring rubric, the Committee will perform a general risk assessment based on *Likelihood of Occurrence*, *Likely Range of Impact*, and *Likely Magnitude of Impact*.
- The Committee members had the opportunity to provide input on the infectious disease draft profile (no additional comments/input); and on Earthquakes, Extreme Heat, Drought, and Brush Fires. Input and comments for these four hazards were noted and the drafts will be modified accordingly. It was noted that downtown Westerly is almost entirely impervious and demonstrates a mild “heat island” effect. There was discussion of the interaction of heat and other disasters leaving certain populations particularly vulnerable.
- The TA provided a brief overview of the Vulnerability Categories for each hazard. These are: built environment, natural environment, local economy, and people. The Committee will be provided drafts of the vulnerability (what is at risk) section and have the opportunity to provide input and feedback to reflect Westerly’s conditions.
- The Committee was reminded of the upcoming meetings, topics to be discussed, and documents to review prior to the meetings.
- Public Comment:
 - Peter Ogle of Westerly – in reference to the discussion on brush fires, Mr. Ogle indicated that he would consider the coastal grasslands and wetlands around the salt ponds to be a vulnerable area. He noted that the old growth of phragmites can become dry and therefore during drought conditions may be vulnerable to brush fires.
- The Chair closed the meeting at 10:06am