

Community Resilience Training **PLANNING FORWARD EVENT**

A GDI training event run by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and the Island Institute (GMRI/II) as Part II of their Community Resilience Training Program.

Funded by NOAA and hosted at Diamond Cove Administration Building, August 8, 2022

EVENT BACKGROUND

This 4-hour training is Part II of a five-part community event and workshop series designed to support rural coastal communities in planning for sea level rise. Part I, the Community Engagement presentation with focus on the Diamond Islands' projected sea level rise, was given by GMRI on July 6 at Elwell Hall where over 70 residents attended. Part III, the Regional Resource Workshop with industry professionals, will happen in Portland later this fall and will involve the participating islands.

The goal of this training event was to help the members of this panel build and reflect on the knowledge, skills, and relationships needed for our island to plan for a resilient future in the face of sea level rise.

The Steering Committee reached out to over 20 GDI residents (from both the Diamond Cove and the cottage side) who might be interested in participating in the panel. Under the guidance of GMRI/II, the invitees were narrowed down to a small 13-person group who would delve into the sea level rise events that are likely to happen to the island.

PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Cottage:

Kathryn Luedke
Regina Momnie
Bruce O'Donnell
Dan Weber

Note: Three other cottage participants were planning to participate but were unable attend.

Cove:

Penny Cohen
Tom Lucke
Bill Middleton
Bill Taylor
John Seibyl
Sue Welton

EVENT FACILITATORS

Gayle Boynes, Municipal Climate Action Program Manager, GMRI

Susie Arnold, PhD, Marine Scientist, Island Institute

Abby Roche, Community Development Officer, Island Institute

OTHER OBSERVERS

GMRI/II invited the **City of Portland** to participate in a listening role and to be available to clarify any questions or concerns that arose throughout the discussions:

Troy Moon, Sustainability Director

Kevin Kraft, Deputy Director of Planning and Urban Development

Event Evaluator:

Chrissy Siddons (UMaine)

GDI Climate Task Force Steering Committee: Jennifer Fox, Marjorie Moore, Tracy Sommers, and Anne Weber

Steering Committee Comments

This planning process was the outcome of the Casco Bay Islands Alliance's recent declaration to make climate future the theme for their organization's foreseeable future. It is also the outcome of a GDI sea level rise presentation given in March of this year out of which the GDI Climate Future Task Force was formed with the goal of building out a credible and legitimate island group to tackle the island's issues that come with sea level rise and climate change. As a result, Jennifer Fox contacted the Island Institute for advice, and in collaboration with GMRI, participation in their the Community Resilience Training process ensued.

SHARED ISLAND VALUES



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

community rooted in history but evolving
family
friendships



NATURE

ocean access
the seasons
natural resources
outdoor living



LIFE STYLE

diversity of ages
proximity to Portland
independence
walkability
peace



SAFETY

children's freedom
feeling secure



ISLANDERS HELPING ISLANDERS

collaboration
generosity
volunteerism

ISLAND VULNERABILITIES

ISLAND ACCESS

AND COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

DECLINING PROPERTY VALUES

! URGENT NEED FOR ACTION WITHIN COMMUNITY

- No existing initiatives to address the island's 2030 or 2050 sea level rise
- *Kicking the can down the road* — using bandaid approaches for repairs and starting new projects while ignoring the exponential costs of not incorporating future sea level rise

! FUNDING

- Galvanizing the HOA boards to budget and plan for the impacts of sea level rise
- Securing funding for sea level rise mitigation

! PERCEPTION

- Climate change vocabulary is not conducive for encouraging community action
- Island volunteerism addresses the majority of important issues on the island
- Money drives responses

sand bar erosion impacts to critical infrastructure such as communication systems and city water

barge landing

Little Diamond and Nancy Lane land bridges

public piers

DC pond and land loss from salt water migration

beach loss

flooding

salt water intrusion into septic systems located on the western shore including DC septic field

shoreline erosion

SOLUTIONS

Educate islanders on Portland's sustainability efforts and changes to the new zoning requirements for coastal land use

Address heating inefficiencies to older and newer homes with simple upgrades to existing systems

Explore nature-based solutions for short term sea level rise mitigation

Research funding opportunities to help evaluate and pursue the island vulnerabilities to sea level rise and climate change

Add a resiliency advisor to each of the HOA boards and keep residents informed

Allow for marsh migration into areas such as the DC pond and fields to mitigate costs

Expand collaboration between island HOAs

Form a GDI climate action group that has the official support of Portland



SESSION 1

COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: to practice real-life conversations about the consequences of sea level rise.

ASSUMPTIONS: that all members of the GDI community can inform decision making and influence change.

GOALS: to model a problem-solving process to build and reflect on the knowledge, skills, and relationships needed for the community to plan for a future in the face of sea level rise.

DISCUSSION After GMRI/II and city introductions, Gayle Boyness invited the members of the panel to do the same and to give a brief statement as to why they were here. Comments included: “for my children,” “to see what can be done about the west shore erosion,” and “to learn more.”

The group was tasked to identify their community values which would be used to aid in their solutions to sea level rise scenarios in session 2. Five common themes emerged: nature, life style, safety, family and community relationships, and islanders helping other islanders.



SESSION 2

SCENARIO PLANNING ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: to be challenged to make decisions, respond to and anticipate a variety of situations that emulate the impacts of sea level rise. This process models how personal and group values can guide any complicated decision-making process and to think about how they can develop resilience in the face of the changing climate.

THE SCENARIO focused on 1.5ft sea level rise and 3ft storm surge increase over the next 30 years and how different scenarios would impact the island and the panel's decisions. The scenario included monies available, choice of solution, resources available and competing priorities.

GOALS: to think about how the GDI community can approach adaptation while preserving the things that they value (i.e. the shared GDI values).

DISCUSSION A ten-year storm surge takes out access to the state pier. A few panel members noted the DC pier access is disrupted now — the ferry does not service the dock during storm or high surf surges. This comment generated much discussion about the need for expanding cooperation between the island HOAs, funding, education, city commitment and private property owner's involvement. How do we get funding for

both docks as cost to rebuild the Diamond Cove pier would be prohibitive? Other key conversations were:

- 1. Education** is crucial in creating community engagement and would drive needed discussion.
- 2. Shoreline erosion of private property and loss of value.** Salt water intrusion into septic systems near water on west side, including DC septic field. **Do we save the ice pond or let it return to a salt marsh?** What are the sea level rise impacts to infrastructure at the Great and Little Diamond Island sandbar?
- 3. Urgency for action now:** Panel was very concerned over timing, i.e. the community should actively be planning for 2050, and yet there are no plans to address 2030's sea level rise.
- 4. How do we get the HOA boards to budget for sea level rise?** There was a broad consensus on how the HOA boards “kick the can down the road” and often use bandaid approaches for repairs while ignoring the exponential costs of sea level rise.
- The panel discussion veered heavily on **how monies drive actions** and **how GDI volunteerism addresses the majority of the important issues for the island.**
- Panel focused on **using education as a way of getting people to commit monies** to deal with the impending 2030 sea level rise (SLR). **The panel suggested instituting a HOA “SLR fee” to spark needed community discussions on addressing sea level rise for the island.**
- Panel suggested **creating a resiliency advisor in each of the GDI HOA boards.**
- The critical need for funding.** Panel touched upon research and exploring funding opportunities to tackle some of the current issues happening now. **How do we keep the conversation going?** If we don't set any goals and communicate, we'll always be stuck with band-aid solutions.
- Panel talked heavily to **possible short-term solutions:**
 - **Addressing heating deficiencies** with simple upgrades to existing systems and home adaptations to drafts. Upgrade to heat pumps.
 - **Lots of discussion on possible nature-based solutions for short term SLR mitigation.**
- The panel suggested **continued education with Troy Moon** on Portland's sustainability efforts and with Kevin Craft on the city's plan to roll out new land use zoning requirements that address climate change. *Note: Troy talked to Portland's One Climate Future and Kevin talked briefly about the city's new climate action zoning requirements.*

SESSION 3

REFLECTION

PURPOSE: to engage in a complex conversation about how we make collaborative decisions with many competing priorities.

DISCUSSION The panel was enthusiastic for more education and moving forward with action.