

Tisbury Climate Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 25, 2024, 5:30 p.m.  
Tisbury Town Hall Annex

Call to Order: Tisbury Climate Committee (TCC) Chair Melinda Loberg called the meeting to order. (*Recorder's note: Discussions are grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

Attendance: TCC members Melinda Loberg, Rachel Orr, Louise Clough, Bill Straw, Daniel Phelan, Holly Stephenson; Casey Hayward, Planning Board Liaison; Ben Robinson, Tisbury Planning Board Chair\*\*

\*\*late arrival, 6:45 p.m.

Minutes of March 4, 2024: Holly Stephenson moved and Bill Straw seconded approval of the minutes. The motion passed 6-0-0.

School Solar Project, update: Since the Climate Committee's meeting with the School Committee, Dan Phelan had been in contact with Chris Blessen of Tappe Architects regarding the question raised by School Committee member Mike Watts. (Mr. Watts thought some of the changes made to the design during the value engineering phase of the project may have affected the ability of the roof on the original structure to support solar.) When Dan asked Mr. Blessen whether the roof would support an array, Mr. Blessen said he was not in a position to answer the question. He indicated that any firm hired to install solar on the roof would need to verify that the structure would support the array and ballasts proposed. He did say that additional supports had been added to the roof of the 1929 building as part of the project and that some work had been done as a proof of concept for solar. Melinda shared an e-mail sent to her by Town Administrator Jay Grande in which Mr. Grande wrote that the funding article for the school solar would most likely be pushed off to the 2025 annual town meeting.

School as an emergency shelter: Holly Stephenson reported that she had reached out to the town's emergency management director, Patrick Rolston, about the question of whether the school was going to be available as an emergency shelter once the project was completed. Her call had not been returned, but she was able to reach Samantha Gitshier, the assistant emergency manager. Samantha Gitshier told her that the school would be used as a shelter in the case of an emergency. This is what the town website says too.

Level 3 charging stations: Committee member Bruce Stuart provided additional information from the company that has expressed interest in installing chargers on town-owned property. Bill Straw mentioned that some companies, such as Shell, are switching some gas pumps to charging stations. The committee decided to turn the information gathered by Bruce over to the town administration. The committee is not making a recommendation one way or the other.

Dukes County Community Wildfire Protection Plan: The plan had been circulated for committee members review prior to the meeting. Bill Straw said the document is lengthy; the executive summary is helpful. Casey Hayward said the last really major fire on the Vineyard burned from West Tisbury to Edgartown in one day. Rachel noted that at the time of that fire, more than a century ago, most of the area that burned was not developed. Now there are houses in areas that formerly were wood lots or grasslands. It was mentioned that development in fire prone areas is a challenge in communities around the country and that some relatively simple steps by homeowners can make a big difference in outcomes.

Climate Action Task Force Forest Management meeting: Several Climate Committee members were able to attend the task force session focused on forest management as it relates to disease and infestation. Given the threats currently facing Island trees, particularly pitch pines and birches, the session was timely. Committee members were impressed by the knowledge of the experts who were invited to talk at the meeting and were appreciative of the Martha's Vineyard Commission task force for putting it together.

Report about flooding in Five Corners: Prior to the meeting, Melinda had circulated the report issued by the Jamie Houle's team at the University of New Hampshire regarding flooding at Five Corners and nitrogen pollution in Lake Tashmoo. The work was done through an EPA grant. The team's research determined that the DPW should clear drains before any weather event that is expected to bring more than 1.3 inches of rain. Casey Hayward reported that as a member of the Planning Board she is pushing to have the Master Plan include safe and improved evacuation routes. She expressed frustration that the conceptual plans presented so far do not focus on that need.

Green Communities 2.0. Melinda reported that the state has deferred the implementation of Green Communities 2.0, so we can take it off our agenda for now.

Committee updates: Ben Robinson reported that the MVC has a draft flood plain bylaw that he thought the Climate Committee should review. He said the draft bylaw was scheduled to be presented to MVC commissioners on April 11.

Upcoming meeting reminders: There will be a virtual meeting at 5:30 p.m. on April 25 regarding the BRIC grant for improvements to the seawall.

Next meeting: The committee will meet next on April 8, at 5:30 at the Annex.

Adjournment: Louise Clough made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bill Straw. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Minutes recorder: Rachel Orr