

**Newtok Planning Group  
Meeting Notes for  
Thursday, August 17, 2006**

**Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) proposal to task CRW with preliminary planning and design services for the Newtok Relocation**

Chris Mello, AEA, explained that this agenda item had changed and deferred to George Cannelos, Denali Commission Federal Co-Chair.

**Denali Commission Participation in the Newtok Relocation**

George Cannelos stressed that the relocation is the project of the community of Newtok, Alaska. He also stated that the Denali Commission would like to assist in the funding of the preliminary planning and design services needed to further the relocation project. He said he was encouraged by the opportunity to develop innovative ideas for rural community development and stated that this may be a signature opportunity. He agreed that it would be important to have professional assistance with coordination of the relocation process.

Mr. Cannelos reminded the group that the Denali Commission is still hesitant to accept a lead role; however the Commission is ready to contribute \$50k for basic community planning and engineering services. Mr. Cannelos recognized that the reality of the relocation, as evidenced by the community of Newtok's building of a temporary barge ramp and their strong desire to build three houses this fall, is and will be colliding with the planning efforts.

The group discussed forming a smaller scoping group, a subset of the Newtok Planning Group, to develop the scope of services for the project management contractor. It was decided that representatives from DEC, DCCED, USCOE, DOT/PF, AEA, and Denali Commission would meet on August 23<sup>rd</sup> for this scoping session. George Cannelos offered space at the Denali commission for the meeting. After the group meets, DCCED will arrange for Stanley Tom to come to Anchorage, at his convenience, during the month of September. The next full group meeting will be during the last week of September (September 25-29).

**Agency Updates**

Stanley Tom, Newtok Traditional Council Volunteer Relocation Liaison, described some of the challenges faced in barging three HIP (Housing Improvement Program) housing packages to the Mertarvik site from where they are being stored in Tununuk on the other side of Nelson Island. The severe weather approaching the Baird Inlet area in September is a concern. He said the Newtok Traditional Council is in jeopardy of losing their BIA grant if the housing units are not constructed by December 2006.

Sally Cox, DCCED, Division of Community Advocacy (DCA), described work completed to prepare an application for an Economic Development Administration Investment Assistance grant to build a Multi-Use Marine Support Facility at Mertarvik. She thanked the Corps of Engineers and the Alaska Department of Transportation &

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Public Facilities Statewide Coastal Engineer for their input to this effort. She also reported that the DCA assisted the Newtok Traditional Council in its application for a Denali Commission Mini-Grant for Community Planning.

Mitzi Barker, RurAL CAP, reported that the two ICDBG applications she prepared on behalf of Newtok had been turned down, as they were deemed to not meet the agency definition of “imminent threat “ due to the recurring nature of the erosion and flooding, despite the state declarations of disaster which cited specific storm events.

Mike Black, DCCED/DCA, stressed the need to keep the Newtok Traditional Council in a key role, to avoid having agencies going off independently and building without consultation. He noted that the Newtok Traditional Council was leading the way in this relocation effort and developing a model that others might follow.

Greg Magee, Village Safe Water, shared ideas he has been developing within the draft “Project Management and Capital Planning” scope of work. This scope of work is intended to secure the services of a project manager to facilitate interagency coordination and project implementation. He suggested the scope of work be used in a two-step solicitation (SOQ) process. Three firms would be invited to compete from all responses to the request for proposal. Chris Mello, Alaska Energy Authority, concurred with the general approach to securing such services. Magee estimated the total cost for comprehensive community planning at \$300-\$350,000

Greg Magee also briefly described an organizational structure within which such a Project Manager could operate. He stressed that the Project Manager would work for the community of Newtok and that there would need to be a steering committee to provide oversight. The Project Manager would operate as the Owner’s Representative, with the Owner being the community of Newtok (or Newtok Traditional Council?). These would be key features of the organization with remaining organizational details to be developed in smaller, separate interagency work sessions.

In order for this organizational structure to be successful, the agencies would have to agree to empower the Project Manager. Chris Rutz, procurement manager for AIDEA and AEA, discussed the need for the procurement process used to be acceptable to all agencies contributing funding.

Mitzi Barker, Rural CAP, discussed the need for a consolidated environmental review. She also noted that as a Non-Governmental Organization there may be some potential for RurAL CAP to facilitate pooling of funds.

Participating agencies were encouraged to include an allocation in their budgets for staff support, designated more generally such as “village relocation” rather than specifically for Newtok.

Brenda Kerr, Corps, told the group that she and Sally Cox, DCA, had already discussed the need to send a formal letter to the Newtok Traditional Council to coordinate a Fall

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2006 status meeting at their convenience and to request input regarding what topics the Newtok Traditional Council would like to address at such a status meeting. Mike Black, DCA, concurred and reasserted the need to strengthen communications with the Newtok Traditional Council. (ACTION: Kerr will draft letter)

**Emergency Response Plan for Newtok**

Scott Simmons, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Division of Emergency Services Emergency Preparedness Manager, described emergency planning at Newtok. He stated that the Newtok Traditional Council has an internal plan. In September 2006 Division representatives plan to visit with Newtok Traditional Council. He said that the visit and emergency preparedness services are community driven and that the community has not indicated any need to speed up the process.

It was noted that Napaskiak uses a portion of utility revenues generated from users to maintain boardwalks.

Brenda Kerr, Corps, asked if an assessment of bulk fuel capacity for the existing community of Newtok is available. Chris Mello said that this information is available and would be provided. (Ron Brown, Project Manager for AIDEA and AEA has provided this to Kerr by fax.)

Mr. Cannelos said that he would be meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pacific Ocean Division Commander, Brigadier General Peabody on Wednesday, 23 August 2006. Brenda Kerr agreed to provide flooded area mappings and other information to Sharon Guenther Lind, Denali Commission Public Information Officer and Government Coordination Program Manager, prior to this meeting.

**Slide show of Newtok Photos**

Mara Machulski, Denali Commission Intern, presented a slide show of a site visit she made to Newtok with Mike Black, Director of DCA. She noted the potential hazards presented by overhead power lines during storms. She also emphasized the importance of the relocation project for the well-being of the children of Newtok.

Jon Menough, Village Safe Water, followed up with a slide show of the trip he took to Newtok on August 15 with Greg Magee, Sally Cox and Brenda Kerr.

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