

ResilientWoodsHole NWG Meetings #2 Summary

ResilientWoodsHole held 6 neighborhood working group meetings that represent 9 neighborhoods in Woods Hole at the end of June 2023. The two goals of the meetings were to determine community preference for adaptation solutions in their neighborhood and to gather feedback on the current phase of RWH initiative. RWH first went over the CZM-funded phase 4, including outreach and engagement initiatives, the demonstration projects at the scientific institutions, and the feasibility assessment of Stoney Beach.

For the Stoney Beach project, community members had many questions and input about the proposed dune restoration and beach nourishment solutions, the conceptual designs for dune size and other amenities, and the 3D renderings. Many community members' questions circled around the effect of dune restoration, for example how the dune enhancement could affect neighbors or how the dune restoration will tie in to the properties on either side of the beach. Other questions were logistical ones: who would pay for the dune, how often it needs to be renourished, and what is the dune lifespan. Feedback on the feasibility of Stoney Beach dune restoration was overwhelmingly positive in restoring the dune to 10ft elevation NAVD88 (approx. 3 ft at beach level). Some community members were concerned with lack of beach space and suggested pushing the dune further back from the beach, however recognizing that this would be at the expense of parking and amenities. Other feedback was geared toward the location of amenities and parking of the beach. During the meeting, Woods Hole Group had presented three different configurations of the parking and amenities, as well as some 3D renderings. Briefly, configuration focused on the parking location, with (A) having parking as it currently stands, (B) one in and one out entrance with a curved parking configuration, and (C) one in and one out entrance with a straight parking configuration. During this discussion, several community members expressed concern with the sheer amount of parking spaces, hoping that number is reduced in future schematics. Some members also expressed concern about the safety of children and families with the parking configuration of (B), as this would increase the potential of children and families being hit by cars trying to get in and out of the beach area. Other community members liked the fact that configuration (B) and (C) had one entrance for cars to enter and one exit. This was especially true for the Spencer Baird NWG, as these community members reside right next to the beach and described scenes of commotion with the current parking situation on the beach. Overall, most community members expressed positive reactions to configuration (C) for two reasons. One, this configuration had two separate entrances and exits, and a normal amount of parking. Two, this configuration would allow for natural dune migration, which was viewed to be extremely important in its protective ability. Overall, the community responded positively to the Stoney Beach project update, and requested that the community be involved in further discussion with the MBL.

For gathering community preference on the adaptation solutions in their neighborhood, there were several important areas of concern across all neighborhoods. **One area of concern** was Mill Pond and the area surrounding it, largely impacting the Mill Pond/WoodsHole Park, Spencer Baird, and parts of Eel Pond NWGs. This area is a major flood pathway due to the privately-owned seawall north of the pond, the wetlands, and culverts between Mill Pond and

Eel Pond under Millfield St. For example, for the two culverts between Mill and Eel Pond, community members from several NWGs brought up that one of the culverts is still functional, while another one is collapsed and therefore not functional. Furthermore, despite one culvert still working, many community members noted that the flow of this culvert is reduced due to the poor health of Mill Pond. The health of Mill Pond was discussed at length in several NWG meetings, with many members noting that algae overgrowth and reduced flow was causing the pond to become an unnatural color. Some ideas for increasing the flow and health were discussed, including making Mill Pond larger by allowing it to expand and take over some ballfield, looking to invasive species management, and restoring culverts to have more filtration, aeration, and better connection to Eel Pond. Community members asked ResilientWoodsHole to conduct a study at the flow, conductivity, and oxygenation of Mill Pond to inform of future improvements. Other community members noted that action was needed with the privately-owned seawall north of Mill Pond, suggesting that the lack of drainage behind the seawall was problematic and contributed to the state of Mill Pond. Finally, many community members brought up the potential to work together and build connecting berms in their front/back yards that would protect their homes from flooding from Mill Pond in the short-term. Long-term options discussed were elevating Millfield St.

The **second area of concern** was Eel Pond flooding, impacting the Eel Pond and Mill Pond/Woods Hole Park NWGs. This area was discussed in relation to flooding due to coastal storms and storm surge. Some residents again brought up the lack of proper flow between the two ponds, especially when Eel Pond floods and water moves through the culverts to Mill Pond. To alleviate the impacts from this, community members discussed elevating the existing bulkheads (as long as it does not unduly affect neighbors), temporary floodproofing and adding berms in the short-term. Community members did note that this will all be at the hands of private residents and may be harder to implement as a collective response. In the long-term, community members discussed that buy-outs may be necessary.

The **last area of concern** was Penzance point at Bar Neck Rd, which gets flooded during coastal storms and affects residents' access to the mainland. A proposed solution was discussed for this area by elevating the road and restoring dunes on either side of the road. Dune restoration was viewed positively among the community members, but there were some concerns about this area being a high energy wave zone and dune restoration may not be the right solution. Overall, community members thought access was the most important issue for this area.

Finally, there was consensus in all the NWGs that there must be a collective action plan for Woods Hole Village that includes residents, research institutions, town, and businesses. Specifically, a collective action plan was needed for hurricane and coastal storm preparedness. This would include deciding where sand or deployable barriers be stored, where can boats be stored during storms, and contingency plans if access is interrupted.