

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

**Date:** October 3, 2022

**Place:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89088543256> Meeting ID: 890 8854 3256 Passcode: 679279

**Meeting called to order:** by Melinda Loberg, Chair, at 5:37 PM.

**Attendance:** Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Keith McGuire, Bill Straw, Anna Edey, Bruce Stuart, Rachel Orr. Guest: Ben Robinson, MVC.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Louise moved that the September 12 minutes be accepted, Bill seconded, and the motion passed 5/0 with one abstention and one member not yet present at the meeting.

### **Kate Warner and Cole Powers - follow-up and more**

Melinda started by saying there's a lot of overlap in the two presentations, and we need to distill some of the things we either agree or disagree with. She asked Bill to discuss his reactions to Cole Powers discussion and he said that Cole pointed out that we should slow down on changing regulations, because if we change to all-electric it will take a couple of years for Eversource to put in the needed infrastructure to match all the changes we made to go to clean energy. Bill said he disagreed on slowing down, and that we should move ahead as quickly as we can to have everything ready, and Eversource will just have to do what they do. He also mentioned the brownout that happened this summer, and there'll probably be more if everyone wants to use electricity at the same time. A brownout can damage equipment – the water treatment facility is an example – if the power drops a certain amount it triggers to facility to go offline and use their generator. But that doesn't mean everybody is protected.

Keith raised a question about the availability of notes from the meeting with Cole Powers, and Louise said they were in the August 22 meeting minutes. Melinda shared those on the screen, reiterating Cole's point that we should not require all new construction be electric, as we need to use some fossil fuel as we transition to all-electric. She asked if we had a building code that new construction be all electric, and Bill said that we did not. Ben Robinson said the Aquinnah and West Tisbury both passed Home Rules requiring new construction be all electric. He suggested that this could be brought to Town Meeting next year. Ben also said that we need to move ahead, knowing that the switch from fossil fuel will happen in fits and starts. He also said that over the next three summers before the cables go online Eversource plans to run generators at the solar array on the old landfill, and there should be discussions about mitigating the noise of these that would affect neighbors.

Anna said solar panels and batteries should be located at the wells, something that could be done easily, and she also had plans for the Town buildings, starting with the Senior Center – she

said solar panels and a storage battery could be done in a year, and the savings would be more than the cost on the loan. Bill said that Anna is basically right, but that as more solar panels and batteries are installed Eversource will lose money – something they don't want - so they will begin to strengthen the grid to meet the growing demand for electricity. Rachel said that regarding Eversource we need to build in some redundancy, so if we're working with them and connected to their grid, we install enough solar panels and batteries so that if we're disconnected from their grid, we will still have power for central services. She doesn't think that we should be in a position to tell everyone they need to change everything to electric, but for example when a boiler goes, they switch then to electric heat. Ben said that this is a good discussion, but we have to understand the scale of what we're talking about. For the whole Island to be self-generating we would need off-shore (or on-shore) wind as well as solar. We can probably generate only 20% of the electricity we will use over the next 10 or 15 years with solar panels. He said that we should put out an RFP for solar panels at the wells, then write a warrant article for that – it should be job number one to protect our water supply. There have been discussions with people fairly high up in Eversource – we are their only municipality supplied by a submarine cable – we're really unique. If we can get them to partner with us then that's our transition. We can't possibly build out a new infrastructure on the Vineyard, but we should start by building as much solar as we can. Bill Straw will be our representative on the group that Ben has been talking about.

Rachel wondered if there's any plan to tie in the emergency services building and the senior center to the upgraded electrical work being done for the school. Keith agreed with Rachel that this idea should not be overlooked, and he wondered who we need to talk to about that. Melinda suggested starting with Mike Watts, and perhaps a letter to the School Building Committee and School Committee asking to meet with them. Bill suggested talking to the Building Committee or another committee about putting a conduit between the fire station and the school - each have generators – so that if one fails or goes offline for some reason, the generator at the other location would supply power. This would not be a huge project. Getting a microgrid connecting the school, senior center and fire station is a much bigger project, needing a warrant article and taking at least a year to do. Melinda said that now that the vote on the school is behind us, we should start to meet with the school committee and school building committee to see what is happening regarding the climate and energy initiatives we've been discussing. Ben said that that there is much more information and planning needed. The electrical upgrade for the temporary and permanent school if it went further down Spring Street might lend itself for a conduit to the fire station. The one thing we haven't discussed is demand reduction, and he suggested talking with Eversource and their engineers about what a microgrid might look like.

Anna suggested that at our next meeting she make a presentation about her design and calculations for the Senior Center, heating system, solar panels and battery, etc., inviting an engineer and electrician to listen and tell us whether the proposal is realistic or not. Keith told Anna that he thought she was a visionary, but that it's not just the design, it's how to convince people of the design. He suggested that we find a project for Anna and some funding, and if that project is a success, then we can have the credibility and the momentum and the

inspiration for other projects. But we can't approach the Town and ask for people to vote on a sketch if they don't see a resume. Keith said that if Anna sent him her presentation, he would ask a building science professional to look at it and say how much time it would take to get further into it, and we'll see what happens.

Bill said that several years ago, Kirk had proposed solar panel on the roof of the senior center, but it didn't get done at the time. Harvest Sun Solar had submitted a bid for about \$160,000, and it might be a good idea for submit a warrant article for this – asking for \$180,000. Louise asked about the cost of batteries, and Bill said he had a lot of questions about that. There are major companies doing battery backup installations, but it's a stretch on the Island to get a solid design. Once you have that, it's like a cookie cutter - you can put one behind every building. Rachel talked about a recent article in the Globe about an MIT scientist who has developed a battery that uses lower cost materials that don't catch on fire. He's opened a factory to see if he can scale that up. It caught her eye because of the water company's and others hesitancy about batteries. She will continue to follow this, and she proposed the idea of a joint warrant article with the water commissioners addressing the various items we've identified to harden up the water supply. Ben had a couple of points about the water: Tisbury has very deep wells, and we do test for PFAS. In terms of relocating the wells, ours are in a great location; the water we are drinking is still glacial water. Melinda reminded everyone that in meeting with the water commissioners our first priority is having water in the event of a power outage, further on would be battery storage once batteries become safer and more palatable to the water company and the fire station.

### **Green Communities grant for a heat pump at the DPW building**

In a call to Melinda Ross said that the quote from the on-Island and preferred installer is higher than the amount of money received, and that we should discuss whether to go with an off-Island contractor who would be less expensive and what would be the trigger point in making that decision. Bill wondered if it would be possible to have the off-Island contractor install the heat and then contract with the on-Island contractor to service the heat pump – Ross would need to weigh in on this.

### **More discussion about priorities and warrant articles**

Rachel said we should add the Harbor Master's building to the heat pump list and Bill had a suggestion to build a covered walkway, covered with solar panels, down to the Harbor Master's building with a heat pump farther up the hill. You could put a low-profile windmill in and go completely off the grid.

Rachel said that warrant articles with money requested would need to be submitted by the end of the year, the home rule petition on a bylaw will have a little more time, but public hearings will be required.

The list of proposed warrant articles was reviewed

1. Adopt new DOER Specialized Stretch Code – should be released in December – needs to be reviewed before a final recommendation
2. Add solar panels/battery storage at the Senior Center
3. Home Rule petition: all new construction be all-electric – language already exists
4. New Town vehicles should be electric- with exceptions for heavy equipment, vehicles for which this is not feasible
5. Procurement policy requirement for all-electric buildings/vehicles
6. Harbor Master's building – solar walkway – need to discuss/work with Open Space Committee
7. Fossil fuel free electric pool heaters
8. A plan for public car chargers is needed, perhaps at the Park & Ride, other municipal parking lots. These could be a revenue source for the town. Edgartown Park & Ride has them – Bill will get more information

### **Next Meetings**

We are meeting on October 17 by Zoom with the Water Department, and we'll have our regular meeting at 5:30. Melinda will find out the deadlines for warrant articles so they we can work to meet them. We can revisit the Nelson Mechanical issue with the DPW heat pump. Some other things:

- the Master Planning process has a subcommittee on natural resources, energy, and sustainability. Melinda is a member of that committee, and they want to reach out to us as to how the master plan can address our future needs. She'd like to schedule them for the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Perhaps we can on the agenda for a Planning Board meeting too, even if we all can't get there. This would be to talk about the warrant articles we are proposing and ask for their input and help.
- After we get our warrant articles more firmed up, we want to meet with the Finance Committee. Finance Committee meets with Jon Snyder on October 19, and can report back to Climate Committee after that.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Bill. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

**Minutes Submitted by:** Louise Clough