

UPDATE ON RESPONSE TO WINTER STORM OF JANUARY 12-13

On January 16, 2024 an emergency meeting was convened to address the ongoing emergency resulting from recent significant storms and the serious erosion and damage to property, infrastructure and the dunes and ecosystem at Salisbury Beach. Present at the meeting were Senator Bruce Tarr, Representative Dawne Shand, DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR Deputy Commissioner Zach Crowley, DCR officials Patrice Kish and Darryl Forgione, Salisbury Town Manager Neil Harrington, Salisbury Selectmen Chuck Takesian and Mike Colburn, Salisbury Planning Director Lisa Pearson, Salisbury Conservation Commission Chair Jeffrey Ward, Tom Hughes, coastal environmental consultant for the Town of Salisbury, and Valerie Coolidge, Director of Special Projects for Senator Tarr. Participating via Zoom were legislative aides from Representative Shand's office.

The meeting participants engaged in a lengthy detailed discussion focused on 2 preliminary objectives:

1. Developing and implementing measures to expedite the necessary permitting, approvals, etc. for property owners to take emergency actions to protect and stabilize their structures and dunes. This involves two basic components;

a. The processing of emergency certifications by the Conservation Commission, which is working on a process to expedite approvals with standardized conditions.

b. The granting of a variance by DCR to allow beach access necessary for property owner remediation actions. DCR Commissioner Arrigo is working on the variance issue, which would avoid the complexities surrounding Construction Access Permits.

c. If and when such a process is developed and approved, it will need to include some degree of coordinated oversight by the Town and DCR to ensure work done is not detrimental to the dune system, neighboring properties, and the larger project being designed.

d. The process may involve a list of pre-certified contractors known to be capable, and familiar with conditions on the beach, and other standardized conditions.

e. This may involve a workshop or temporary processing center to allow residents to navigate the process with support and coordination.

There was agreement to pursue these objectives as quickly as possible, and efforts are ongoing with results expected imminently.

2. Developing a comprehensive plan for emergency actions for dune restoration. Such a plan will involve DCR actions and focus on repairing the dune system as a whole. Necessary steps include:

a. Immediate survey work to determine the condition of the beach, shoreline, and dunes - This survey work will be done primarily by DCR, using MassDOT drone capabilities, and Tom Hughes and his contracted surveyor(s). That work is underway.

b. An expedited analysis of sand volume lost, options for restoration, and cost estimates for those options. These will occur when survey work is completed.

c. Determination of preferred option - this will require significant discussion, and exactly how that decision will be made has yet to be determined.

d. Identification of funding source for the preferred option, and securing funding - This presents a considerable challenge, and preliminary efforts are underway. Sen. Tarr and Rep. Shand have had a brief conversation with EOEAA Secretary Tepper on Wednesday evening, January 17th.

3. Action by Salisbury Board of Selectmen and Town Manager to make formal requests to the Healey - Driscoll Administration for expedited permitting and financial support to achieve objectives above. This action was taken by the Board of Selectmen at its meeting on Monday, January 22.

The Town will post updates of further meetings as they occur.