



The Family Resort

Borough of Seaside Park

BOROUGH HALL

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June 18, 2025

Members of the Seaside Park Council (for informational purposes only and not for response)

VIA EMAIL ONLY

**RE.: Status Update as to the Implementation of Viable
Permittable Actions In Furtherance of Seaside Park's
Long Standing Bayfront Plan of Mitigating Flood
Impacts**

Dear Members of the Council:

In light of there being so much ongoing bayfront related work, through various entities, the council, various council committees, and our engineers, I thought it appropriate to give one memorandum, as a status update, with regard to such multifaceted efforts.

Most importantly, of course, all these continuing actions remain consistent with our long standing bayfront plan; the most expedited implementation of viable, permittable actions to mitigate flood impacts, to help to preserve infrastructure and homes, and to maintain and enhance a living shoreline.

Also, I thank all of you for resisting any short sighted requests to remove \$1 million plus, from this year's annual budget, which again has such a line item, allotted to startup costs and fees for bayfront actions. Consistent with the above vision and plan, the inclusion of these funds, in the 2025 budget, will allow maximum flexibility for initial funding for any such permittable bayfront projects, for which grant monies, or any allotment of funding from other sources, may have been denied, or not yet made available.

Your foresight is further appreciated, especially, as to the ongoing phased in bayfront related work, which has resulted in various recent positive developments. I therefore, thought it appropriate, to summarize such actions, as we continue to move forward.

1. On May 12th, the Borough of Seaside Park hosted the Northern Ocean County Barrier Island Mayors' meeting, at which time various constructive general actions were taken. Representatives and Mayors of the nine towns involved, continued to focus on the ongoing negative impacts of bayfront flooding, which has occurred throughout the area, even on days of fair weather. With its well-known expertise in grant writing, and successfully being awarded grant monies for clients, Colliers Engineers received authorization for our first filing for initial grant monies, potentially, to be awarded to our nine town consortium.

With Ocean County itself now a tenth (10th) partner in our shared services agreement, the engineers and consultants expressed optimism about the initial resilience grants being sought. The consortium had already authorized Colliers Engineers to compile joint data, project information, and background, for a sharing arrangement, for all the towns, as to viable projects, which have the best chance, with the most expedited determination for positive permitting, and funding.

2. Again, I thank the governing body for its vision in authorizing the change order for the installation of underground piping by the contractor, Earl Asphalt. This action will make available, an already "in place", piping for our ongoing project handled by RVE Engineering; i.e. "mini pump stations" to alleviate flooding situations, with the first, to be installed on 14th Avenue bayfront area.

As such, this underground infrastructure, will tie into the above non-obtrusive pump stations to be constructed along the bayfront. This first such endeavor can be monitored for its effectiveness, so as to become a "pilot" project, in anticipation of further "mini-pump stations".

Also, as to more detailed draft plans, sketches and a more detailed status report, please refer to plans and information supplied in the most recent engineering report from Pam Hilla, of RVE. The specific project has been labeled by Pam, as "1528-U-090 14th Avenue Stormwater Pump Station".

RVE is in the process of submitting a preliminary engineer's estimate to Ocean County for the preparation of a shared services agreement. The scope of work will be verified, as will a proposed platform to be sized a for future generator landing, to be constructed in an approximate dimension of 10 ft. by 8ft.

If so, there remains the possibility that funding might be available from the aforesaid monies, if awarded, to the Northern Ocean County Barrier Island group. As per Pam's most recent June 10, 2025 engineer's report, ongoing work entails the following:

- a. A Cafra Permit application will be submitted in the end of June,
 - b. An Ocean County Soil Conservation District Permit will be submitted also by the end of June,
 - c. She indicates that the office will need to finalize "Complete Controls SCADA Design and Scope",
 - d. An application must be submitted to JCP&L to bring in 3 phase power,
 - e. In conjunction with input from Pam, Pam will need to finalize the MEP Design,
 - f. As to targeted future dates on this exciting mitigation project, Pam stated that the "anticipated Bid date will be January 2026, with the award in February 2026,
 - g. Construction of this project could commence in the Spring of 2026.
3. Ongoing efforts continue to request the NJDOT to reconsider its previous denial of our request to utilize "tie-ins", into their Seaside Park Bayfront Pump Stations. As you are aware, the NJDOT itself, has made potentially related requests of the municipality, to enter into an agreement related to three (3) different bayfront parcels, sought to be acquired, or alternatively, subject to condemnation.

At the very least, the above referenced ongoing inquiry, will facilitate our reopening dialogue with the NJDOT, as to various bayfront related issues, including but not limited to, our request for "tie-ins", as to the NJDOT Pump Stations.

4. Further, efforts continue on multiple fronts, by the team of the American Littoral Society, Stockton Coastal Institute, RVE Engineering, Dr. Paul Bologna, and the council, for us to be granted the final permit, necessary for the living shoreline project, proposed to be implemented in the approximately seven (7) block bayfront area, from the J Street Marina section, southward. There appears to exist an internal difference of opinion, as to the potential scope of required SAV Mitigation work, if any, among those federal officials assigned by the Army Corps. of Engineers, as well as by NOAA. Certain federal agency individuals have given different interpretations, as to the project, versus assessments previously provided.

You will recall that with the aid of drone footage, kindly supplied by the Ocean County Sheriff's Department, we clearly demonstrated what our national expert, Dr. Stewart Farrell, had demonstrated previously, i.e., that there existed no SAV (eelgrass and other sub-aquatic vegetation) along the entire expanse of the shoreline area, and little growth in the project's offshore section.

You are aware that the project has a significant living shoreline proposed, as well as a component to address wave attenuation (in the form of oyster reefs, as well as a partial hard-scape, embedded in the living shoreline itself). Other mandatory goals, "in the public good", addressed by the project include a measure of flood mitigation, infrastructure protection, habitat restoration, and the enhancement of water quality, through the proposed living oyster reef.

Despite ongoing good work of the Borough of Seaside Park and its team, the Army Corps. and potentially, NOAA, have never adequately defined the required scope of SAV Mitigation efforts, if any, for this project to be permitted. Some other, area bayfront projects have simply entailed a "monitoring" requirement as to SAV, while federal authorities apparently have defined a precise area of SAV acreage to be mitigated, or alternatively, planted in another area, as to other bay projects. In light of the comments and suggestions rendered by the Army Corps. to date, as you are aware, the American Littoral Society had prepared its final proposed plan, which, after consultation with the Stockton Coastal Institute folks, consisted of eliminating one row of the off-shore oyster reefs.

In order to submit modified plans, which are consistent with the concept proposed as a result of the most recent consultation with the Army Corps. of Engineers, Pam Hilla's, of RVE Engineering, proposal was approved, with an estimate of costs (not to exceed \$7,500.00) in order to prepare the modified plans for submission. Pam and her RVE team have rightfully raised appropriate questions as to the project, including but not limited to the fact that the Army Corps. still has not given us the precise scope, as to what SAV Mitigation, the agency might require.

As you are also aware, we had previously authorized our SAV expert, Dr. Paul Bologna, to provide services for us, including a survey, as to the existing SAV at the project site, if any, and what mitigation services and efforts he could provide. In Dr. Bologna's email submission to us, from late February 2025, he refuted the Army Corps.' position as to the necessity of any significant SAV Mitigation action. Dr. Bologna stated that "the cost and expectations for doing it don't match the needs of shoreline protection and emergency escape routes and access related to public safety". Similarly, the Army Corps.' position did not take into effect the potential benefits for flood mitigation, infrastructure protection, and indeed, SAV protection, either!

Also, as we have discussed previously, the Army Corps. of Engineers has applied a different interpretation, to at least two other bayfront area projects, which also had a component of SAV disturbance.

Specifically, as Pam has rightfully advised us, this lack of specificity, as to the scope of potentially required SAV Mitigation, and the costs associated with

same, are not yet able to be quantified, for services to be provided by Dr. Bologna. As the window of time, for even a rudimentary SAV survey of the bottom area in question presents a limited time frame (May and June), we authorized Dr. Bologna, accompanied by his graduate students, and one of the people from the American Littoral Society, to provide the initial survey of the area, at a modest cost. This survey work was completed this last week.

Clearly, there exists numerous factual and legal arguments which we can continue to advance at the appropriate time frame, to support our position. Only minimal, if any, SAV Mitigation action, should be required.

We are advised that this project will not hinder or obstruct our simultaneously, moving forward with the sheathing project.

5. Numerous efforts are ongoing, as to the bayfront sheathing project, in the form of ongoing meetings with the Ocean County Engineer, and other County Officials, RVE and the Council. Design and implementation issues present themselves, as to the special challenges proposed by the 5th Avenue dock/playground area, as well as ingress and egress, into the Yacht Club site.

In light of the substantial recent loss of parking places on the ocean front, and throughout the town, work has been ongoing to preserve bayfront parking, on both sides of Bayview Avenue, to be incorporated in any final design.

As you are aware, the concept of the sheathing project itself, is similar to what had been proposed and objected to, by members of the public, back in the 2016 to 2018 time period. The most recent modified version of the concept plan, arose out of input and suggestions by Seaside Park's volunteer bayfront committee.

You will recall a topic which was covered during a portion of the public comment session at the most recent June 5, 2025 meeting of the governing body, as to the committees' preliminary rejection of a concept plan dealing with a continuous seawall with an elevated walkway, as part of any such sheathing project. The implementation of the sheathing with such a concrete walkway as well, included a rough estimate of costs in the neighborhood of \$38,691,851.00.

I would encourage members of the governing body to view the concept plans, as envisioned by Pam Hilla of RVE, and the council committee. Pam has labeled this "option 2-continuous sheath file seawall-construction costs estimate total", on page 4, of the most recent June 10, 2025 engineer's report.

The above referenced proposal needs to be considered by the council, which body would have to authorize the next step. This would entail our authorization for Pam to proceed as to formalizing a phased in approach, for preparing proposals as to finalizing the design, permitting, and application work and engineering, and then, implementation. You will note that this option eliminates the construction costs associated with any such concrete walkway. The construction costs associated only with the sheathing itself, were memorialized in an estimate of \$23,489,139.00.

Nevertheless, the cost associated with engineering, design work, permitting, and the related construction services, are estimated to be nearly \$2,000,000.00. Similarly, what the engineering firm has referenced as being an estimate for "administrative and contingencies" (8%), includes an amount of \$1,592,484.00. The costs, fees and any potential for availability of grant monies or shared services, could be reviewed further, for authorization by the entire council, at an upcoming work session, once the committee has digested the substance of Pam's submissions on this project.

6. We are also continuing to move forward with flood mitigation efforts by the marina, especially, at the K Street area. These actions have included K Street roadway improvements. We are optimistic that the project will have a significant positive impact on flood mitigation efforts, to allow road access, and otherwise, during storm events.

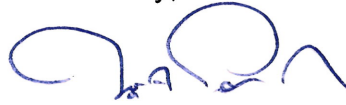
Again, please feel free to reach out, through Karen and Jenna, to obtain the survey, and a preliminary design and cost estimates prepared by RVE. Their file is designated 1528-U-086 K Street Roadway Improvements.

7. Ongoing actions continue, as we also consider any and all suggestions, or other proposed or implemented concepts, from other towns, with vulnerable bayfront areas. We expect to receive some additional input, as to successful projects in other areas, as reported and proposed, through the Northern Barrier Island Mayors' Association's consultant, and input received, as a result of the consortium's ongoing research. Once we receive and digest any and all such suggestions, these too, will be considered by the appropriate council committees, and our engineers, for implementation and funding.

As previously indicated, depending on the level of detail you may wish to review, please do not hesitate to reach out to Karen and Jenna, to have the most recent preliminary design plans, concept work, and background materials, available from all sources.

Thanks for your ongoing hard work and efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John A. Peterson, Jr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

Mayor John A. Peterson, Jr.

cc via email only:
Karen Kroon, Administrator
Jenna Jankowski, Clerk