

Town of Kittery Planning & Development
November 9, 2021

Subject: PREP (Piscataqua Region Estuary Partnership) grant

KLIC members,

As some of you may recall, in early 2020, the Town participated in a Floodplain Resiliency Checklist workshop. Staff and KCAC members were there. The resulting checklist and report from SMPDC's Abbie Sherwin made recommendations on how the Town can become more resilient and meet climate change challenges. Among those recommendations were floodplain ordinance changes and the creation of a coastal hazard overlay showing sea level rise. See the report included with this memo for reference.

This past spring, the Town of Kittery and the Kittery Climate Adaptation Committee (KCAC) together with SMPDC was awarded a grant by PREP to fund the creation of a coastal hazard overlay which will inform amendments to the Town's floodplain ordinance. The coastal hazard overlay will use the sea level rise data from the Maine Geological Survey which aligns closely with Maine's Climate Action Plan calling for management of 1.5 and 3.9 feet of sea level rise. Storm surge will also be mapped. Base flood elevations will be used just as they are in the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). The overlay will be a GIS layer, able to be used and viewed from the Town's on-line GIS by staff and the public. It will be a supplement to the Town's existing floodplain data.

The ordinance changes that are anticipated by KCAC and staff involve changes in freeboard (the height at which a building's lowest living level can be) and changes in the height of bridges, streets and other types of infrastructure etc. It is also anticipated that there will be changes in how buildings within the coastal hazard overlay can be redeveloped e.g., a certain percentage of repair, renovation or remodeling based on assessed value over a designated timeframe will result in the building having to meet current freeboard regulations and any other such changes. New development in the coastal hazard overlay zone will be prohibited with few exceptions. Some Low Impact Development (LID) standards may also be introduced. The Town is currently participating in another grant that will produce a model LID ordinance for the state that will wrap up later in 2022. There may be other amendments as well. The PREP grant timeline is set so that mapping should be completed in January and the ordinance amendments should begin their journey through the adoption process in March/April of 2022.

Staff is providing this information so that KLIC members can ask questions and comment on the approach to the floodplain amendments at the meeting on the 15th.