

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 7, 2023

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

Place: Planning Board Annex
High Point Lane, Vineyard Haven

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Rachel Orr, Keith McGuire, Kate Shands, Holly Stephenson, Bill Straw,

Review and Approval of Minutes: Louise moved that the minutes of July 17 be accepted, Rachel seconded, and the motion passed 5-0, with 2 abstentions.

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

Elect New Chair: There was a lively discussion about Melinda's wish to rotate the chair position. All agreed that she had done an excellent job, and there was no one else who could fill the position as well as she had. Instead, Louise Clough volunteered to be the Vice-Chair. Kate nominated her, Rachel seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.

Eversource Report [regarding generators]: Melinda and Rachel met with Jay; Rachel had copies of the relevant easements, and the meeting seemed to energize Jay, who said that he did not want a public meeting but would talk to the higher-ups at Eversource. Melinda asked Daniel Phelan to work with Jay, and he agreed.

Rachel noted that Eversource is on the Select Board agenda for their Wednesday meeting. She said Ronit [Goldstein] asked about easements in her e-mail. She also reported that Eversource now has 31 generators. They have applied to the fire chief for a 20,000-gallon fuel storage container. The diesel is stored near the generators and used to fuel them. The development is on the State Highway, so its frontage is on state property. Holly asked if Eversource considers rights of way to be their property, and Rachel said it seems that way. Rachel noted that resiliency issues are huge for us, and that Eversource will tell you that the plan for the island is covered by their generators. Holly asked about the 5th cable, and Rachel said they need permits. Holly followed up with a question about whether they are thinking of burying the main power lines; Rachel said it's unlikely and added they have 34 acres of transmission property.

Rachel reported that that she noticed that Araujo (a septic hauler) has a large storage container near the generators on the Roberts property. She talked to health agent Maura Valley about it, and Maura told her no septic waste is treated on island. Haulers discharge the septic waste

into interim storage - such as Araujo's large container - and then transfer it to a large truck container and take it off island. This situation came about initially in 2020 when Edgartown dramatically curtailed its wastewater treatment plant's capacity for accepting septic pump-outs due to effects of the pandemic. Other towns followed suit, and now all pumpers must truck their septage off-island. Septic haulers need expensive permits and don't always get them. They store septage in tanks that are located here and there around the island. Maura told Rachel that the town may want to offer haulers a little space for storage on the site of the old septage lagoons near the dog park. Melinda commented that there are comprehensive wastewater treatment plans, and that the airport got a lot of money to rebuild their plant. She noted that there are two big generators located adjacent to the solar array and the Park & Ride and wondered how often those generators are run.

Rachel brought up a third item: National Grid has asked for an increase in its rates to recover costs related to a single storm event. The Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) sent a letter to the [Massachusetts] Department of Public Utilities (DPU) recommending that they deny the request because of National Grid's failure to anticipate foreseeable storm events and to assess its infrastructure's readiness for them. In addition, Dylan Fernandes and Cynthia Stone Creem have introduced identical bills in the House and Senate that would compel the DPU to require electric distribution and transmission companies to prepare climate vulnerability and resilience plans by the end of 2024 (and every five years after that). The bills would also allow for district microgrids that are not exclusive to power companies. The first hearing regarding the House bill is September 28. Melinda commented that CLF was responsible for requirements for nitrogen-decreasing septic systems, that they're a powerful organization, and that we should support their initiatives. She added that we should submit a planning document to the town, and that she and Rachel can draft that document. Keith said he would pass that information along to other towns. He also noted that IHT got grants to put solar panels on all the houses on Kuehn's Way, and that Eversource said there's not enough infrastructure for that. Bill commented that people could install solar panels and add smart switches that would turn generators on at the time of peak power requirements. Melinda said there's no differential cost to peak power times yet, and Bill said that's true for residential properties but not for commercial ones. Keith commented that the fire chief and the DPW are supportive of diesel generators. Bill added that two of our wells have propane generators and one has a diesel generator.

Town Hall Study Committee and Follow Up on outreach to taxpayers re CLC opportunities:
Both items were deferred.

Future Agenda Items and assignments: Melinda brought up the issue of assignments for committee members in the future. She noted that the need for the CVEC group which Kate Warner (Energy Manager at MVC) attends [it was started by Rob Hanneman about 2-3 years ago and has representatives from all the towns] has decreased because the Climate Action Committee at the MVC has taken over more of its role. Melinda added that Interfacing with the MVC and CVEC is a major job of this committee, and that Bill has been doing a lot of that work; she suggested that perhaps Daniel Phelan could take on some of that work as well. A second

major area of concern is our flood plains. Rachel noted that the Planning Board is overwhelmed with projects because people are building willy-nilly in our flood plains; of special concern is Lagoon Pond Road, much of which floods every time it rains. Many of those properties are fill land, including Veterans Park, and the drainage goes from the fill land to the roads; there is no by-law that prohibits an increase in density. This concern is a high priority for Liz Durkee at the MVC; she wants to create matching wording for flood plain by-laws for all the towns. The committee need someone to interface with Liz on flood plain bylaws. Keith and Holly volunteered to do that.

Holly said she had another project she was interested in. Her backyard is adjacent to the Jabberwocky property, and because of global warming, black oak trees in that area are being attacked by bugs and falling over. She would like to look at the issue of invasive species moving into our area. Several people suggested people she could work with: Tim Boland at Polly Hill Arboretum, Julie Russell at the Land Bank, Kristen Geagan at Sheriff's Meadow, and a group at U Mass.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Keith. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 PM.

Next Meeting: Sept. 11, 2023, at 5:30 PM.
Location: Planning Board Annex, High Point Lane

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands