

Tisbury Climate Committee (TCC) Meeting Minutes

Date: April 3, 2023

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

Place: Zoom: Meeting ID: 975 061 9542
Passcode: climate

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Bill Straw, Bruce Stuart

Melinda began the meeting by notifying us that the Zoom option has been extended and that we have options for future meetings.

Review and Approval of Minutes: The minutes of March 6 were not available; Melinda will circulate them for review.

Discussion: of Agenda Items: [*Recorder's Note: Discussions are grouped for clarity and brevity.*]
Green Communities Update: Melinda announced that Margaret Song has been promoted at Cape Light Compact, and Laura Selmer will be taking her place. There will be a meeting tomorrow morning at 9:30 to meet Laura. It was originally scheduled for Jay, Kirk, Melinda, Margaret, and Laura, but it is now a Zoom meeting, and the whole TCC is invited; it is informational only. She went on to say that we have completed the DPW project, and it's time to focus on our next Green Communities project. The application is due October 27. Bill sent Melinda a list of hot water heaters. Bill added that we need to look at heat pumps at the Senior Center. There are some heat pumps there, but we don't know what they're being used for. The majority of hot water heaters are electric, but they are the resistance kind; we could get rid of those and replace them with instant hot water heaters under the sinks in several town buildings. They might cost only \$500-600 apiece with an electrician and a plumber involved. The newest type are solar-assisted heat pump hot water heaters, and Nelson Mechanical is installing those. Potential grants from Green Communities (GC) total about \$150,000. Melinda asked about the library, and Louise said there is a warrant article for \$800,000 for repairs and the addition. They are going to hire someone to oversee the project. Rachel added that the whole project is in flux; they are trying to put out a bid for the two projects together. Rachel added that the Harbormaster's shed would be a good place for a GC grant; they're doing work anyway, and Bill said there's a 180-gallon hot water tank there. Rachel added that the Animal Center project was piggybacked onto the DPW grant. Melinda said the Harbormaster (HM) is applying to connect their pump-out to the Town sewer; it's not a warrant article; they've applied for a grant. She wondered if the current work is a stop-gap measure. Rachel answered that they're trying to deal with the mildew and provide inside access to the bathrooms for the staff; it's a small-budget project. She noted that the warrant article for Town Hall has been expanded to facilities in general, and the HM project is part of that discussion.

Melinda said that wouldn't preclude us from using GC money. Rachel said they will always need to have showers for boaters, and that she didn't know about the comfort station. She noted that Town Hall has a historic preservation designation. Rachel then asked whether GC money could be used for vehicles such as the pickup trucks the building inspectors use, and Bill said that before the DPW project, the Town leased two hybrid vehicles for the police department with GC money. Rachel noted that the all-electric F-150 is coming out and that the DPW and the Building Inspectors use vehicles like the F-150. Melinda added that they use large SUV's as well. Bill said other suggestions for new GC projects included any energy-efficient lighting, heating, and hot water. Melinda asked if he had a preference, and he said lighting might be quicker and easier, but instant hot water heaters would be better.

Tisbury School Progress. Melinda said she ran into Amy Houghton, who is very excited about what they're finding as they do the demolition. She wondered if it's time for us to do a tour and review the energy systems there. Bill said that Margaret Song had said that it's a very difficult funding path for something that large, and Rachel said we need to find out what's not included in the contract with W.T. Rich. We can't get grants to pay back the loan; we can only get them for things that have been left out of that contract, such as solar panels, the canopy over the parking lot, and a new generator.

Meeting between Richard Andre [Vineyard Power] and the Town. Melinda said Richard Andre presented the same information he had presented to the TCC. Louise noted that there was a discussion about solar power on the Senior Center and whether the Town should own it and run it or whether it would be better for some other entity to do that, and who could help us apply for the money for that project. Rachel said that there had been a warrant article for that project, but it was pulled because the Finance Committee was told that the Town was short on money. It turned out that's not true, but it was too late to change it; as it turns out, the Town has free cash this year. Bill said we would need help writing an RFP; he asked about Liz Argo, but Richard said no, they could help us with that. However, Luke is not going to do that. Tisbury must put out an RFP for solar and battery together. We need to know how many circuits there are, and Kirk said the town electrician could do that. Bill called Maria at CVEC, and she said Round 7 is not in play. They are re-issuing Round 6. CVEC might do solar only, and batteries could be added on. Melinda said the Town staff doesn't have the bandwidth to handle such a project, and we would need to go with CVEC or solicit for an individual contractor who would want to install and manage the project. That's a discussion for next year's Town Meeting. This year, we are putting money into the reserve fund. She wondered if Kate Warner could help us with the RFP. Bill said we could target the money that goes into the fund to hire a consultant who could help with the RFP and set out a schedule. He said there is GC money, and we don't have to vote on that at Town Meeting. \$50,000 could provide a part-time job for someone. Rachel said that makes sense, and that other Towns need the same kind of help, and we could ask Kate about that. She also said she has a friend who is doing permitting of batteries, and she can ask her about other towns. She then suggested that we plan financially to buy the solar array at the Park and Ride and manage it, but Bill said we don't need to purchase it. CVEC has the first right of refusal to own it. They don't want to discuss it now, but they may not want it, so it might just drop into our lap. It would be a golden opportunity for us; we could interconnect all the Town buildings, or we could generate electricity and sell it to other towns, and we would have a continuing revenue stream. Melinda said if CVEC buys it,

there would be a new contract. Jay could seek a legal opinion about that. She added that we need an energy consultant; West Tisbury hired someone to do a study for them. She reiterated that the new Town Hall has morphed into a facilities budget item, and Rachel said it's worth looking at the language of that warrant article, because if something is not part of the warrant, Suzanne won't pay for it. Bill said Cape Light Compact does energy audits for free, and Tisbury has already done that. Jay has the reports, so we don't need to do hire someone to do that. Rachel added that West Tisbury did it through a state pilot program and stressed that we need to make sure that energy considerations are covered in the warrant article. Louise said we may need to propose an amendment to the warrant article at Town Meeting. Melinda said we need to understand it before that, and that she will forward the warrant articles to us. She also said we need to stay in close contact with Richard Andre. The VP money can accumulate, but that money has to be used for a shovel-ready project. The money doesn't come to us automatically, so we need someone on staff working on that. She also noted that the Town's accounting hasn't been that good and we need to get back into CVEC's good graces.

John Ramsey's Coastal Resilience Program. Melinda reported that John had a meeting with the Packer family about the berm, and Ralph and Debbie Packer wrote a letter afterwards saying that they won't collaborate or participate in a berm. John called, dejected, because that was one of the few ideas that could be carried out. He can't do it without everybody being involved. She asked him to re-direct his efforts to Lagoon Pond Road. She said she doesn't know what Jay will do, and that it's an uphill battle to get this grant done. Melinda spoke to Cheryl Doble, and she was okay with the re-direction to Lagoon Pond Road. Melinda said she needs to speak with Jay because the grant ends in June. Louise said that the Black Dog and others don't want the outfall pipe on their property, and that it's a big problem if these people don't want to protect the Town. Melinda said Jay has been talking about a town-built stand to support the pipe; he's not happy with the abutters. Jamie Houle has been helpful. We need to understand what his relationship is with the DOT so we can find solutions; we need to re-visit that situation. She also mentioned the DeSorcy property and Chapter 91 as issues. Rachel reminded us that the outfall pipe would need to go out 40 feet and must be protected from boater activity; otherwise, it's a hazard to navigation, which is why putting it under a dock was proposed. She didn't know if extending the pipe was a harbormaster issue or an abutter issue, since the abutters could lose access to their docks. She noted that the Town and the State do have eminent domain powers and could possibly put in a dock. She wondered when we, as a community, are going to discuss these issues and whether we are abandoning Beach Road. She stressed that we have to have a plan, or a hurricane is going to handle it for us. Melinda said another option – a last resort – would be to install a pump. If there is force instead of gravity flow, the pipe could be shorter than 40 feet, and she wondered, along with Rachel, why two property owners can prevent a good plan for the Town and agreed that an easement would not be too radical. Rachel said there are lots of highway structure easements. Bruce wondered about Boch Park, and Melinda said there is a lot of stuff under Beach Road, so engineering is a problem. She said she would take these thoughts back to the Town.

Ferries Now Program. Melinda reviewed what the various presenters are doing: Denmark has an electric ferry up and running; Maine's Casco Bay Island Transit District is putting in a hybrid ferry with a diesel backup system on board, and Washington State Ferries is converting six existing vessels and building 16 new hybrid electric vessels. One or more of their

vessels is twice the size of the Island Home. Bob Davis of the Steamship Authority (SSA) said the Elliott Bay Design Group had done a study for them, and it's on their website. They will be looking for public input this coming summer. The new freight boats are not slated for conversion. The Elliot Bay Design Group representative reviewed vessel designs and vessel and battery costs. The Eversource representative said they will be putting in two new electric cables to the island: one new and one to replace an old one. That will bring the total number of cables to five, which will allow them to retire the five generators on the island. Louise said she was surprised that Eversource thought they could get rid of their five generators once the new cables are in place; apparently Eversource thinks the Falmouth substation will never go down. Melinda said that the Master Plan Committee met with the SSA. There are repairs that need to be made under the docks. The SSA is not owning the problem that people may not be able to get to the ferries in case of a big storm. Louise added that the SSA is supposedly starting strategic planning.

ETIPP [Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Program] Update. Melinda said there are grant opportunities, but it's hard to get information about plans for emergency preparedness. Kate Warner got herself, Melinda, and Alan Strahler invited to an Emergency Managers meeting, but it got canceled at the last minute. Kate said there is not enough support right now. The deadline is April 15.

Other Items. Melinda noted that we need more members on this committee. Rachel asked if there's anything we can do to help John Ramsey, and Melinda said we could possibly help beef up what he's done with respect to Five Corners, Chapter 91, and Lagoon Pond Road. She will try to get further information.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Kate. The motion passed 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Next Meeting: April 17 at 5:30 PM.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands