

Tisbury Climate Committee (TCC)

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 12, 2022

Meeting called to order: by Melinda Loberg, Chair, at 5:35 PM.

Place: Tisbury Town Hall Annex

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Keith McGuire, Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Bill Straw
Guests: Kate Warner, MVC Energy Planner
Casey Hayward, Planning Board Liaison
Ross Seavey, Building Inspector, Town Liaison
Ben Robinson, MVC

Review and Approval of Minutes: Louise moved that the minutes be accepted, Bill seconded, and the motion passed 5-0, with one abstention.

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

Bill suggested that we have an internal discussion about the material Cole Powers presented. Melinda introduced Kate Warner, who has recently been appointed the Energy Planner at the MVC. Kate noted that she is focused on energy, not climate, and she outlined several things she would like for the TCC to do:

1 – Kate began by saying that we need to know if we are making progress towards being 100% electric: she needs for us to track the installation of heat pumps, hybrid electric water heaters, solar installations, as well as the acquisition of electric vehicles in the Town. She suggested that the building inspectors can track the first four and said to make sure that the assessor updates them on the property record cards. She noted that heat pumps are often installed without permits but building inspectors can note them. Electric vehicles can be tracked by looking at excise tax records through the treasurer's office. She said she doesn't need to know who has made these installations, just how many there are.

2 – She wants to look at resilience in terms of power, not just emergency management. Puerto Rico was without power and water for 6 months after Hurricane Andrew (Category 5) and our overall goal needs to be for the island to be ready as a group to face a Category 5 hurricane. Since the Great New England Hurricane of 1938, the island has only faced two Category 3 hurricanes (Carol & Edna, 1954) and a Category 2 hurricane (Bob, 1991). Kate needs a prioritized list of buildings that would need some form of power in case of a Category 5 hurricane. The only two buildings on the island that are Red-Cross-certified shelters are the OB School and the Tribal Community Center in Aquinnah. Tisbury needs to designate Shelters for both the short term and the long term. Suggestions included the Senior Center, the School (once the renovation is completed), and the library. She also said we need to consider having members of the community take CERT training courses, because emergency personnel won't be

able to handle all the medical issues that could arise. She suggested organizing neighborhoods with CERT-trained volunteers. Rachel suggested that neighborhood groups could include the Island Elderly Housing communities such as Hillside Village and Love House, as well as Havenside and Greenough House. Kate noted that three of the island towns have public water, and three do not. We need to think about how to provide water and wastewater treatment in case of an emergency, how our town will function overall in an emergency, and what our priorities are. In West Tisbury, for example, the number one priority is insulation in the Public Safety Building; an engineering study is being done on the Town Hall. Bill noted that we have heat pumps at the police station, and our current Green Communities grant will cover the installation of heat pumps at the DPW. Kate said she needs for us to pick projects like that, pick away at them, and notify her as things get accomplished. In a free-ranging discussion, Bill said that for him, water is the number one priority. Rachel wondered if the island could have a water truck to deliver water to the up-island towns and noted that Tisbury has a lot of churches and religious centers (St. Augustine, the Hebrew Center) that have kitchens and have pitched in with social services and wondered if any of them could be used as shelters. Melinda wondered if the island towns have arrangements to share water, Rachel mentioned the Menemsha Water Company, and Bill said that Grass Roots Solar in Vermont has portable solar kits that can be used in an emergency, Kate added that there are kits that high school kids can build, and Casey said she could work on that at the high school.

Kate then moved on to another issue: EV charging and she began a discussion of whether more EV chargers are needed around the island. Tisbury has chargers at Cronig's, Town Hall Annex, and the Senior Center. Kate said she would encourage the stopping of free electric charging. Keith said there are companies that can set up payment systems for EV charging. Kate noted that gas stations can offer EV charging, but Tisbury's gas stations are in the flood zone. She said Tisbury (Vineyard Haven) is a port town, and there could be level 3 charging at the Steamship Authority. Keith asked if we need a certain number of publicly available chargers, and Kate said we are moving towards time-of-use meters, that nighttime charging is the cheapest, and that we should have chargers at the schools. Casey noted that non-homeowners won't have charging available at their places of residence, and Melinda suggested that landlords who rent out apartments could be required to have EV chargers. Kate said the Stretch Code requires EV chargers in new construction, and Ben noted that the MVC is looking at requiring fleet owners to put in pedestals. Kate said the state has a rebate for EV chargers and that some vehicles (e.g., the Ford 150 truck) now come with level 2 chargers. She added that we can expect some help from Vineyard Power when we decide what we want to do. They have a list of 30 buildings for which they apportioned money and sent a proposal to the DOER. DOER allocates funds based on status as isolated, public or private, and whether the applicant is an EJ community. Ben said New England Wind has committed some money as well. The Town must pay for the initial engineering studies. Bill reminded us that the solar array at the fire station cost \$122,000 and that it will take 7 years to pay that off. He said there is a battery at the OB school, and the hope is to use that as a standard for other places. He said that we shouldn't forget about opportunities on island for wind power; there is a manometer at the town landing next to the bridge, and we are looking for an average wind speed of 15 mph to make it worthwhile. And he added that we should also think about tidal generation and said there is a tidal energy project underway in Edgartown. Ben noted that the Mass. Maritime Academy is

testing tidal turbines in the Cape Cod Canal; but Kate there are not as many places as you might think for tidal generation.

Melinda asked if it would be useful for us to meet with the energy or climate committees in other towns. Kate said VSEC [Vineyard Sustainable Energy Committee] meets once a month; Bill is our representative and the towns share information in that way, and Keith said all of the towns have representatives on ICAN [Island Climate Action Network] and that ICAN has connections with activists.

Rachel said that if Tisbury hardens up, it will be a benefit not only to Tisbury but to the island as a whole and asked if there we could apply for grants on that basis, and Kate answered that there are opportunities for regional grants; she added that in a climate-related emergency, town boundaries will be meaningless; in terms of resilience, we are one island. The Army Corps of Engineers Carrying Capacity grant will measure water uses and supply and will look at stormwater, supply chain and carrying capacity issues on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Bill said he had run into Johnny Dumas from Eversource and discussed the need to clear trees from the power lines around the wells. Melinda noted that there is no published climate emergency plan for the whole island. Kate said W. Tisbury has one, but it's 26 years out of date. She said the MVC is looking for an Emergency Management Planner as well as other full-time people. She said her position has planned obsolescence because she wants to be part-time. She said Vineyard Power is hoping to set up a program of education, outreach, and housing stock with Dion Alley's help. Dion has been hired through the Vision Fellowship program as an energy transition planner and will be working with homeowners. Kate noted that W. Tisbury and Aquinnah have home-rule petitions requiring all new construction to be 100% electric, and she believes every town should do that. The state has a 10-town pilot program initially including those two towns as #9 and #10, but all towns must meet affordable housing guidelines.

[At this point, Kate Shands left the meeting, and Louise Clough took notes.]

In discussion about whether Eversource could support increasing needs for electricity, even with the new cables from Falmouth, Melinda remarked that we need load management of electricity and Bill said that there are smart meters that will use electricity when the cost is lowest (although Eversource pricing by time of day is not available now). Bill then asked if the Falmouth switching station goes down will the Vineyard lose all power? Ben Robinson said that Eversource will still have and use its three generators. Kate W said that the biggest changes are for energy providers, and that we are in a transition mode.

Green Communities Update

Ross said that the grant for a mini-split system for the DPW came through though we may fall a little short of the money. Paperwork will be signed and then the project can be started. He also said that we should be able to apply for another grant in February. Bill said that it may take up to four months to get materials, so the project might not be done in time to be eligible for the next round of funding.

Planning for proposed warrant articles for 2023 Town Meeting

Bill suggested solar panels for the Senior Center, especially if we want it to be used as a shelter. He said there was a quote from Harvest Solar a few years ago, an update to that cost might mean a request for \$185,000. Rachel suggested a home rule petition that all new and renovated buildings be all electric. Town procurement policies should require electricity instead of fossil fuel and new town vehicles should be electric. Ross said that he hadn't seen the

new building code and new stretch code, but they might be out in December. *(LC Editorial comment: Tisbury Town Meeting adopted the Stretch Code on 4/12/11; in place since 1/1/2012)* Rachel said she is really worried about downtown / 5 corners flooding and wastewater.

Ben asked if we should consider an engineering feasibility study for canopies at the Park & Ride. Someone from South Mountain might do this.

Melinda reminded us that part of the Climate Committee's first goal is: Hire a facilities manager to manage/support all that is needed. She asked Ross if he knew the status of this, he just knows that the position has been advertised and suitable candidates have not been found.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be devoted to discussing the meetings that we had with Cole Powers and with Kate Warner – what we learned, what we need to do. We will work on proposed warrant articles for Town Meeting.

We will meet on October 3 by ZOOM.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Bill. The motion passed 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands & Louise Clough