

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Zoom: Meeting ID: 897 50123390

Passcode: 061488

January 8, 2024, 5:30 PM

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

Liaisons: Erik Blake, Tisbury Facilities Manager

Others: Jay Grande, Tisbury Town Administrator

Luke Lefeber, Vineyard Power

Peter Meleney, OB Climate Committee Tree Planting Program

Katharine Colon, Tisbury Resident

Review and Approval of Minutes: Postponed until next meeting.

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

Vineyard Power (VP) Request: Green Communities/Senior Center – Luke Lefeber

Melinda introduced Luke, who came to talk about VP's interest in providing solar and battery back-up at the Senior Center. Jay announced that the Senior Center had been without heat for eight days and said the heating system, which is less than five years old, might need to be replaced. There followed a long, confusing discussion about these competing needs, which can be summarized as follows:

- Luke explained that CVEC put together a Round 6 RFP for Solar PV and Battery Storage Systems for the Senior Center. Developers will respond to the RFP. There's a pre-bid conference for Developers on January 16, a Q&A session later in January, and site visits in February. Bids are due on March 25. CVEC will choose the Developer.
- Tisbury previously identified the Senior Center as a critical facility for resiliency and battery projects and agreed to include the Senior Center solar and battery project in the CVEC RFP. The Town expressed a preference for the project to be handled by a Purchase Power Agreement (PPA) with the Developer, in which the Developer would be responsible for any problems with the systems.
- The Town would not have to pay any money up front; the Town is invoiced for the electricity generated as part of the PPA. The contract is usually for 20 years.
- The Town had an audit done by RISE engineering, as part of a Green Communities (GC) grant application. It included a proposal for installation of heat pumps (along with LED lighting and a heat pump water heater). It assumed the propane system was working well.
- Bill spoke to Laura Selmer at Cape Light Compact, who is handling the GC grant. There are two different sources of money – from CLC and from GC. GC could provide up to \$200,000. Someone needs to handle the project and get back to Laura Selmer. GC

needs information by April. Erik and Bill need to get together to move this project forward.

- Nelson Mechanical responded to the emergency at the Senior Center but has not provided information to the Town about what needs to be done. Hopefully they will let Erik and Kirk know soon what the next steps should be.
- If the Town replaces the heating system, the load requirements and specifications will change and will need to be modified in the RFP. The Town will need to communicate those updates to VP.
- All decisions will be based on the costs involved, but we still don't have a proper analysis of the needs of the building.
- The Senior Center consumes about 30,000 kWh per year. The anticipated solar capacity is 26 kW, and the storage rating is 18kW.
- The estimate for rooftop solar with batteries for the Senior Center will be approximately \$140,000. The total grant amount for the project will be up to \$70,000. VP negotiated with Vineyard Wind, and they are looking to grant money to the towns to subsidize the cost of adding batteries to the solar and ensure a 10% savings on the value of energy for the Town. The subsidy is in the form of a grant to the PPA and would total \$2,250 per year for a total of \$45,000 over 20 years. In addition, because batteries only last about 10 years, there will be an ESS [energy storage system] subsidy of \$25,000 to replace the batteries after 10 years, bringing the total subsidy to \$70,000.
- What the Town does next will depend on the costs, but Jay is inclined to replace the system rather than repairing it. However, every Town building will need a back-up system if heat pumps are installed.

Tree Planting Program:

Peter described a tree-planting program in Oak Bluffs as a small measure designed to combat climate change. He said he is reaching out to the down-island climate committees to find a way to plant more trees. It would not be an expense for the Town, because people are willing to donate money to plant more trees. They have planted 10 trees so far and have Oak Bluffs CPA funds available to plant more trees over the next 3 years. They are using Tony Lima [OB Parks Commissioner] and Tim Boland [Polly Hill Arboretum] as experts to decide what kind of trees to plant, but oaks are high on the list. Holly brought up the issue of the trees that are dying on the island and said it would be good to plant trees that are resistant to bugs. Melinda said she detected interest on the part of the committee and added that the Open Space Committee might be interested in this project as well.

Warrant Articles (WA)s:

The committee discussed amounts for three Warrant Articles.

- 1.) The first was for the Town's share of the GC grant for the Senior Center rooftop solar array. As noted above, the Town intends, through CVEC and with assistance from Vineyard Power, to enter into a power purchase agreement for the Senior Center solar array. An RFP has been issued, and we await responses. So, a WA will not be necessary.

- 2.) The second article would be entered as a contingency for upgrades to the heat, hot water, and lighting systems at the Senior Center, arising out of a recent analysis by RISE Engineering to identify potential improvements to the building that would result in increased resiliency. This sum would probably be \$200,000, which would be covered by a GC grant without a need for a match. Furthermore, this article would be moot if the Town decides to keep the existing systems after getting more information about the repair costs to the existing propane furnace. We will prepare it if it is needed. Bill so moved, Louise seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- 3.) The final article would recommend that the Town proceed with installing rooftop solar on the Tisbury School. Rachel commented that WA amounts can be decreased but not increased once they are submitted and suggested \$1,200,000 for the school. Melinda said we need to write up an explanation of why we want money for the solar array for the school to explain it to the FinCom, the Select Board, and the public. Dan and Rachel agreed to collaborate on that letter. Dan moved, and Rachel seconded, a motion to request a WA in the amount of \$1,200,000 for that purpose. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Updates:

These were postponed until the next meeting due to time constraints.

VSEC – meeting at Howes House. January 18, 2024, 5:00-6:30 PM

We had previously agreed to rotate attendance at these meetings. Kate volunteered to attend this one.

Letter to Water Department re trees under power lines:

Our “meeting” at the Water Department attracted attention from the Water Department, and we had a good curbside discussion with one of the water department employees. Dan and Holly prepared information sheets, and Dan agreed to write a letter proposing that the Water Department ask Eversource to cut the trees that are endangering the power lines.

Annual Report:

Melinda reported that the Annual Report has been submitted.

Melinda thanked Katharine Colon for attending our meeting.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Louise, seconded by Rachel. The motion passed 9-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Next Meeting: January 29 at 5:30 PM at Planning Board Annex and by Zoom.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands