

**Kingston Flooding Task Force**  
Riverview Missionary Baptist Church  
240 Catherine Street, Kingston, NY 12401  
June 18, 2013 \* 3:00-6:00pm

**Meeting 6 Draft Summary**

Next Meeting

Tuesday, July 16, 3-6 PM, location TBD

Action Items

- Planning Team – revise recommendations and share with Task Force via survey for input
- All – provide input on revised recommendations via survey once available
- Planning Team – revise recommendations based on Task Force suggestions from survey
- Planning Team – plan final Task Force meeting agenda
- Gregg Swanzey, Julie Noble and Emilie Hauser – coordinate Task Force member participation at the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee’s 7/15 meeting
- All – Plan to attend the July 15, 2013 6 pm, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee at Kingston City Hall, in the Common Council Chambers
- All – Plan to attend the next Task Force meeting on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 3-6 pm.

Welcome and Introductions

On June 18, 2013, members of the Kingston Flooding Task Force met at the Riverview Missionary Baptist Church for their sixth meeting. The 27 meeting participants are listed in Appendix 1. Meeting handouts included an agenda, a draft recommendations document and a FEMA pamphlet on changes to flood insurance rates. Kristin Marcell (NYSDEC) provided a welcome and led introductions.

Kingston’s Comprehensive Plan steering committee will hear from community groups on July 15 and expects to hear from the Flooding Task Force. Gregg Swanzey, Julie Noble and Emilie Hauser will coordinate the effort to attend and present the group’s work at the meeting. The planning team encourages members of the Task Force to attend. Once the official time of the meeting is set, this information will be shared with the Task Force.

Discussion of Draft Task Force Recommendations

Guided by Kristin Marcell, participants reviewed and discussed 20 of the 54 draft recommendations compiled by the planning team. The draft recommendations draw on contributions from: Task Force meetings and discussions, the Georgetown Climate Center’s Adaptation Tool Kit, Kingston’s use of the New York Climate Smart Planning process and a review of the recommendations of the New York State Sea level Rise Task Force (2010). Participants had received a copy of the draft recommendations in advance and were asked not to share the document outside the Task Force as it had not been vetted or discussed. Kristin said the goal of the meeting was to review some of the recommendations and identify areas where there is general agreement and disagreement.

Participants were asked to focus specifically on the concepts described and to hold off on micro-suggestions and word-smithing. The project team will send out a survey to allow all Task Force members to review and provide additional input on all of the recommendations. To quickly gauge approval of each recommendation, Task Force members were given three colored cards, which corresponded to their level of comfort with each recommendation: (green = comfortable, yellow = needs more discussion, red = very uncomfortable.) Kristin gave instructions on the use of colored cards and went over a few ground rules for the discussion. After introducing each recommendation, clarifying questions were taken first, followed by concerns, a vote, and further discussion as needed. The 20 recommendations reviewed during the meeting were preselected by the planning team as the recommendations either (a) with the most agreement, or (b) in most need of discussion.

Task force members provided several general comments about revisions needed for the whole set of recommendations. Many members said this first draft of recommendations was too wordy, repetitive, and needed to be condensed and consolidated. Some pointed out that more specificity was also needed, for example spelling out acronyms. Members agreed that as a political document, it is important to thoroughly explain the source and credibility of the sea level rise projections which the Task Force is recommending as reasonable for city planning purposes. In order for this to be a credible document, it will need to emphasize that values for sea level rise elevation and the time horizons of 2060 and 2100<sup>1</sup> are reasonable for planning. Not all Task Force members are comfortable with the projections the Task Force selected at its February meeting, however the majority agree that creating a bold document can be useful long-term. This will require certain proposed solutions that are seemingly far-fetched to be discussed now in order to prevent the city from being unprepared in the long-term. Another general comment about the recommendations was the need to specify what these recommendations do and don't take into account. For example, the recommendations consider sea level rise and storm surge but not weather patterns or changes in storm frequency and intensity.

The following recommendations are those that Task Force members in attendance ultimately reached a unanimous vote of approval on (pending slight wording modifications):

- **Require city agencies responsible for the management and regulation of resources, infrastructure, and vulnerable populations to factor the current and impacts of sea level rise and flooding into all relevant aspects of decision making.**
- **Develop a plan for implementation of these recommendations.**
- **Use the USGS Rondout stream gauge and Steven's Institute NYHOPS model** for real time emergency management planning.
- **Support the creation of an organizational framework to conduct preliminary damage assessments** after acute flooding events.
- **Support community-based organizations** and their ability to reach vulnerable or non-English speaking populations, facilitate translation of complex information to community members and gather information on local impacts of flooding.
- **Ensure that the public is aware of and understands the Federal Flood Insurance Program.**

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<sup>1</sup> For 2060, 20" or 36" of sea level rise, as a low and a high. For 2100, 33" or 68" of sea level rise, as a low and a high.

- **Share risk assessments and findings** from the Rondout-Hudson Waterfront Flooding Task Force with all appropriate municipal and county officials.
- **Capital expenditure plans and departmental requests for funds should consider sea level rise and flood projections**, flood mitigation goals, and priorities for climate resilience.
- **Integrate departmental funding requests** into a city-wide Capital Improvement Plan that incorporates and prioritizes the needs of all departments.
- **Evaluate and revise existing building standards** to address sea level rise and wind- and water-related impacts associated with coastal storms and riverine flooding.
- **Encourage creative, water-dependent and water-enhanced uses** with zoning and building codes to allow for resilient structures and landforms, including:
  - elevated, amphibious, or floating structures
  - wharfs, berms, or elevated rights of way
- **Amend municipal code** to exceed State’s 2-foot freeboard requirement. Revise other local building codes to increase flood resilience.

Recommendations that did not reach unanimity will be revised and consolidated by the planning team. These include recommendations pertaining to buffer areas, State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), Transfer of Development Rights and designating a sea level rise floodplain overlay zone, that is, extending the boundaries of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) special flood hazard areas.

Task Force members were invited to write and submit additional recommendations they thought should be included in the document. They submitted the following proposed recommendations:

- Include motivational incentives as a sixth task force theme. Motivational incentives would include carbon neutrality and utilizing green architecture, getting at the root cause of climate change.
- Encourage city government and community members commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, recognizing that it is important to “mitigate” not just “adapt.”
- Consider including Sleightsburg Spit in the recommendation about using buffer areas. Even though Sleightburg is in the Town of Esopus it a valuable wetland and could protect the Kingston Harbor.

The planning team will be revising the recommendations based on further discussion and then share them via an online survey for Task Force input.

#### Describing Task Force Member Participation

Given that individual Task Force members’ participation has varied over time, participants discussed how to decide which Task Force members’ names should appear on the final recommendation document. The group decided that an opt-in approach would be best. After the July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, when the final report is near complete, Task Force members will be asked to notify the facilitator, Ona Ferguson (CBI), if they would like their name and organization to be associated with the document.

## **Appendix 1: Meeting Participants**

### **Task Force Members**

Jeff Anzevino, Scenic Hudson  
Steve Finkle, S. Finkle Associates, Inc. / Hudson Landing  
Abel Garraghan, Heritage Energy  
Huntley Gill, Guardia Architects  
Tom Hoffay, City of Kingston - Common Council Ward 2  
Ann Loeding, Friends of Kingston Waterfront  
Kevin McEvoy, Kingston Land Trust  
Jon McGrew, Trolley Museum  
Deanna Roberston, representing Hudson River Ventures  
Alan Shope, Clearwater Board President  
Arthur Snyder, Ulster County  
Susan Spencer Crowe, Kingston Resident

### **Project Team Members**

Fran Dunwell, NYSDEC HREP  
Emilie Hauser, NYSDEC HRNERR  
Mark Lowery, NYSDEC Office of Climate Change  
Kristin Marcell, NYSDEC HREP Cornell  
Libby Murphy, NYSDEC HREP Cornell  
Julie Noble, City of Kingston - CAC  
Sacha Spector, Scenic Hudson  
Gregg Swanzey, City of Kingston - Economic Development  
Christina Tobitsch, NYSDEC HRNERR and SCA

### **Others Present**

Jim MacBroom, Milone and MacBroom, Inc.  
Kitty McCullough, Historic Kingston Waterfront  
Mary McNamara, Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership  
James Nami, Times Herald Record  
David Railsback, ARCADIS  
Joan Williams Washington, Kingston Resident