

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting ID: 812 4999 1729, Passcode: climate

January 27, 2025, 5:30 PM

Attendance: Committee Members: Daniel Phelan, Louise Clough, Melinda Loberg, Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Bill Straw

Guests: Laura Selmer, Cape Light Compact

Review and Approval of Minutes: Louise moved that the minutes of January 6 be accepted, Rachel seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

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

Presentation from Laura Selmer with Cape Light Compact (CLC) about \$200K in possible funding for Town energy-related upgrades.

Laura presented a slide show outlining the grants available. She said CLC and Mass Save are shifting their focus from energy efficiency to decarbonization. They are encouraging customers to replace existing fossil fuel equipment with high-energy heat pumps, including heating systems, cooking equipment and water heaters. Rebates for fossil fuel equipment are being phased out. She outlined two DOER [Department of Energy Resources] Municipal program grants: (1) Green Communities (GC) grants up to \$225,000 for energy efficiency projects and up to \$500,000 for decarbonization projects, and (2) Climate Leader (CL) grants up to \$1 million that can be used for renewables.

The GC grants are of 2 types: (1) designation grants, which are one-time grants, given upon acceptance as a GC, and (2) competitive grants, which have 2 cycles per year, spring and fall. Designation grants must be closed before applying for a competitive grant. Competitive grants must be closed out before applying for another one.

Climate Leader requirements are as follows: be a GC community in good standing, have a local sustainability or energy committee, commit to eliminate fossil fuel use in municipal buildings by 2050, create a municipal decarbonization roadmap, adopt a zero-emission vehicle first policy and adopt the specialized opt-in building code. She noted that DOER has technical assistance available. Eligible projects for a Climate Leader grant include solar PV, energy storage (batteries), electrification /decarbonization measures such as heat pumps, and other clean energy projects that target reductions in overall energy use, emissions, and fossil fuels.

She said based on these requirements, Tisbury is eligible, and the deadline is early April. She outlined the grants Tisbury has already received, including its designation grant of \$140,925 in 2017, which provided a water heater at the Senior Center, boiler upgrades at the library and the police station, and heat pumps. Tisbury has also received a competitive grant (#1) of \$11,000 in Spring 2020 which was applied to the purchase of 2 hybrid police cruisers, and a 2nd competitive grant (#2) of \$71,690 for HVAC electrification and an air source heat pump at the DPW.

Other opportunities for Towns include MVP [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness] grants, EV charging infrastructure, IRA direct pay tax credits, META [Municipal Energy Technical Assistance] grants (\$15,000 for technical assistance) and GAP (Massachusetts Gap Energy Grant Program] grant funding for wastewater projects.

Daniel said he had spoken with Kirk, and Kirk is in favor of replacing water heaters in Town buildings, and we need to have a walk-through. Laura said she could coordinate a walk through with Kirk. Bill asked if some electric water heaters are eligible, and Laura said yes, we need to take the age of the equipment into account. She said she'd be happy to look at all the water heaters.

Rachel asked about the CL requirements. She said we need to update what we voted on in terms of eliminating fossil fuel use by 2050 and noted that we adopted the Special opt-in Code. She said the police department has had trouble with their hybrid vehicles and asked what a municipal decarbonization roadmap is. Laura said it requires specifying a triggering event, for example replacing the roof of the Town Hall. Rachel asked if it's possible to get technical assistance for that, and Laura said yes; there are two pots of money, the next one is in the spring, and the requirements are brief.

Melinda said she had a couple of questions as well. She asked about our intention to apply for the EMF [Emergency Management Facility] to be thoroughly switched to heat pumps, and Daniel said Kirk listed the EMF as a high priority; that building needs a lot of help. Melinda said we should attend to all the needs of that building. She said her second question concerned the Senior Center and wondered if CLC was working with Vineyard Power. Laura said yes, they are a Community First partner working with the DOE [Department of Energy]. Rachel asked if she could send us a link to that program, and Laura said she would send that and a copy of her slideshow.

At this point, Laura left the meeting.

Leaf blower Bylaw discussion

Melinda said she had found the last bylaw about noise. It was the last article (#16) in 2021. What was printed was M-F 11 pm to 7 am and Sat/Sun 11 pm to 8 am, and she had no notes about changes. Daniel said he had had discussions with the Planning Board, Kirk, and several landscapers. Kirk said the Town is buying electric leaf blowers, but they don't meet the decibel level in the bylaw, which is 65 decibels. The landscapers said the commercial leaf blowers are all in the 70-decibel range. Kirk thought the time limitations were okay, but the landscapers said they need a wider range of time. They also said only two leaf blowers per home is not a problem in Tisbury, but it is in Edgartown where the properties are larger and have large lawns. There was no resistance to the months leaf blowing is allowed, but they said there could be problems in the summer because of grass clippings.

Rachel said the article had been filed. She saw it with a clerk stamp dated 1/23. It was circulated to the FinCom. She said we should prepare a stance for Town Meeting. She added that she works in Edgartown and in the summer the noise is high intensity all day long. Daniel commented that if electric leaf blowers are just as noisy as gas-powered ones, that's a problem, and Rachel said the commercial electric ones are still loud. Melinda asked if the warrant article was a Select Board article and if there is a public

hearing planned. Rachel said it didn't say. Melinda said we should weigh in and perhaps we could have one ourselves. She asked if the purpose is to get rid of gas-powered leaf blowers, and Rachel said yes. Daniel said the scope is too broad, but as a climate committee, we would want to be in agreement with them; he added that leaf blowers could be quieter in three years. He commented that it's hard not to defer to people who do this for a living. Rachel said the meeting could be informational, and Kate said that Zada Clarke said VCS [Vineyard Conservation Society] could have an information session. Melinda said VCS is disappointed in Tisbury's response. Rachel said to their credit, they have organized all the island towns, and that's not easy. Daniel said he was glad the Select Board took it up, and Rachel said only the Select Board can put up a warrant, although VCS would have done it with a citizens petition if the Select Board hadn't done so. Daniel said we'll have to wait and see the language and how it's moving along. Rachel announced that the FinCom is meeting with the Select Board on February 11 to review their articles, and she could send that information to Daniel. Daniel said he will reach out to John Cahill to see where this stands and whether he thinks we should have a public session.

Update on mitigating or contending with the insects harming the native trees with comments from DPW

Daniel reported that Kirk said they don't have a policy about cutting trees. If they're near power lines, it's on Eversource to handle them. There are two problems: worms and beetles. The worms are attacking the beech trees, and they can be treated. Melinda said the Board of Health has been objecting to Eversource doing spraying, but the material has been approved by the Department of Agriculture. She asked if the DPW communicates with Eversource and Daniel said it doesn't sound like it; Kirk didn't mention Eversource.

Rachel reported that she and Kate had taken a walk in the area around Brightwood Park and saw a mix of sick and dead and healthy trees. There is a long-standing power line there, and the area would be compromised in a big storm. She is concerned about emergency access and nobody taking responsibility; it's complicated as to who has jurisdiction. Melinda said another route might be to contact the emergency management people because the dead trees pose a fire risk, and Rachel added that insurance companies may be telling people that they have to deal with dead trees on their property.

Tisbury Energy and Climate related Goals Report – Ongoing (Bill)

Bill said he had two quick points. He asked Melinda to send an e-mail with language concerning the water department and said that Rachel had made a comment about funding. He said he would make changes in the plan and present the revised version at the next meeting. Louise said there's an April 1 deadline; we need to review 11 buildings and get started with a request. She asked if Daneil could get Kirk to get that plan in play; we need either Kirk or the Town Administrator to make an official request to Laura Selmer, and she will handle the review. Melinda agreed, saying if we're going to focus on the ESF building, we just need for Kirk to say yes; Laura will handle it from there. They can get here quickly, and they can tell us what the extent of the project will be.

At this point, Bill left the meeting.

Rachel said she would like to nominate Bill to announce at Town Meeting in April how much money the Town is saving by no longer using oil at the school, and Daniel said he would ask Bill if he'd like to make a brief presentation.

ETIPP – Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project. Daniel said the slide deck for that meeting was interesting. He wants to re-do it before allowing others to see it.

EV Chargers at Park & Ride and 21 Beach St – Needs to be signed off by new Town Administrator (TA), no in ground conduit works for electrical.

Daniel said Kirk thought EV chargers at the Park & Ride is a good idea, but all electric work must be above ground because it's a capped landfill. Daniel reported that he had brought the issue up at the Planning Board, and Ben Robinson had said he had notes saying that we would be allowed to start digging again at the capped landfill in 2030; at that time, we can treat it as regular ground. Melinda asked about the EV chargers at the old fire station, and Daniel said Kirk said the TA needs to sign off on that, and Melinda said everybody's delaying until March when we have a new TA.

Rachel said she had noticed private Tesla trucks using the Town's EV chargers at the Annex on a regular basis and that the Town should not be subsidizing private use; she didn't know if the ones at the school were being used as well. She said there's no notice posted that they are not for public use. Melinda moved that we should write a letter to the DPW and the Select Board calling this matter to their attention. Daniel seconded and offered to write the letter. The motion passed 5-0. A discussion ensued concerning the need for a policy about which chargers are for the Town and which for public use; how to manage ChargePoint cards and RFID keys; how to make this issue part of the grant criteria for EV chargers; and whether upgrading current chargers was part of the plan to install EV chargers, whether they could be made to require cards, and whether cards could be issued to Town staff.

Upcoming Meetings: Floodplain Bylaw.

Model Floodplain and Wetlands Bylaws Meeting – Jan. 29 at 4 pm over Zoom.
Louise agreed to attend.

New Business

Melinda said Cheryl Doble has been attending CAP [Climate Action Plan] meetings on second Fridays at the MVC and that Keith has not been there. She volunteered to be our representative to that committee. Rachel said that would be great, and Melinda moved that we invite Cheryl to be our liaison. Rachel seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Rachel, seconded by Louise. The motion passed 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Next Meeting: March 3, 5:30 PM by Zoom.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands