

Town of Brookline Informational Minutes
Hazard Mitigation Planning Community Meeting with Margo Ghia of
Windham Regional Commission
Saturday, October 28, 2023

1. Call the Meeting to Order

Dorothy Maggio called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

2. Changes to the Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Introduction

A. Margo Ghia - Windham Regional Commission

Margo is working with Brookline to develop the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

B. Attending members of the Selectboard

Dorothy Maggio (DM) (Selectboard Chair)
Stanley Noga (SN) (Selectboard Vice-Chair)
Paul Madalinski (PM)
Somara Zwick (SZ)

C. Attending members of the Community

Pat Noga
Leslie Zucker
Chuck Tattersall
Vanessa Ballou (Zoom)
Oliver Ames (Zoom)
Alyssa Schmidt (Zoom)
Leah Daly (Zoom)
Chris Daly (Zoom)

4. Hazard Mitigation Discussion Led by Margo Ghia

A. Overview of Plan and Process

Margo began her presentation by describing the purpose of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the process for developing it. Brookline's initial Local Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed in 2017 and is available on the Town's website under downloads (<https://www.brooklinevt.com/documents/brookline-hazard-mitigation-plan-adopted-01-30-2017>).

Plans needs to be updated every 5 years. The process for updating the Plan includes asking the community to complete a survey and organizing meetings to seek community involvement in identifying and prioritizing hazards. As the Plan is being developed, there are multiple opportunities for the community to provide input – through the survey, participation in the community meetings, and review of the initial draft.

B. Slide Presentation and Public Discussion.

Margo presented slides which addressed the following topics of the Plan's development. **See attached slides for additional details.**

- 1) Cover Slide
- 2) Agenda for Today's Meeting
- 3) What Kinds of Hazards Are We Talking About
- 4) What Is Mitigation
Action taken to reduce or eliminate risks from future hazards.
- 5) Purpose of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
The purpose of the plan is to identify Brookline's risks and potential mitigation projects. An additional benefit of the plan is that after a federal disaster declaration, the Town is more likely to get Federal or State funding for hazards listed in the Plan.
- 6) Different Plans
Clarification of the Hazard Mitigation Plan vs Emergency Management Plan which assigns roles and responsibilities to various organizations.
- 7) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Process
Describes process from draft development phase through FEMA Final Approval.
- 8) Current Hazard Mitigation Plan
In the initial Plan, hazards included flooding from fluvial erosion and beaver dam failure, invasive species, and an all hazards category. The purpose of this meeting is to identify hazards Brookline has experienced since 2017. The next meeting will cover what mitigation actions could be taken, under what timeline, as well as what resources and funding might be available.
- 9) Public Survey Response
The Town received 29 responses to the public survey.
- 10) Properties Located in a Designated Floodplain?
Of the 29 responses, only two reported living in a floodplain, 14% responded that they did not know, and 80% responded that they did not live in a floodplain. The group discussed the need to educate the community regarding the floodplain locations and possible sources of floodplain insurance.
- 11) Hazards Experienced
Top hazards experienced included deep and heavy snow, strong winds, ice, inundation flooding, invasive species, and fluvial erosion.
- 12) Likely Hazards Next 5 Years (Top 3)
From the community survey, the most frequently expected hazards included inundation flooding, deep or heavy snow, strong winds, fluvial erosion, and invasive species. This list is similar to the list of hazards experienced.

13) Ranking Hazards

Attendees were asked to rank hazards according to the following criteria: probability of the hazard; damage to infrastructure; and impact on people, local economy, and environment.

14) Ranking Probability & Level of Severity

Four categories of probability were defined according to likely frequency of occurrence, and four categories of severity were defined according to potential impact on Brookline. Then Margo paused the presentation, and asked attendees to rank the probability and severity of hazards identified during the Town survey. She will share the results at the next community meeting.

15) What Hazards and Where Are They

What Natural Hazards Have Had an Effect on Brookline in the Past 5 Years & Where in Town Are the Most Vulnerable Locations for Different Hazards

Since the 2017 Plan was put into effect hazards experienced include storms and invasive species. The amount of rain is 30% to 40% higher than the levels experienced when the original Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed. The community reported the following significant events.

- a. Storm of July 2021 (DR-4621-VT) resulted in significant damage to the community from heavy rains and flooding. Whitney Hill Road had severe damage, primarily fluvial in nature. Merrill Drive, Grassy Brook Road, Putney Mountain Road, Athens Road, Parker Road, Hill Road, Kirsch Road, Ellen Ware Road, and Murdock Drive were also impacted. Fourteen different sites experienced damage. Sections of roads were washed out and debris was deposited in roads. Most of the damage occurred around the West River or Grassy Brook corridors. Significant damage occurred because of erosion down steep areas. There was massive inundation flooding around the intersection of Parker and Grassy Brook Roads with an additive effect from a beaver pond.
- b. Storm of July 2023 (DR-4720-VT) also resulted in significant damage – but not to the extent as the 2021 storm.
- c. Heavy snow during March of 2023 resulted in loss of power for some residents for up to three days.
- d. Flooding from the Christmas Storm of 2020 when Brookline received 2 feet of snow followed by warming temperatures with rain - conditions that caused flooding because of the frozen ground.
- e. Windshear of 2023 during the Spring
- f. Areas and properties that have experienced repeated damage include:
 - Area around the intersection of Parker Road and Grassy Brook Road.
 - Athens Road where a culvert goes under the road and the topography includes steep slopes that channel the flood waters which then overwhelm the culvert.

- In the southern half of Brookline where a steep ravine and a depression also channels flood waters that overwhelms a culvert and floods a property.
- g. Residents also reported hazards associated with invasive species, including Japanese jumping worms, Japanese knotweed, buckthorn, and woolly adelgid. As an example of the hazard presented by invasive species, Japanese jumping worms inhabit the upper part of the soil and their castings with all the nutrients absorbed by the worms are washed away by the rain. This degrades the soil and has a negative impact on farms, maple groves, and forest ecology.

16) What to Ponder for the Next Meeting

The next meeting will focus on ongoing hazards and the potential solutions and mitigation actions.

5. Set Agenda for Next Meeting on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

The meeting will again be a hybrid meeting; residents can participate either in person at the Town Office or online via Zoom. Topics will include Identifying hazards ranked as top priority from this meeting's survey responses, and ideas for solutions/mitigation actions that the Town can take to address some of these high probability hazards.

6. Adjourn the Meeting

Meeting Adjourned at 11:07 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Vanessa Ballou
Recording Clerk