

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 24, 2022

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

Place: Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/85844118020>
Meeting ID: 858 4411 8020 Passcode: 374601

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg (Chair), Louise Clough, Keith McGuire, Kate Shands, Bill Straw, Bruce Stuart*
(* late arrival, 5:50 PM)

Liaisons: Ross Seavey, Building Commissioner, Town Liaison

Ben Robinson, Chair, Tisbury Planning Board & MVC Commissioner

Guests: Mary Ellen Larsen, Sean Roach, Elissa Turnbull, (Melinda Loberg), all from Natural Resources, Energy and Sustainability Sub-Committee of the Tisbury Master Plan

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

Review and Approval of Minutes: One small correction was made to the minutes of October 17, 2022. Louise moved that the minutes be accepted, Bill seconded; the motion passed 4-0 with one abstention.

Discussion: Melinda introduced the participants to each other and reviewed the TCC's Goals for 2022 [see attached goals list]. She started with the energy generation, conservation, and protection goals.

Mary Ellen asked if anyone knew how much the solar array at Cronig's had cost, and Melinda said that we knew about the solar panels on the fire station and asked Bill to review that. Bill said there were 119 panels there, Harvest Sun put them in, and they cost \$122,000. We receive \$10,000 per year in rebates over 20 years, and with the rebates, they will be paid off in 7 years. There are 3,000 panels at the landfill, and we receive \$100,000 per year for them. We didn't pay for them; CVEC did. They lease the property from the Town, and that lease will be up in 2034. We need to plan to purchase them, but it is possible they will give them to us. We can double their output by repopulating the panels.

Melinda then moved on to goals in the areas of coastal resilience and sea level rise. She said we need to do some public outreach and that we are waiting for the Town to update its website. She invited Sean, Mary Ellen, and Elissa to ask questions. Elissa asked how these goals can be put into the Master Plan (MP). Melinda said we are discussing warrants for the Town Meeting. Some are money articles, such as a solar array for the Senior Center, and some are policy articles for the Special Town Meeting. Green Communities helps us with funding. We would like to be part of the oversight checklist on Town plans.

Sean commented that he loves the idea of MP plans being run by the Planning Board and the Climate Committee. He said there's a codified system for things like insulation and asked if there's something like that for building in general. Ross answered that there are already code requirements in the State Code. Keith said that there had been a meeting with VSEC, and there will be a choice to elect a Special Stretch Code (SSC) which is more stringent than the regular Stretch Code, and the planning process should support the SSC. He said the TCC wondered if we should have a role in reviewing the plans, but that right now we have no veto power. Louise added that if we adopt the SSC, residents would have to meet its requirements, and we wouldn't need to look at individual houses, although we would have to review Town buildings. Melinda commented that we're very fortunate to have Ross on our committee, because his specialty is in building codes. Ross commented that applicants for building must achieve a certain score. For larger projects, he serves in an advisory role to the Planning Board. Mary Ellen asked if there could be a mandate for individual buildings to meet green criteria, and Ross said that the Stretch Code is a heightened energy code.

Melinda further explained that the Stretch Code is being updated, and that its adoption is automatic, but the SSC is optional for us to adopt; one of our first tasks is to look at the Town infrastructure. She added that we've been focusing on the water supply and working with the Water Department to make sure the water supply is hardened in preparation for storms. Elissa asked if we're focusing on future damage or current safety, and Louise said that we can't tell them to put things in place; we can only make recommendations.

Bill commented that he likes the word sustainability. Resiliency is preparing for the worst-case scenario, i.e., a category 4 or 5 hurricane. Eversource is not prepared for that. He said he was just elected to a committee that will be interacting with Eversource. He mentioned the history of Mexico Beach, where poles, wires and transformers were all knocked out in a hurricane. He said we need to come up with a plan to prepare for a serious event like that, and it should be part of the MP Committee's plans. Melinda said that Eversource was considering battery storage, but at the 11th hour changed the plan to repair their damaged cable and add another one instead. The electricity they bring us comes from the Cape, and we are all equally vulnerable; we are looking at our own resiliency plans. Keith commented that in answer to Elissa's question, the wells have generators as backup; they are all above ground. Can they be underground? How long does their propane supply last? We want to keep the water flowing; Bill has been looking at that: water is needed for both drinking and firefighting. Our goals are short-term. The MP and the Planning Board are looking at the long term. He said we can fill out a nice picture together.

Elissa asked how many days of backup we have, and Melinda said a month in the winter and a week or two in the summer. The Water Department wants, as a medium term or long-term goal, to build another water tower. She added that inertia is a problem for our committee; no major storm has happened for a long time, and it's hard to get people excited about planning without a crisis to motivate them. The Water Department did agree to work with Eversource to cut trees. They think they can run the whole operation manually if need be. There will be ongoing discussions. Louise added that they're very positive about their ability to handle whatever happens.

Melinda commented that the MP will be in a very different position in 6 months, and we may want to get more specific then. Sean commented that he's not sure how specific the MP

will be, and they want to be able to talk about the language with their consultants. He said he understands that the TCC wants to have veto power and asked if there is anything they should communicate to their consultants now. Melinda said that there was discussion at meetings she had recently attended about not wanting to build up infrastructure in flood zones. Ben said Horsley Witten is the sub-consultant for the MP process, and we have access to Ellie Baker through that process.

Sean asked if he were to ask the TCC to dream big, what would we need? Melinda mentioned warrant articles, Home Rule, an all-electric mandate for all buildings, and building codes. Ben said we aren't going to beat Mother Nature. We must move away from Beach Road and up the hill. Insurance companies will start to require that. Sean said a lot of people think it's not our problem; we'll all be dead. Ben said it will be our children's problem. Keith asked what would help us; he said we need consensus about resilient design. The MP needs to inspire people; we need to help people believe that it would be wonderful to be near the town dump; we need a beautiful vision of using bicycles, not cars, installing heat pumps, and building smaller houses; but creating that vision and getting consensus on it is the most difficult thing in the world. Ben said he agreed with Keith and that this committee and the MP need to communicate the seriousness of the situation. There is a book called "Limits to Growth" that used a computer model to simulate the consequence of interactions between the earth and human systems, and its predictions are still accurate. We have to recognize that we are connected to the mainland, and we need to address the reality of our situation. We only produce 7% of the food we need. We need demand-side reduction, specifically a 40-70% reduction. Without accepting that, we face a planetary crisis. Our biodiversity is collapsing; our population is exploding, and we want the MP to address that reality. Sean asked how to do that without giving the middle finger to builders, and Ben said we are all part of the problem, and he thinks we can do this in a guilt-free way. These are social-policy-level problems, not individual ones; we need people to see things in a different way. He said we need the government to do that, and it hasn't been communicated yet. Melinda said a large house by-law would be a government step; builders would have to comply with that. Ben said Town meetings in Chilmark and West Tisbury supported that. Tisbury is a fairly built-out town; construction has to be paired with demolition. We should be subtracting, not adding. We used to have fine summer homes that used less electricity in the winter. Melinda said the MP process will involve lots of discussions about these issues. Some ideas will be contrary to others. She said this meeting has been helpful to us and hopefully to the MP group as well and that she hoped we could work together. Sean said he was pleased with the work the TCC is doing and that he wants to do whatever he can to help make the island safer and more resilient. At this point the MP group left the meeting.

Melinda moved on to a fuller report on the recent VSEC meeting. She noted that Bill is our representative, and that she was an observer. She repeated what Keith had said: there was a unanimous vote to support the SSC. She asked Ross if he could outline the differences between the Stretch Code and the SSC; he said no, but he would review it and update the committee between now and the next meeting or at the next meeting. Melinda then asked Bill if he could give us a recap of the discussion, and he said we need Ross's analysis of the differences between the two to see if they are significant enough to adopt the SSC. He noted that the reason W. Tisbury had to give back the grant it received from the State was that they

didn't meet the housing requirements. He noted that it could be a non-binding warrant article. Melinda said that she remembered that the Stretch Code amendments will kick in next year, and that Kate Warner said the SSC would kick in 6-18 months after that. Louise commented that even if we were to adopt the SSC, it would not mean that every building must meet all the conditions; instead, they have to meet a certain score, which involves parking spaces, electricity, solar panels, and insulation. The goal is to have a low score; it is 55 now, but it will be 42 later. Melinda added that it's a Chinese menu of sorts and reiterated that the goal is to meet a low score and that things like windmills can lower the score. She then said that we needed to table this discussion until we have Ross's summary, and Ross proposed that he do a presentation at the next meeting. Bill commented that there are resources available from the State, and Louise noted that they are in builder's terms. Melinda said we would take this matter up at the next meeting.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made and seconded, and the motion passed 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Next Meeting: November 7, at 5:30 PM, by Zoom.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands