

Tisbury Climate Committee
Minutes, Meeting of September 11, 2023
Tisbury Town Hall Annex, 5:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Committee members: Melinda Loberg, Dan Phelan, Bill Straw, Louise Clough, Rachel Orr, Holly Stephenson
Others: Jay Grande, Town Administrator, Casey Hayward, Planning Board*

*late arrival

Minutes recorder: Rachel Orr. Minutes have been grouped and ordered for clarity.

1. Minutes of August 7, 2023. Louise Clough moved to approve the minutes of August 7. Bill Straw seconded the motion. The motion passed.

2. Conversation with Town Administrator Jay Grande

a. Facilities Manager. Mr. Grande reported that the town is in the process of hiring Erik Blake, retired Oak Bluffs police chief, to serve as a part-time Facilities Manager. Chief Blake will work a maximum of 23 hours per week, focusing on the town's structures. It is a non-benefitted position. Chief Blake brings significant experience with government processes, which Mr. Grande believes is an asset. Chief Blake will focus on the town's buildings and will work closely with the climate committee on energy matters. The position is technically within the Department of Public Works and Chief Blake will work out of the DPW building, which also houses the town's procurement staff and Mr. Grande. The Facilities Manager position has been vacant for a number of years; Melinda said the hiring of Chief Blake is welcome news.

b. Inspections. Related to the town's facilities, Mr. Grande reported that he has instructed his inspectional staff to begin inspecting all town buildings bi-annually. Before now, only the school has been inspected by staff on an annual basis. Mr. Grande has asked that staff inspect the buildings in October and near the end of the fiscal year. With the October schedule, deficiencies can be identified in time to be included in the warrant for town meeting. He would like a climate committee member to go along on the inspections. Mr. Grande also said that he is changing how maintenance is budgeted. The town had been consolidating costs across town buildings in the facilities budget, but now Mr. Grande wants departments to budget for smaller maintenance items and for the facilities budget to be reserved for larger items.

c. Green Communities and the Senior Center. Mr. Grande wants the town to stay ahead with the Green Communities program and to take advantage of the grants available as much as possible. In the past Margaret Song of the Cape Light Compact has been tremendously helpful, but now she has a new job. Bill Straw reported that

Margaret continues to provide assistance and her replacement has also been helpful. Evaluations are underway by CVEC and the Cape Light Compact of the Senior Center, with the plan to install solar and battery back up at the facility as our next green communities project. Bill said once the evaluation has been done, we will know what size battery we will need for the facility. Dan Phelan said it was crucial that the project include coupling of DC to the solar. This was not done with the large Tesla battery installed at the Oak Bluffs School and as a result the battery cannot be recharged by the solar panels when there is a power outage.

d. Consultants. Melinda and Mr. Grande reported that John Ramsay has produced his report with recommendations to deal with sea level rise and storm surge. The recommended constructed dune along the harbor will most likely not be built because of lack of buy in by the private property owners.

Mr. Grande said the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DoT) is expected to release another report on October 2 about drainage and roadway safety around Five Corners. The DoT, which has hired Greenman Pedersen to assist with the planning, has expanded its scope of study to include pedestrian safety. Soil tests at the former fire station lot showed that the soil needed remediation, something the DoT was going to put on the town. Jay said that was the "kiss of death" for using the fire station lot for underground stormwater containment. The DoT is now looking to see if the Chapter 90 drainage system established when the state granted the licenses to fill Bass Creek or diverting some water to the outlet under the Steamship Authority pier are possible options.

Environmental Partners is providing a supporting role for a variety of town projects, including the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan currently being developed.

Scott Horsley, a founder of Horsley-Whitten, has been of great assistance to the town in developing plans to improve the nitrogen levels in Lake Tashmoo. Mr. Horsley is currently working on permitting a cluster septic system design for the Tashmoo watershed and is working to position the town to be eligible for grants.

Tighe and Bond is working with the town on planning for a replacement seawall through the federal BRIC grant program. Mr. Grande wants the climate committee and the open space committee to work closely with the consultants on the planning for this project. Sharon Rooney is the Tighe and Bond lead.

There was some discussion by the committee about the recent work done to improve Beach Road by the DoT, and whether any of the work proposed is sufficient to deal with the expected changes as a result of sea level rise and climate change. Bill wondered how much forward looking we're doing into Five Corners and whether we should be making plans for the relocation of the post office, the police station and the grocery store. Mr. Grande said that post office generates a lot of foot traffic and relocating the grocery store, a downtown anchor store, potentially would have negative effects on the other downtown businesses. He also said that the problem at Five Corners is not just a

Tisbury problem, it is an island problem.

e. Tisbury School project. Mr. Grande said conduit and handhelds have been requested as part of the project. The school building committee has met with Richard Andre of Vineyard Power to discuss solar. A comprehensive update of the project is planned for September 12, with the weekly construction team meeting occurring at 1 p.m., followed by a 2:30 site visit and then a joint meeting between the Select Board and the School Committee. It was decided that if possible Dan Phelan would attend the construction meeting and site visit and learn more details about the solar planning. Dan will report back to the Climate Committee what he learns.

f. Library project. Mr. Grande said that there has been an encouraging amount of interest in the town's solicitations for an Owner's Project Manager (OPM). OPM selection is expected to occur in late September.

g. Consolidated town hall project. Mr. Grande said the current arrangement of staff operating out of multiple buildings is bad from a customer service standpoint and means staff spends a lot of time traveling around town. The task force is working to see what options might be viable for a consolidated town hall.

The committee was very appreciative of Mr. Grande's time and the opportunity to discuss current town projects. Melinda provided a brief outline of our division of labor, as decided at the August 7 meeting, and let Mr. Grande know that we were working with the Martha's Vineyard Commission on a revised flood plain bylaw.

The next Climate Committee meeting will be on October 16th. In the meantime, members are encouraged to attend the master plan meetings to be held at Katharine Cornell Theater on September 14th and the Senior Center on September 22 and 23rd.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.