

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: November 15, 2021

Meeting called to order: by Melinda Loberg, Chair, at 5:31 PM.

Place: Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/94422760157>
Meeting ID: 944 2276 0157 Passcode: 941163

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Anna Edey, Keith McGuire, Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Bill Straw (who has now been officially appointed to the committee), Bruce Stuart
Guests: Ben Robinson, Martha's Vineyard Commission
Danielle Ewart, Tisbury Shellfish Constable

Discussion: Melinda began by reading the Covid disclaimer and noted that she has Bill's report on the work of the Energy Committee. She then asked for approval of the minutes. Rachel corrected the spelling of Phil Wallis's name and then moved to approve. Keith seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with one abstention (Bill).

Melinda then asked for a review of the final responses of those who were approached for the Thematic Working Groups (TWG's). The current list is as follows:

Land Use/Natural Resources (LUNR):	Nancy Weaver
Infrastructure & Transportation (IT)	----
Public Health & Safety (PHS):	Kate Shands
Economic Resilience (ER)	Phil Wallis
Energy Transformation (ET)	David Schwab
Food Security (FS)	Anne McDonough

Rachel reported that she was working on the Infrastructure & Transportation (IT) TWG. She has been playing telephone tag and exchanging e-mails with Alan Fortes and Glen Provost. Melinda reminded the group that Liz Durkee had asked that we try hard to get town personnel on the TWG's and said she had approached Kirk Metell, head of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and asked him if he or someone he recommends would be willing to serve on the IT group. She hasn't heard back. Anna said she wants to be on the ET group (rather than the FS group, which she had also volunteered for). Melinda asked Louise for contact information for Anne McDonough. Melinda also suggested that Betsy Carnie be added to the FS group. Betsy runs the Charter School kitchen and does catering. Melinda asked for a vote on the revised list. Anna made the motion, Keith seconded. The motion passed 8-0. Melinda then asked Ben for contact information for Betsy.

Keith reported that the Steering Committee will meet on Friday, November 19 at 9:30 AM. Zoom information should be posted on the MVC website.

Melinda thanked Ben for his work moving climate to the forefront at the MVC. She stated that the Federal Government is lagging in this area, that COP26, didn't make much progress and that therefore we need to move fast, and that the work will be stressful and complicated. The MVC Climate Action Plan is dependent on community involvement, and spreading the word will be important.

Melinda said the next agenda item was to address the Climate Committee's Mission Statement and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (MVP). She started with the mission statement and noted that the list of tasks is somewhat overwhelming and asked if anything stood out to anyone as our #1 priority. Bill suggested that there are two important goals: to reduce fossil fuel use and to develop a mitigation plan against the damage we can expect from big storms. Anna said the damage is going to come and asked about how we can reduce fossil fuel use. She said her focus is on fossil fuels and carbon emissions. Keith said he agreed we have two equally important goals with lots of tasks for each of them and asked how to prioritize the tasks. He said that the two goals should work to help each other; for example, we should not be using gas generators, and no solar panels should be placed where flooding could occur. He noted that if the tasks are too much for us, we could go back to the select board to modify our mission.

Bill had previously provided the Climate Committee with a "short history" of the work of the Energy Committee. Referring to that document, he said he had a couple of insights. In the realm of reducing carbon emissions, we need to make the 11 town buildings as efficient as possible in 3 areas: lighting, hot water, and heating; he noted that the town has money through grants. He said if that work on the fire station could be duplicated on the senior center, that would be great, but the town gave the senior center project to The Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative (CVEC). Melinda said we will come back to that report later in the meeting.

Rachel said that a lot of work has already been done; we are not starting from zero. We need to divide up the tasks. We will need staff help, and we need to interact with town staff. She asked what is expected of us and do we have funds?

Melinda noted that it took a long time for our committee to be formed; others had already started to work; and we're going to step in in the middle of the work. She said that yes, we are expected to interact with town staff. She said that the point about staff help is a good one, but that it's a hard ask because the town is stretched already. She said that we need to establish priorities and then ask for help.

Keith said he saw the lists Kirk Metell provided of projects that the Department of Public Works (DPW) has been working on in the past few months and of planned projects over the next 6 months. He said he believes the town should have a climate expert on all town projects. Bill suggested that the town needs to go back to an energy manager. He pointed out that the town's Green Communities (GC) status could give the town \$250 thousand dollars twice a year, but that we can't get a 2nd grant until we fulfill the first grant. If we hired an energy manager,

we could apply for grants, and we could first put heat pumps on all the town buildings and then put them on every house in our community.

Rachel noted that an energy manager would have to be approved at town meeting unless it were to be a consultant.

Ben stated that there has been discussion at the MVC to hire an energy planner for the whole island. The position would be a 3-year fellowship. He said that Nantucket has an energy planner, and that they have received five million dollars in funding. He added that the funding would be a good argument for that position.

Rachel said we would need a proposal by the end of December to create such a position.

Melinda stated that the town has a consultant for the DPW: Environmental Partners. She wondered if we should invite them to a meeting so we could learn what they are providing already and what input we could have through them. She noted that the Building Department has 2 people working there, but she didn't know about their skill set. She suggested that we could approach our own Building Department.

Ben said we need an essential audit of the town. Bill reiterated that we need a project manager to handle contractors and funding for the 3 areas he already listed for town buildings. He repeated that GC funds are already there, and we are leaving money on the table.

Melinda stated that the town has a job description for a Facilities Manager already. We could ask the town to reinvigorate the position to handle those 3 areas. Rachel said perhaps we could do a job description revision, and Melinda said we need to get a copy of the job description and review it with the DPW. Louise asked if Ben had a job description for the Nantucket energy planner position and suggested that we might pass along that information to the Vision Fellowship people. She suggested that we might share such a position with Edgartown and Oak Bluffs, but Bill said that we have hired a shared person in the past, and it didn't work out. He emphasized that we need to put Tisbury first.

Melinda then outlined the options discussed to this point:

- 1 - Repurpose the DPW Facilities Manager job
- 2 - Review what energy planner consultants could provide
- 3 - Explore the Building Department capacity

Keith asked again if Rachel's question could be addressed: is there money for our committee to have staff help? Melinda suggested perhaps DPW staff could help. Anna asked again what we need to do to decrease fossil fuel use. She said we need to brainstorm before it would be appropriate to hire someone.

Melinda said we have 2 tasks as a committee: tune in to the work of the TWG's and do our own work for this town. We've accomplished the first task; now we need to focus on the second.

She reiterated that all materials have to go through the chair and said we have the beginnings of an action item. Louise said we need to think about tasks from the Select Board and said she likes the idea of an energy manager. Keith asked if we need to produce an annual report. Melinda said for this year, the report would pretty much say we formed a committee.

Melinda then moved on to the next item on the agenda: a review of the MVP report from 2018. She noted that Bill and Ben and Rachel had participated in that study. It outlined the risks and hazards we need to pay attention to. She said the Executive Summary addressed 7 things, notably the island's comprehensive supply chain vulnerability and said that issue is very important: we have had several ferries canceled just recently. She pointed out that Nantucket has the same supply chain issues. There is an MVC grant using the Army Corps of Engineers that will look at Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Gosnold. It will last 18 months, cost a million dollars, and will encompass carrying capacity.

Rachel said that she had recently read a newsletter from the group, Communities Responding to Severe Weather (CREW) and found it interesting. They are particularly focused on environmental justice neighborhoods, and we could ask them what has worked for them. They have about 500 people involved and are leading the way on climate change in Massachusetts. She said there are lots of people who could help us, and she can send lists of organizations in the Commonwealth.

Melinda said we will need community engagement, so that's helpful, but she wanted to return to talking about the MVP report. We need a summary of what's important. John Crocker will fill us in at the next meeting, but we all need to review it. There have been two studies done already on coastal resilience, both by Applied Coastal. The first identified weak spots along the harbor between the jetty and the Packer facility where high water from the harbor and lagoon and storm water from Beach Road could be problematic. The second study proposed a dune along the harbor as a mitigation strategy. It would be temporary and would have to be replenished every two years. They're in the process of engineering that and have asked us to be part of an outreach effort to host public meetings. She said we need to form our own opinions about the costs and benefits. She added that she would like to invite them a meeting to discuss Tisbury's first attempt at mitigation.

Melinda then returned to Bill and the report he prepared concerning the energy committee. Bill reiterated that there are funds available. He said someone has to co-ordinate putting heat pumps on all the buildings. He asked if we were to recommend a Facilities Manager would we have to have a warrant article before the end of December? Melinda answered that if we can live with modifying the job description already established, we could do it more easily. She said that's an already-established action item, and the timeline is fast. Melinda & Bill will plan to meet with Kirk.

Bill then summarized his report. In it, he reviewed the Energy Committee's involvement in 3 electric generation projects: the installation of the solar array at the landfill site in cooperation with CVEC; the installation of solar panels on the fire station, and the planned installation of

solar panels on the senior center, again in cooperation with CVEC. In 2018, 114 solar panels were installed on the fire station, and between payments from the SMART program (\$10,000 per year) and savings in electricity not purchased from Eversource (\$7,000 per year), the payback from the initial investment is expected to be 7 ½ years. Once that payback period is over, the town will make money from the panels. He said that If we give the solar panel installation on the senior center to CVEC, they pay for it, and we don't get the income because they will own that structure. He emphasized that we need to sort that out, and again, an energy manager could handle that. Melinda replied that it would be an advantage to have the town handle it, but there is no one to do the work. Bill said that in addition, if Tisbury could buy back the panels at the landfill, it would be possible to establish a micro grid with all of the town buildings connected and add a battery backup system. Those panels represent 1.2 megawatts, which matches what is needed for the town's 11 buildings. He added that those panels will still produce 85% of their output after 30 years.

Melinda said we need to learn about that and make a recommendations to the town.

Keith asked what building would be Bill's favorite to address next, and Bill said that's up to Kirk. Keith thanked Bill for writing up the summary.

Melinda noted that the original plan for the school had a solar array, but it was dropped. She added that Anna was very familiar with the school.

Melinda then said that she was not going to go through the list of DPW projects that Kirk had provided but would wait for him to be able to be present at a meeting for him to do that.

There was a brief discussion of when we should meet again, and Melinda decided that the next meeting should be in 2 weeks so that everyone could attend (due to Thanksgiving) and that we need to have Kirk Metell, John Crocker, and/or Liz Durkee, at that meeting - whoever can come that day.

Danielle thanked everyone and said that if we needed anything, for instance rainfall data, to let her know.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Bill. Approved 8-0.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Next Meeting: Monday, Nov. 29, 2021 at 5:30 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands