

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 13, 2021

Meeting called to order: by Melinda Loberg, Chair, at 5:34 PM

Place: Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/94030604821>

Meeting ID: 940 3060 4821 Passcode: 756961

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Anna Edey,
Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Bill Straw

Guests: Jay Grande, Tisbury Town Administrator
Kirk Metell, DPW Director
Ben Robinson, MVC

Melinda began the meeting by reading the Covid disclaimer and the Zoom information.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Several small additions and corrections were made to the minutes of Dec. 6. Louise moved that they be accepted; Rachel seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.

Discussion: Melinda introduced our guests.

Jay began by noting that this is a beginning point for the Town with this committee. He stressed the importance of the committee and said the primary focus at Town Hall is on the energy side: switching systems over to achieve energy conservation and decrease energy consumption to net zero or as close as possible. He said the committee could be helpful to the Town by maintaining the focus on those goals. He noted that the Town is planning to hire a Facilities Manager for Fiscal Year 2023. He then outlined some of the Town's accomplishments and plans in the energy area:

At the Senior Center, the roof has been replaced in preparation for rooftop solar installation; there is a charging station there; they plan to install a generator and battery storage. They want it to be a comfortable place for people to come for heating and cooling, even if it cannot serve as an overnight shelter.

The Emergency Services Facility (ESF) has rooftop solar, and it could potentially have ground-based solar. There is a leaching field behind the building, but there is a possibility of re-locating the police station there, so details need to be worked out. That building has been used for warming and internet access, even though it is also short of being a full-blown shelter. They are trying to avoid the use of diesel and propane generators; battery storage would be helpful in achieving that goal. He noted that if we were ever cut off from the mainland, propane and other fuel supplies would dwindle rapidly.

At the Wastewater Treatment Facility, plans for solar and battery systems have been on again, off again.

The new Tisbury School is the Town's largest capital investment and the largest floor area. It presents a challenge and an opportunity. Both rooftop solar and battery storage could be installed there. He said he could use help in that area: support and ideas for ways to accomplish those goals.

Melinda noted that there is a written plan related to the energy focus at the school, including windows and a heating plant. She said we need to educate ourselves about the school plans. Jay said that things are not finalized yet; the bid documents are due after the New Year. Early bids will come in January and February, and subsequent bid documents will be released in the spring (for subs for heating and cooling systems). He said the architects are still working on details for the roof so that it can house rooftop solar in the future. He said their internal goal is to have it functioning when the school opens. He reiterated that the construction documents are not final yet.

Bill said he had asked the fire chief about the solar installation at the ESF, and the chief said it had contributed to roof leaks there. Bill said he would feel better if at least the racks for the solar were part of the initial construction at the school, rather than adding them on later. Jay said he agreed it should be as soon as possible. He also noted that CVEC is not the same organization as when the Town put in the landfill solar array, and we should think about whom we want to talk to about these issues at W.T. Rich Company.

Rachel said battery storage will require space, and we need to talk about that now. She mentioned an all-electric building, compressors, mini-splits, and a canopy over the parking lot, and said we need to talk about all of those things now, not later. Anna added that it was amazing that the town voted for a building where energy considerations were not included. She said the financial projections were way off, and we will have to pay more than the estimate. Melinda repeated Jay's point that figuring out who to speak with about the energy need is important. Anna said she would love to talk with David Schwab [electrical contractor], and Melinda said we can do that.

Rachel returned to the ESF and asked if we could have battery storage at one location or if we need several. Jay said that was a good point, and he will think about opportunities to cluster batteries in one location. He noted that the parking field at the Senior Center has some space, as do 55 W. William Street and the old DPW parking lot; maybe even a corner of the cemetery or a corner at the Park & Ride. He noted that Vineyard Wind is going to provide some funding for battery storage and said we need to solidify what we're asking for and narrow the ask to the extent possible. He then asked if we are meeting every two weeks and said we could have a preliminary discussion about that.

Melinda suggested talking to Richard Andre [*President of Vineyard Power*] and Jay said he needs to have one or two committee members there. He might have ideas about how constructive they can be.

Bill said he wanted to return to Rachel's point. In order to connect buildings to battery storage, we would need to lay lines between the buildings to form a mini grid. He said he doesn't know if Eversource is ready for that, and we need to have another discussion with them. Jay asked what the square footage requirement would be for a battery storage area, and Bill said the size of a trailer truck container, about 15 by 40 feet. Anna asked if that is the size of the one at the ESF, and Bill said yes. Rachel asked if that size would be necessary for each building, and Bill said it's a good yardstick, and we need to know how many kilowatt hours (kWh) are required. Melinda asked Jay if kWh information is available, and Jay said he believes it's available in annual reports; he added that the Town has a lot of paper documentation but that they have not had time to sort through all of it. He said Kirk and Ross and he could do a little of that, which would allow us all to be informed. He added that it's a big job on the ESF accounts. He also said that we have a solar array at the fire station, and if we believe a battery backup is necessary, we need to complete that before we start on new projects.

Anna said we need as many places as possible to be independent of the Grid, and we definitely need to know how much energy is required. She noted that the ventilation system is not good at the ESF, and said she looks forward to a report.

Melinda said we could send someone as a representative to internal meetings.

Bill said that when we established our Green Communities (GC) status, we needed 1.2 megawatts (MW) of power, and that, coincidentally, the solar array at the Park & Ride is 1.2 MW. Melinda asked where that is distributed, and Bill said to the Grid. Melinda asked if that reduces our bills, and Bill said no, we get a payment of \$113, 000 per year.

Jay said we need a resource library for this group. Melinda said she imagines the GC reports are dense. Rachel said she asked Suzanne Kennedy [Town Accountant] about numbers for utility costs, and she said Margaret Song at Cape Light Compact (CLC) keeps track of this. Jay said they have digital copies, but we need a depository so people can use it. Melinda said the Committee had talked about using Google or Dropbox for that purpose but decided to start with our webpage. Jay said Ross put together a binder; they can scan that, but it needs to be organized.

Bill asked if, as we move to greener power supplies (solar and heat pumps), we need to maintain the old systems (e.g., boilers) as backup. Kirk said yes, it's imperative to have backups; the heat pumps don't keep up when the temperature is low.

Bill said Maria Marasco at CVEC {Cape & Vineyard Electric Cooperative} said a number of contractors decided not to bid on solar at the Senior Center and asked if there are heat pumps at the DPW. Kirk said there is a high-efficiency boiler. Bill asked if it would be a shovel-ready project to put in heat pumps now, and Jay said unfortunately, there is a requirement for more than one bid. He said regulatory issues are a problem; people need to recognize the island factor and create more flexibility; sometimes we get no bids, sometimes just one. He said we need to talk to Maria about the requirements.

Melinda asked if the Town is planning to apply for a grant, and Jay said we need something that's shovel ready. He said bid costs exceeded the estimate for heat pumps at the Senior Center, and charging stations are not eligible under GC. He reiterated that there are bureaucratic issues. He said they had evaluated several locations for a solar array like the one at Cronig's. The Senior Center has space for the footprint size for battery backup; it could use a generator and a rooftop solar system. He commented that he likes giving that building resiliency; people are comfortable there, and there's plenty of parking.

Melinda asked if Kirk agreed, and he said he did. He said it has a new roof; new siding is coming; and it's perfect for solar. It has a new high-efficiency boiler, and it could be upgraded for heat pumps.

Bill said that from a financial standpoint, we are getting payments of \$10,000 per year from the ESF; we lose money doing business with CVEC. Jay said we need that kind of input, and asked what if we kept the solar and had GC do the heat pumps. Bill said we can do that; GC can do heat pumps. Jay said then let's focus on the heat pumps because they are low-lying fruit. He asked Kirk about other buildings.

Kirk mentioned the library. Bill mentioned the DPW building. Jay asked if Kirk had answers to these questions, and Kirk said the roof at the DPW building is not in the best shape; it leaks. And it's not time to move forward on Wastewater projects yet.

Bill asked if, instead of putting solar on buildings, we could concentrate on car canopies. Jay asked if they are eligible on GC, and Bill said no, they can't do generation. Melinda commented that we don't have a good foundation for GC: what can and can't be funded? She said she will try to find a link to their resources. She added that it would be good to spend some time talking with Margaret Song at CVEC.

Jay asked Kirk about the old water building and said there had been some talk about using it for temporary employee housing; he added that there are opportunities with the Spring Street building. Kirk said we have a brand-new Waterworks building and it would be perfect for rooftop solar.

Jay said the library building is tired; it needs to have the HVAC system replaced; they are trying to keep it weather-tight and functioning until the addition project takes place. He said there are questions about the structure: for example, the ability of the roof to hold a solar array. He wondered if ceramic solar panels would be a reasonable alternative. He said they look nice, like a regular roof. He added that the library is a renovation/addition project at this point. We need to hold the line on deterioration. It's one of the few buildings that should be in pristine shape; it's a public space. Whatever has been done piecemeal in the past (gas, septic, HVAC tinkering) needs to be comprehensive.

Melinda asked what is being done about the library now, and Jay said he's trying to have meetings with Amy [Ryan, Library Director] and the Trustees. What happens will depend on

funding. They are doing well with donations, but the process needs to be jump started. Rachel asked about funding and whether it could be divided into thirds: donations, a town appropriation, and a state library grant. Jay said yes, and Rachel suggested that because it's not just a library but a community resource, perhaps there could be resiliency grant funding instead of a library grant. Melinda said Amy had mentioned that libraries are serving as emergency shelters and Rachel said yes, in collaboration with CREW [Communities Responding to Extreme Weather].

Jay said he is looking to meet with Amy and the Trustees after the first of the year, and these minutes will be helpful. He said they are going to end up having two major disruptions, and it makes sense to coordinate those two. Anna commented that it would make sense to tear down the building and build a new one, with a kitchen, that would be energy-efficient and could serve as an emergency shelter; she said that would cost less money. Jay said sometimes we don't have that option. There is a sense of place about the library; there are emotions involved. He said he would be upset if that building came down. Rachel asked if people remembered the columns. She said using the basement space was logical because the temperature stays pretty constant all year.

Melinda mentioned the school, and said "enough said". She suggested that when Jay talks to Amy and the Trustees, they could discuss the square footage cost of building a new building and get a baseline comparison of the two options.

Bill asked if we could buy all the solar panels we need for the next ten years and save money that way. Jay again mentioned the ceramic tiles that TESLA puts out, and reiterated that they look nice and are guaranteed. Bill said he would bet on the old style. Melinda said incredible strides are being made, and we wouldn't want to have outdated panels. Kirk said yes, it would make sense to go out only a couple of years.

Melinda asked if we're okay with the library and inquired about the Marine Terminal (MT). Jay said he's very actively involved with the MT. He said the town was working on the waterfront, and lo and behold, Vineyard Wind shows up with a new development. He said we're fortunate to have that project in Tisbury. We want to encourage these types of businesses and entrepreneurs and support private projects and initiatives.

Melinda said we were having time issues with this meeting and we need to invite Jay, Kirk, and Ross again. Jay asked if in the meantime, he could have a volunteer from the committee to interact with CVEC and CLC, and Melinda asked Bill if he would represent us. Bill said he had further questions, and he and Jay should have a discussion first. Melinda said she's willing to do her part, but she's not the best person to do that. She said we can talk about that at the next meeting. She asked if there were any other questions for Jay and Kirk.

Louise thanked Kirk for the project list he had provided and asked why we can't do solar canopies at the Park & Ride, since the land is already there. Jay said we could do that, and he will circulate a study of the parking areas.

Melinda then referenced the CLEAR [*Clean Energy and Resiliency*] report that West Tisbury had done and asked if we have such a study, and if not, would it be appropriate? Jay responded by saying that the studies Tisbury has done have not been created in the current era of climate change and energy considerations, and he would be interested in updating our information. He said things have changed, and it would make sense to update the plan we submitted as part of our GC application. He said he didn't know about the cost and asked if grants were available. He said he could put in a placeholder, because he wouldn't want to miss this funding cycle. He said he needed a dollar amount and would need it by tomorrow evening. Melinda said we would do our best, and Rachel said we could call West Tisbury and ask about the amount. Jay said yes, do that and add an increase because of the size of the town. Melinda said we'll work on that and asked Rachel to do that. She said if anybody else knows about research grants to let her know.

Melinda then thanked Jay and Kirk and said this was a great starting point. She added that we want to be good partners. Jay thanked the group for waiting for them to be available. Melinda said we would have them back in the New Year.

Melinda then said our next meeting will be January 3, and Anna will give us some of her thoughts on energy. She said we need to prioritize things that matter to us. Rachel said flooding issues were important. Jay said Ben Robinson is here, and he has been working with him on those issues.

Melinda reminded the group about the public information session on the coastal section of Beach Road on the 15th and said there are many other elements to the flooding issue. She suggested that maybe Ben could come and talk to us about that.

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

Next Meeting: Monday, January 3, 2022 at 5:30 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands