



Scituate, Massachusetts Scituate's Coastal Resource Officer: Every Coastal Town Should Have One!

Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- A system for gathering and tracking information related to flood management helps in the long run with setting priorities and meeting FEMA requirements. If communities can't afford to hire a coastal resource officer, on their own they should consider working with neighboring communities to share a position.
- The Coastal Resource Officer needs to be able to work across various departments to coordinate solutions and gather information.
- It is important to look at both short and long-term solutions in critically vulnerable areas. We need to address what is "doable" now, no waiting for long permit processes, before the problem causes irreparable harm
- Participation in the Community Rating System, part of the National Flood Insurance Program, helps lower premiums if a town meets certain criteria for flood management activities.
- To get FEMA grant funding for hazard mitigation and clean up efforts a town must have a hazard mitigation plan.



What they did, and why:

Scituate, on the southeast coast of Massachusetts, experiences strong storms and coastal flooding. Sea level rise is accelerating adverse impacts. Part of the community was built on or near a barrier beach, with houses close to the seawall, and the harbor business area is subject to routine flooding. So far, 69 houses have been elevated. Last summer, the town worked with EPA to complete a flood resilience workshop. It received a grant from Coastal Zone Management to see which areas along its coast were vulnerable. Local emergency officials are working with the utility companies to identify areas that are inaccessible during floods and where power can be made more centrally controlled to avoid incidents. The Town has participated in the FEMA Hazard Mitigation program since 1997. Five major storms in four years compelled the Town to look at coastal management in a different way and the Coastal Resource Officer position was a direct result of that.



Benefits:

- Coastal resources are better protected, while organized efforts to minimize damage are underway
- One person is focused on getting grants, and meeting multiply community rating system requirements.
- Flood insurance premiums are lower.

Costs

- The cost of elevating a house can range from \$100,000 to \$175,000

“Coastal resiliency for Scituate—means building the ability for the community to “bounce back “after coastal storms and flooding, rather than simply reacting.”

*Nancy Durfee,
Scituate Coastal
Resource Officer*