

## **Tisbury Climate Committee (TCC)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

Tisbury Town Hall Annex

High Point Lane, Vineyard Haven

April 22, 2024, 5:30 PM

#### **Attendance:**

TCC Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Rachel Orr, Daniel Phelan, Kate Shands, Bill Straw, Holly Stephenson (late arrival)

Liaisons: Casey Hayward, Planning Board

Ben Robinson, Tisbury Planning Board Chair & MVC Commissioner

Others: Liz Durkee, MVC

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Kate moved that the minutes of 3/25 be accepted, Louise seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

**Discussion:** *[Recorder's Note: Discussions are grouped for clarity and brevity.]*

#### **Liz Durkee – MVC**

Liz updated the TCC on the MVC's Climate Action Plan (CAP). She reminded us that the CAP has over 200 actions and each has a lead organization responsible for implementation. She also noted that the initial CAP committee has transitioned into the CAP Community Coordinating Committee; Keith McGuire is our representative. She outlined programs on native plants, mapping of eel grass and aquaculture, and efforts to decrease the size of lawns. Bill asked about the latest sea level rise projections, and Ben replied that the State has those and that the FEMA flood zone maps are not accurate because they don't include sea level rise projections. Casey mentioned that there is a program we could get into called Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The program is administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and specifies that a town can only grow to the population level that could be evacuated safely. She said she would send a link to the program. She added that Key West is similar to Tisbury and has a good website.

Liz said she is going to get climate committee representatives to work on two items: developing guidelines for native plant species and developing the regulations for a maximum percentage of land disturbance for new development over one acre. Ben commented that the latter would be easy to do.

There was then a discussion about native plant species and how climate change is affecting those, which has led to changes in the USDA planting zones. Rachel commented that we're lucky because there is a wide range of native plants on the island. Ben said this is the least understood area of climate change; there's not a lot of good science in this area; and we need more information. Liz asked if we should just let nature take its course, at least until we know more. The issue of trees was also discussed: should we develop a list of species that shouldn't be removed and include that in our zoning guidelines? Melinda noted that we could do more to promote

decreasing lawns; we haven't done direct outreach to residents. Liz said it might make more sense to focus on land disturbance.

### **Climate Action Fair, Sunday, May 19, 12-4 PM, at the Ag. Hall**

Liz said the theme is "Resilient Landscapes" and there will be a focus on what everyone can do to be more resilient. There will be 2 panels on native plants and one on fire protection. Vineyard Power, Cape Light Compact and Sheriff's Meadow will be there; the Land Bank may be there; and there will be information on biochar. She has a table reserved for TCC, and a suggestion would be to have a sign which reads "Ask me about...". Her goal is to have people leave with concrete information about what they can do to contribute to resiliency on the island. Melinda suggested that we could have information on MASS SAVE programs and rebates, as well as information about the Seawall and the NOAA grants. She said we could also solicit feedback from Tisbury residents about problems in the Town. Casey said we could address climate change and its impact on housing issues, employee housing, and parking. She suggested we have a word wall and use post-its. Ben said the Lagoon Pond area is the hottest development area on the island, and it would be good to discuss issues in that area. Holly said we could have maps and handouts about what we're doing. Melinda, Casey, and Kate agreed to work on ideas for our table.

### **School solar project update**

Melinda then moved on to updating Liz about what the TCC has been doing and said we have been focused on energy. She filled Liz in on our efforts to get solar on the Tisbury school and wondered if anyone had the latest update. Louise said she is still worried that it will only be solar-ready. Rachel commented that Marni Lipke said the building committee hasn't met in a year and said she didn't know if they were planning on just the rooftop or canopies as well. Daniel said we're in the dark. Ben commented that there are limitations on solar installation on the island and WT Rich won't be willing to wait. He asked if we had seen designs; Daniel said yes; and Rachel clarified that they were proofs of concept, not really plans. Melinda said she could talk to Jay and that it would be useful to talk to the engineers as well and asked for their names. Daniel said Chris Blesson and Mike Owens. Rachel said we should tell them we're delighted, and that we were only looking at the rooftop, not the canopies.

Melinda continued to update Liz on our activities:

- She said we are waiting for the CVEC bid process, and that the Senior Center roof was one of 3 projects. Bill said there haven't been any meetings lately because a key person, Maria's assistant, left. Melinda said only off-island installers came to the meeting, and Daniel wondered why no on-island installers had been notified. Rachel said it might have to do with where they advertised it.
- Tristan Israel has a plan for planting trees in a tree nursery in Tisbury.

### **Report on Kate's meeting with Tisbury Emergency Manager**

Kate met with Patrick Rolston on April 11. He provided her with a copy of Tisbury's new Emergency Management Plan, which does not yet have the required

signatures. Kate distributed several copies, and Melinda agreed to have the Town make enough more for everyone on the committee. Patrick told Kate that non-official emergency shelters are problematic because of liability issues for the Town. Patrick agreed to meet with the entire committee on May 20, and invited us to meet at the Emergency Facilities building. He asked that we prepare questions for him in advance. There followed a discussion about emergency shelters, what the criteria are for them, and what role the faith-based centers can play. The group agreed to discuss these issues further at our next meeting and to prepare questions for Patrick at that time.

Liz said that hiring a regional emergency manager was part of the CAP plan. Dukes County has hired an emergency coordinator as part of a pilot program, but that person is only working 4 hours a week. Also, the island's only official shelter, the OB School, is adjacent to a flood plain.

**Volunteers needed for ETIPP meetings:**

**Wednesday, June 5, 1:00 – 2:30 with the water departments**

**Thursday, June 6, 9:00-3:00 at the MVC**

The consultants will be reporting. Melinda is the liaison for the ETIPP, and she cannot be there. Rachel and Bill might be able to meet with the water departments on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and Louise will try to go on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

*[Recorder's note: Daniel will go on the 6<sup>th</sup>.]*

There was additional discussion about the need for climate committees to have more support. Liz said all towns should have staff to deal with climate issues. Melinda commented that we lobbied hard for a facilities manager for Tisbury; one was hired, but he is only half-time, and he has only come to one TCC meeting. Liz said the MVC has not focused on the need to get all the climate committees to work together, but they should do so. Ben suggested that we should let people know that we are not getting the support we need; he thought we should put our concerns in writing and send them to the Select Board and the Planning Board.

**Upcoming meeting reminders:**

April 25, 5:30, Beach Road Resiliency Improvements: public meeting.

Virtual presentation about the seawall project from Tighe and Bond.

*[Recorder's note: this meeting was subsequently re-scheduled to May 2 at 4 PM.]*

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Rachel. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 PM.

**Next Meeting:** May 6, at 5:30 PM at the Tisbury Town Hall Annex.

The following meeting will be at 5:30 PM on May 20 with Patrick Rolston at the Emergency Services Facilities (ESF) building. Kate will follow up with Patrick to confirm that meeting.

**Minutes Submitted by:** Kate Shands