

Tisbury Climate Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: May 2, 2022

Meeting called to order: by Melinda Loberg, Chair, at 5:34 PM.

Place: Zoom: Meeting ID: 846 3292 3014 Passcode: 882012

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Anna Edey,

Keith McGuire, Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Bruce Stuart, Bill Straw

Liaison: Ross Seavey

Guests: Greg Leland, Fire Chief; Patrick Rolston, Assistant Fire Chief

Cheryl Doble, Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) Climate Action Task Force (CATF)

Melinda began the meeting by reading the Covid disclaimer and the Zoom information.

Review and Approval of Minutes of April 18, 2022: Louise moved that the minutes be accepted, Rachel seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 (Bill was not yet present.)

Discussion: Melinda began the discussion by asking Chief Leland (Greg) to outline the emergency management plan for the town and how the Tisbury Climate Committee (TCC) might help. Greg responded by saying that typically emergency management and emergency service plans address ways to overcome current hazards and future impacts. The Fire Department (FD) follows federal and state guidelines. On the energy side, they sometimes get inside information on new technologies and on the climate side, they get information on best practices to bolster infrastructure and how to work with the American Red Cross, food banks, and shelters. Melinda asked about climate priorities, and Greg asked if she meant normal storms or 100-year storms. She said both. Greg said it's a continuum, and 100-year storms are now predicted to occur more often than every 100 years. The FD engages in active discussions at the county level regarding goods and services to be brought to the island and secondary means to bring them here. They have had discussions with R.M. Packer to discuss options if the Steamship Authority dock is damaged. The National Guard could airdrop some supplies, but their help would be minimal. Greg said he had a friend who lives in a town where they have an emergency food bank and an emergency fuel depot managed by the town; taxpayers have access to it. That makes distribution easier.

In answer to several questions from Rachel, Greg gave the following answers: his friend's town has a full refrigeration system and goods are distributed to the local food bank when they near their expiration dates. Flooding at Five Corners, Beach Road Extension Lagoon Pond Road and even Union Street are priority considerations, and he noted that during Hurricane Bob, there was water up to the old fire station. The downstairs training room at the Fire Station can be used for warming and water supply in an emergency, but it can't be used to house people, and neither can the school. The only facility on the island that can house people in an emergency is

the Oak Bluffs school. The FD is planning for CERT teams and planning early classes for the general public as well as train-the-trainer sessions. Everybody wants their own shelter, but one shelter for the island is not a bad idea; it makes sense, at least in the winter; Covid complicated that idea.

In answer to several questions from Bill about monitoring emergency channels, fire hazards, and what the TCC can do to help with emergency preparedness, Greg said citizens can monitor the public 911 channels through the Dukes County Sheriff's Communications Center, and it is possible for the public to monitor the channels the FD uses; they can get the equipment and the numbers. All the Fire Chiefs participated in a MVC study of potential fires on the island, and they developed a list of recommendations. There are many private developments on Martha's Vineyard with long roads without fire hydrants; they need turn-offs so 2 fire trucks can pass each other as they shuttle from tankers to the site of a fire; that could dramatically improve the situation.

Melinda asked about extending town water to areas that don't have it, such as the Lambert's Cove Rd. area, and Greg said that is usually done in conjunction with wastewater development, and it would be quite an undertaking. Anna asked if that would increase development, and Greg said there are zoning restrictions. Greg added that Tisbury's fire protection and insurance rating is 3X. Number 1 is best. The Water Department and the FD collaborate on those ratings, and we're as high as we can get without being a full-time FD.

Anna said she was concerned about a long-term nationwide grid collapse as a result of a super storm or a terrorist attack and the need for solar panels as an independent source of power. Greg said solar panels would not survive a storm large enough to take out a substation. Anna said she was thinking more about a terrorist attack, and Greg said she was correct. Anna said she was looking at ways for the island to be energy-independent and would like to discuss that. Greg said he would be happy to do so.

Melinda said the big question is how we will support the population in terms of energy and storage of energy. Keith said the TCC just formed last year, and our charge is to support the Select Board in preparing for climate-related problems. We have a lot of people working on emergency planning: Dukes County Emergency Management, the Fire Department, the DPW, the Planning Board, the Master Plan Committee. What we need to know is what is our purpose on this committee when so many other departments are working on these things. What's the right role for us? Greg said in the last cycle, the plan was to hire a person to coordinate the plans from all the Towns; that person cannot be housed in Dukes County, but perhaps at the MVC. Maybe TCC could review those plans and see where we are with the MVC and if there are any holes. That's not for him to decide. Melinda said first we need to know what's going on and then we can decide what we can do. She said she wanted to go back to the issue of communicating with the public.

Greg said they are using Code Red for emergencies and there is a Facebook page with updates almost weekly. They are working with the Senior Center, and they send out personnel when there are emergencies, such as snow, to make sure of access; they divide those responsibilities with the police department. Anna said she has designed and calculated self-sufficiency plans for all the town buildings, and she wants to get involved there. Melinda responded that when we get the FM, coordinating through the FM and the emergency departments will be the way to go. Melinda asked if documents are available, and Greg said the Master Plan is not codified

yet; they have to wait for the new Select Board member. Rachel said to let us know if we can help with the community Facebook page.

Bill asked if there is going to be an upgrade to the Emergency Services facility; he said that when the building was built, it was a registered safe haven, but the camera system is now off-line and needs to be replaced, and the switching station is on its last legs. Greg said that on the first floor, there is a small meeting room that could serve as a command center in an emergency, and the powers-that-be could meet there; there is direct communication to the downstairs meeting room; those two rooms can be linked by hardware and software. Bill asked if the article passed, and Greg said yes. Bill then asked if Greg was comfortable with the command center at the fire station and if we could help with that. Greg said we're missing the fiber optic portion. We need a signal that leaves the island. It was the goal of one committee to work on that, and he is not up to date on that plan. He said technologies are moving rapidly. Tisbury is a member of FirstNet AT&T [a nationwide wireless broadband communications platform dedicated to first responders and public safety agencies]. It's federally subsidized and free to taxpayers. Greg said he can call them and get a satellite phone system with its own diesel generator. The FD used it as an exercise during the Beach Road event. If there's a storm predicted, he can call 72 hours ahead to get the equipment.

Rachel went back to the fiber-optic cable and mentioned that Eversource is putting in a 5th electric cable to the island. Greg said, yes, he had sat in with them. Rachel asked about Comcast, and Greg said it would be better for the county to handle that, not a private company. Rachel asked if makes sense to permit them all at the same time. She added that there is an upcoming community input meeting. Anna said she wanted a cost comparison between the 5th cable and photovoltaic batteries. Greg said a battery investigation had been done and the cost-benefit ratio was not good for the island.

Melinda thanked Greg and Patrick for coming and moved on to the next agenda item: Climate Action Week. Cheryl said the CATF was trying to get the word out about Climate Action Week and could use some help getting posters up at Stop & Shop and the library. She asked the TCC to encourage friends to participate. Melinda and other suggested additional sites for posters such as the Steamship Authority, Main Street stores, schools, the Black Dog, Mocha Motts, Cumberland Farms and the Post Office. Cheryl said there were multiple events scheduled for the week, bringing attention to things that have already been done and things people can do individually to address climate change. The week will culminate in a Community Celebration at the Grange on Saturday, May 14. Information can be found at: www.thevineyardway.org. The Climate Action plan will go up on that website, and there is a link to the island-wide survey. The theme is "Connected to our past, committed to our future". She asked that the TCC look at the website and provide feedback.

Melinda thanked Cheryl and moved on to a follow-up to our meeting with Jay Grande. The Committee reviewed two documents Jay sent after that meeting: the FM Job Description, (and the ad for that position) and an addendum to the Procurement Manual recognizing the Town's commitment to green energy. Committee members suggested several revisions, including adding possible job requirements and using language from the warrant article regarding climate change planning. Melinda said she would update those documents and send them back to Jay. Ross said that he would also speak to Jay: the FM will probably be the liaison to the TCC and will certainly spend a lot of time with us. He said he doesn't handle infrastructure, but the FM will.

He also returned to Keith's question about the role of the Committee. He said he sees the TCC's role as informing the FM; he added that Town employees don't always have time to do research and they will look to the TCC for that.

Melinda added that looking at the procurement manual made her think we should review where we stand. Bill said there are 5 basic requirements to being a Green Community and we have accomplished our baseline of a 20% reduction in energy use over 5 years, or we would not be continuing to receive money from them. He said we need to go back and set a goal of another 10-20% reduction. Anna said that was too small, and that was why she wanted to talk. She suggested using wording for the procurement manual such as: "as large a decrease in CO2 production as possible, as quickly as possible, and at the least possible cost". Rachel said there is a template from the National Association of Procurement Managers that mentions using the least toxic materials as well as several other guidelines. She said changing that wording could take some time and we could put something forward for another meeting. Melinda said she would incorporate our suggestions into the documents Jay sent and that she would send Jay the revisions. She asked for a motion to that effect. The motion was made and seconded and passed 8-0.

Melinda then said that we were past time for adjournment, but she wanted to say that the School Committee met, and they are debating how to modify the renovation project to meet standards and budget. They are in a jam, and we need to pay very close attention to what they are doing and make sure we know about future meetings. That project will be a challenge for the Town. She added that we need to be careful not to violate the Open Meeting Law. It's fine for us to share facts but not opinions.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was moved and seconded, and the motion passed 8-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Next Meeting: May 16, 2022 at 5:30 PM.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands