

Tisbury Climate Committee (TCC)

Meeting Minutes

Tisbury Town Hall Annex

66a High Point Lane, Vineyard Haven

October 30, 2023, 5:30 PM

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Keith McGuire, Rachel Orr, Daniel Phelan*, Kate Shands, Holly Stephenson, Bill Straw (remote), Bruce Stuart

Liaisons: Erik Blake, Tisbury Facilities Manager

Ben Robinson, Tisbury Planning Board Chair & MVC Commissioner

Guests: Nancy Weaver**

* Late arrival

**Early departure

Review and Approval of Minutes: Louise moved that the minutes of October 16 be accepted, Keith seconded, and the motion passed 8-0, with one abstention (Kate).

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

Introduction of Erik Blake, Tisbury's new Facilities Manager (FM)

Melinda asked Erik Blake to introduce himself, and he said he had been the Chief of Police in Oak Bluffs until 2022. He has been in the security business and worked for CLAMS; he has facilities manager experience as the police chief; and he has experience in capital improvement projects. He recognized that the position had been empty for 3 years and that there was a lot to be done. He noted that Kirk [Metell; DPW Director] is very busy, and he can fill in. He emphasized that his role is to oversee buildings, not grounds. He added that he will be a liaison to this committee, and that he is a big believer in green energy.

Erik and the committee members then discussed a number of issues, including the following:

- The need for a new roof on the police station, and solar and battery on the police station and the senior center.
- Plans to put solar panels and heat pumps on other appropriate Town buildings. Rachel mentioned that we need to figure out how to finance solar panels for the school.
- The need to put repairs to Town buildings and installation of heat pumps (with existing heat sources as back-ups) on the front burner. Keith mentioned that the FM position has been vacant for a while, and we've been spinning our wheels on these issues during that time.
- Green Communities (GC), Cape Light Compact (CLC), and Cape & Vineyard Electric Cooperative] (CVEC) projects and grants. Bill explained that differences among these groups to Erik and reviewed the history of the solar array at the Park & Ride. He explained that we are interested in acquiring that array at the end of the 20-year contract. Erik asked who writes our grants; Melinda said Margaret Song at CLC has been

very helpful in that role, but she has moved into a new position. [Her replacement is Laura Selmer.] Timing is important in obtaining grants from these organizations.

- The need to reach out to the community and have residents meet energy goals.
- The Town's designation as a Green Community. We need to pay attention to GC requirements (for example, vehicle requirements) to continue that designation.
- Potential funding sources, including the Town's new stabilization fund and Vineyard Power's Resiliency and Affordability Fund (RAF).
- Issues with generators and batteries. Melinda commented that the Fire Department is not that comfortable with batteries, and we need to work with them around that issue. Dan noted that the OB school has a large Tesla battery.
- The Committee's division of labor, including Keith's roles on the steering committee of the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) Climate Action Plan (CAP) and flood plain by-laws; Dan's role as a liaison to Eversource; and Holly's role in working on invasive species.

Erik said he was looking forward to learning more about GC, CLC, and CVEC and said he will be keeping the committee's mission in mind. He added that wouldn't be hard for him. Melinda said the TCC meets on Mondays every 2-3 weeks, and she wanted Erik to be with us as often as possible.

The committee then moved on to the other agenda items, including committee updates:

Flood Plain By-Laws

Keith is checking in with Liz Durkee at the MVC. Melinda said it would be nice to have island-wide by-laws, and Erik added that would regulate what gets build in the flood plains.

Kate Warner's ETIPP – Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project

This project would provide technical expertise for down-island towns and would address drinking water and fire safety.

Seawall Grant

We need to rehabilitate this grant. We have applied several times for a state grant and been turned down. This year, a federal grant was finally awarded. Erik emphasized that Beach Road is a main artery to the hospital, and this project is a high priority. Melinda said that we would like to have something like what Oak Bluffs did, which would include public access. She added that Dylan Fernandes and Julian Cyr consider public access to be a high priority. Rachel commented that Jay had asked the TCC to take a lead role on this project; it involves the harbormaster, Kirk Metell, and the DOT (who deny it's their wall). Holly added that they are planning to repair the wall, not raise the road to address rising sea levels. Melinda said they had raised the level of the bridge by 5 feet, and they are talking about increasing the height of the wall, but they don't want to raise the road. She added that the Vineyard Wind building is a building of the future because it is built ten feet above ground level; she also said she didn't think the DOT will do anything until there is a big storm.

Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Keith announced that our participation in the MVP (Municipal Vulnerabilities Project) makes us eligible for certain grants, and that the State is introducing a program called MVP 2.0. There will be an introductory training session on November 10 at 9:30 AM at the MVC.

Keith reviewed the CAP process and referred Erik to the website, *The Vineyard Way*. He explained that there were more than 100 people involved in the project, and they are now trying to get towns to work together to implement it. Liz Durkee will be presenting implementation plans to the Select Boards soon, and he urged all of us to attend the Tisbury Select Board meeting when she meets with them.

Rachel introduced a new topic, saying there have been discussions about increasing the embarkation fee from \$.50 to \$1.50. Our legislators have proposed \$2.00. The money could only be used for certain things, including harbor and port town needs; Tisbury will have some money for Five Corners. Some of the money could possibly go into a green fund. Melinda said there is also talk of a green fee, which would be different from the embarkation fee, and asked if there was anyone on the TCC who would like to be on a committee looking at that issue. Rachel said it should be either her or Louise because they are on the Finance Committee, and Louise volunteered.

Melinda introduced another new topic, saying there was a group looking at a fire break in the area around Carroll's Way, Stony Hill Road, and Wapatequa Woods. Rachel said she and Nancy Weaver walked it, and it's being billed as a soft break, but it's an old road. She said the plan would involve taking out walking paths and ancient ways, and it doesn't make sense; it doesn't work for getting vehicles in quickly in case of a fire. She added that she thought they talked to the Land Bank about it. It's near an area where the DPW widened the road and took down banks, and there are invasive plants there. Dan commented that there have been fires there, but David Foster (research associate and Polly Hill Arboretum) said that the Vineyard is wetter than other parts of New England. Holly said black oaks are dying there, creating a fire hazard. Keith asked how close this area was to the generators Rachel has been talking about, and she said it is not close. Ben suggested that we invite Dan Doyle to send us the most recent information and come to a meeting to discuss all of this, and Melinda said she would.

Melinda said we have been invited to talk to the Master Plan subcommittee about implementation of the plan, and our next meeting will be devoted to a conversation with them.

Ben announced that the MVC has been invited to a 2nd round of applicants for a \$680,000 NOAA grant. There were initially 900 applicants; 120 have reached a second round; and the final group of recipients will number 40. The grant would involve improvements to Beach Road in Vineyard Haven, the OB-Edgartown Road along State Beach, and Menemsha harbor. They need to develop an application for the grant, and the deadline is in February. He said he would check with Liz and have her send us information about it. He said the MVC is also working with the Army Corps on water and carrying capacity issues.

Rachel said the school solar is in the list of capitalization plans, as are the police department roof and solar. Melinda said there are ongoing discussions about where the police station should be located. Erik said the police station has elevators, so a generator is needed there in addition to solar panels. We would be putting money into a building whose occupant might move, but putting solar on the building would enhance it.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Rachel. The motion passed 9-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Next Meeting: November 13 at 5:30 PM. Joint meeting with Master Plan Steering Committee. Location: Tisbury Town Hall Annex

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands