City of Cambridge posts its Vulnerability Assessment Study of Future Steps it wants to take

Impressions and notes from Cambridge Vulnerability Assessment Climate Study after 3 years of deliberation by at least 40 persons. The Kleinfelder Report

Cambridge Vulnerability Assessment Report and Presentation 3/17/15

Here are some impressions and concerns I and others gleaned from the presentation at MIT with about 150 there, many already concerned about status of city in regards to natural disaster plans. The Climate Assessment was truly a wake up call and the scientist who worked for a local Firm contracted by city, to tell us past and increasing rain coming for the periods from 2007-10-2015-2030 and from 2030-2050 and then to 2070, the later to be studied later. She was very helpful on the frequency of the 2,10, 25, 50 and 100 year storms and the heat effect we will feel over a prolonged heat wave. She did not try to 'soft sell' climate change but gave strong data .The other speakers evaded almost every direct or 'on the ground' solution, planning mechanisms in place and process for planning (but mentioned NSTAR (EverSource now) many times as the partner to confer with and not the “community” which meant us. Meeting dismissed impacts of storm surges and sea rise levels as not very relevant to Alewife and said with 2 more generators at the Amelia Earhart dam of the DCR, we'll be alright - noted the PPT slide.

There was a half hearted commitment to look more closely at Alewife but the word "permit" was never used during the 2 hours, despite the fact the meeting succeeded the massive permitting of about 2000 units. At break up sessions 3 of us were from FAR (Ben, Judy and myself) and we advocated strongly for tougher permitting and bringing more of the agencies into the climate solution planning. The group was compatible and listened attentively to our angst and concern and direct challenge to the 'good faith' aspect of the presentation after so many permits flew in the face of this so-called new information, when the city knew of the dangers all along but still cut the forest as Judy reminded them- that they would need to go back to the drawing boards with the forest gone.

During the presentation, Very few seemed that concerned with the absence of so much needed reassurance that the city was developing a strong civilian plan in neighborhoods which would bring more safety and security to vulnerable populations. Julie Wormser head of the Boston Harbor Assoc. who began the studies for Boston even started out her public question with her need to hear "more about Alewife". Those few of us working for years at Alewife to sound the climate alarm and to improve conditions whether through FAR or elsewhere should feel a bit relieved that now, the Fresh Pond Residents Alliance, neighborhood groups, schools, can take on the challenge of flooding study and preparation for that region, and strengthening the storm water/wetlands by laws because they will be most affected in their homes and with their families. I don't know if there is that type of interest but I will hope for it. We know regionality will be all but impossible unless a highly skilled negotiator can come in and side line "home rule" which make regional discussions much more difficult. Climate change, however, warrants it and even the meeting admitted it was essential.

John Bolduc reminded us that they were following the direction of mass Highway with their models and likely not the Alewife “Hecras” storm event model which would
validate this presentation. Everything, as far as I am concerned is 'up in the air' in regards to Alewife. There are a number of people interested who work with Alice H. and one is a former Board of the Watershed Assoc. Let's pray.

What is most logical to me, is that without neighborhood organizing, phone chains, and house to house emergency aid connects (very easy to do with internet) with hard copying for lists, and without electricity, the city would respond with civil defense or national guard as they did not respond to the many pleas for community or neighborhood organizing, but their own hired hand to go out and speak with people to allay their fears. In a true emergency, to date, we're on our own.

Hopefully we can save ourselves and families if we are confronted by a challenge such as "Sandy," and this needs to start asap. we are extremely fortunate that we did not have another 2 or 3 consecutive snow days. An extreme emergency may have been triggered. These winds are not teasing us, nor is the snow fall from a jet stream gone amiss, etc. etc. Emergency preparedness is the name of the game (Adaptation measures). And many cities, towns are far ahead in this sphere. I do not know much about this information.

Again, I am personally glad that Alewife was spotlighted as the greatest flooding site in Cambridge for climate change as it justifies further why our ranting and leading campaigns were created to preserve the silver maples as a valuable floodplain forest, and after that time for the Environmental Hearing, preserving the floodplain forest land for carbon sequestration or a memorial park.

Very pleased that arrested Danny will have a SMF trial we can attend to hear more advocacy and try to gain stronger protections. Those trees must not be cut in vain. Some of the FPRA members seemed interested to pursue the Alewife threats as they all live in the area, but not so much around Alewife but Fresh Pond, but I really don't know. They don't include me or us. I have asked over and over to change the name from "Fresh Pond" to "Fresh Pond/Alewife Residents Alliance" to be inclusive of people such as yourself and other west Cambridge residents and businesses.