

Town of Shandaken

S.A.F.A.R.I. Meeting Notes

Shandaken Area Flood Assessment and Remediation Initiative
Tuesday, January 13, 2026 10:00am - 12:00pm

Attendance:

Eric Hofmeister, Town of Shandaken Highway Superintendent
Robert Drake, Shandaken Town Board member & Deputy Supervisor
Leslie Zucker, AWSMP Program Coordinator, CCEUC
Heidi Emrich, Environmental Planner, UCDOE
Max Garfinkle, AWSMP Project Manager, UCSWCD
Bobby Taylor, AWSMP CSBI Coordinator, UCSWCD
Sally Rodgers, AWSMP Education Program Manager, CCEUC
Max Kelly, AWSMP Watershed Educator, CCEUC
Aaron Bennett, Flood Hazard Mitigation Coordinator, NYCDEP
Karen Lee, Conservation Advisory Council & Comp Plan Committee member
Eric Lane, Flood Hazard Mitigation Implementation Program Manager, CWC
Andrew Emrich, Sr. Civil Engineer, UCDPW

Town of Shandaken Floodplain Development

- Floodplain Administrator updates on technical assistance needs, permits, issues, applications, etc.:
 - Robert shares the town has welcomed Babs Mansfield as the new Supervisor, Sworn in on January 1. With that will come more organizational changes and updates:
 - Kevin VanBlarcum will be the new CRS Coordinator.
 - Kevin may be interested in pursuing CFM; would be great to have more depth of knowledge. He could better support Donna.
 - Donna is remaining the Floodplain Administrator, but with increasing support from Kevin.
 - Heidi asks if Donna might start being able to attend these meetings?
 - Robert: she will be encouraged to attend as often as she can.
 - Heidi to make sure Donna is added to the distribution list
 - Phoenicia Playhouse - permitting concerns:
 - Landowners are doing quite a few interior renovations, including installing a whole new HVAC system among other improvements. They received a stop-work order. Donna determined they might be getting to the point of Substantial Improvement.
 - WHAT IS THE VALUE BEING DETERMINED FOR THE BUILDING?
 - Heidi explains it must be the current market value of the structure (less the value of land and outbuildings).
 - The Town has several options for how it can make determinations. However they do it, it MUST be consistent and defensible.
 - There is a brief discussion about the town's Cumulative Substantial Damage / Substantial Improvement ordinance: costs must be tracked on a rolling 10-year basis.
 - Heidi will send Robert contact information for Bailey Sawyer and DEP Floodplain Coordination staff. She'll cc Kevin; this is an opportunity for him to support Donna;

- Kevin and the CRS team should get in the habit of starting to record outreach.
- There is a brief discussion about what is counted as improvements. Structural, utilities, electrical, and permanent fixtures are counted in the costs. Costs include material and labor. Heidi will send some reference material.

Town Hall & Highway Complex Relocation Updates

- Progress report on NYSDOS **Local Gov't Efficiency Grant** Contract and Planning Project
 - Heidi shares that the grant contract with the state is still working through the contracting process at the County.
 - Heidi asks Eric: Before we move forward with this planning effort: are there any non-starters, in terms of sharing space or driveways, or anything from the town's perspective?
 - Eric replies that no, there are no concerns that he can think of.
- Progress report on 20-acre parcel, Big Indian (adj. Golf Course Rd).
 - Feasibility Study by LaBella is forthcoming.
 - Robert shares that he believes development is likely feasible; however, informational wetlands are present.
 - The next step may be to get a jurisdictional determination on the wetlands, to understand what development limitations might exist.
 - The next step would then be to meet with CWC to get an acquisition plan (application) together.
- Progress report on 259-acre parcel, Big Indian (presently owned by DEP).
 - Meeting yesterday with Robert, Jason Merwin, Glen Faulkner (Middletown Supervisor), **Karen Stainbrook** from the DEC, taking over some responsibilities for Tom Snow.
 - DEC is working through the land swap process; she is in support of projects like this moving forward, as the benefits appear obvious.
 - This is getting tied into the conversation with the FAD and Water Withdrawal Permit.
 - There is language that supports this Easement "correction."
 - Any project would have to be consistent with provisions in Article 49.
- Town Hall, Highway Flood Buy Out:
 - Heidi shares that NYCDEP has sent a buy-out offer for municipal review. Obviously, the town is not ready to act yet, but the information is very useful for the town's planning purposes.
 - Eric asks: when the town does move forward, when would the buildings have to be vacated?
 - Heidi is unsure of the exact time frame. Certainly, by closing, may be several, if not 6 months before closing.

Phoenicia Resiliency Project (Benches and Bridges)

- Leslie provides a summary of recommended activities that when combined, dramatically reduce or remove floodwaters (future and current flows) off Main Street.
 - Jay Street – 8 properties affected, but to what extent, and feasibility are not yet clear
 - This could be an additional next-step study; closely tied to NYS DOT Main Street bridge replacement.
 - Leslie has been working to schedule a meeting with NYSDOT (Phoenicia to Lanesville).
 - So far, good response: 3-4 people from Ulster County's DOT region
 - February 11 (10-12) ← preferred date (Town will have to cancel CRS meeting)
 - SAFARI will review next steps for Jay Street AFTER the DOT meeting.

- Town conducted a meeting with SLR and AWSMP with the Comprehensive Plan Consultant
 - An entire section of the comprehensive plan will be dedicated to flood mitigation/climate change resiliency.
 - There will be more specific recommendations related to this project to help build and establish community support.
 - This will help provide a foundation for discussions with landowners and community members.
 - These efforts will have impacts on safety, tourism, and the local economy.
 - The Comprehensive Plan is expected to be out this Spring.
 - It will be helpful for NYSDOT to understand just how much support and effort the Town is dedicating to these floodplain benches and Phoenicia flood reduction projects.
- Ulster County provides an update on the Bridge Street Bridge:
 - Design for the Bridge Street Bridge is on hold. The County wants to move forward with multiple designs. UC doesn't have enough information based on feasibility and landowner buy-in to pick one design, so they want to advance two. They asked for a project amendment from SLR, and the estimate was really high. So high in fact, the county feels they need to go to RFP.
 - Andrew shares that he's hoping to advertise in the coming weeks.
 - The county is going to add another alternative, which is a pedestrian bridge.
 - Andrew advises that the town should pursue the waterline redundancy independently of the county's bridge design efforts.
- Heidi suggests it may be possible that the Bridge Street bridge project may be eligible for Resilient NY Dollars, but it may have to be accepted by the town formally, as an LFA update.
 - Pine Hill Addendum, being accepted by the town formally, might be a good example.
 - Leslie says she'll help Robert coordinate on a resolution to accept.
- Andrew asks about Blackbear Campground's interest in participating in the Flood Buy Out
 - Heidi shares that they have said they're interested but have not followed up. She will send one last email to follow up on the post-camping season.

Chichester LFA and the Chi-FAC

- Leslie shares that she sent the draft SMIP grant application for the Supervisor to review, sign, and submit to the AWSMP grant committee.
 - Once received, AWSMP can turn the award around and contract with SLR.
 - Sally is looking to gather the selected committee for a pre-planning meeting in order to talk about FAC responsibilities, what an LFA is, etc.

Community Rating System Program Activities Update:

- Shandaken poised to achieve level 7 with a nice cushion!
- Heidi shares next Steps (Kevin has recently been appointed the CRS coordinator, RLAA Mailing, Substantial Damage Management Plan, funded by a SMIP grant from AWSMP)
 - The committee wonders what the financial benefit for landowners is, of the town's CRS Level 7 status?
 - Heidi doesn't think this info is available any longer.
 - Aaron says to reach out to NYSDEC. They should be able to produce a CRS What Ifs, and tell you approximately how much savings each level would provide in each community in the county.
 - Heidi will follow up.
 - Leslie suggests submitting an abstract to NYSFSMA for a presentation on the work it took to reach level 7. The CRS team will discuss offline.

New York City Funded Flood Buy-Out Program

- Updates on participating parcels [Plank Rd. parcels, Main St.]

- 38 Main – awaiting appraisal. Should be in any day now.
- 464 Plank – owner has accepted the offer. As that moves through the contract, the town will be a party to it.
- 576 Plank Rd – Town passed a resolution for participation. NYCDEP conducted site visit and will conduct a phone call with the landowner, and discuss internally before moving forward.
- 27 Station Road - Heidi shares a brief update on why that is on hold. It has to do with the potential dedication of the road, and may depend on which design UCDPW advances for Bridge Street.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

- Review Started; set date for second half
 - UC Overall Plan can be found [here](#). **Shandaken Annex** can be found [here](#).
- Robert, Eric H., and Aaron will participate in the review. Heidi and Sally will send some dates (not a Wednesday) to complete the review.

Partner Updates

- **AWSMP**
 - (Non-LFA) SMIP funding Round – open now. An announcement will be coming imminently. Deadline: March 31st.
 - AWSMP Scholarships available.
 - Particularly to send to NYS Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association annual conference.
 - NYSFSMA courses that come up throughout the year
 - FEMA 0273 is also available, offered in Maryland
 - Or other CFM Credit training opportunities that arise
 - Ashokan Watershed Conference, likely June / July
 - Will include a municipal official training, which will aim to meet the 4 hour annual requirement for boards, etc.
 - Robert suggests including anything related to SEQR
 - SWCD: moving Broadstreet Hollow stream restoration project to 60% design
 - Anticipated construction for summer 2026
- **CWC**
 - Community Vitality Study; should be up on the website soon; compares communities within the watershed with communities outside the watershed
 - Unclear what the next steps will be at this stage
 - LaBella was the chosen consultant for future Feasibility Studies for the FHMIP program and also received the NYCFFBO Demolition coordination bid.
 - CWC has a workforce development program out now. Applications due early February
- **NYCDEP**
 - Resilient NY – has anyone heard anything?
 - We only heard the announcement could be made any day now.
 - LOMR – meeting next week review with towns options for moving forward.
 - Aaron provides a brief summary of where we are now.
- **Ulster County (Planning, Emergency Services, DPW, DOE)**
 - DPW will be replacing the superstructure (just the deck) on a bridge on Woodland Valley Road. Dougherty Brook
 - Will install sheeting in front of the abutments for scour protection.

Review Notes: Heidi will send to Joyce.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 10, 2026