

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting

ID: 849 7433 6346, Passcode: climate

March 3, 2025, 6:07 PM

Attendance: Committee Members: Daniel Phelan, Louise Clough, Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Melinda Loberg (late arrival)

Guests: Cheryl Doble, Richard Andre from Vineyard Power

The meeting could not be called to order until there was a quorum, which did not happen until 6:07 PM, when Melinda arrived. The minutes of January 27 were not approved because there was not a quorum.

Richard Andre attended the meeting and presented the following information about the Resiliency and Affordability Program (RAP) at Vineyard Power to the members who were present:

Vineyard Power (VP) has secured \$15 million through a Community Benefits Agreement with Vineyard Wind. VP's share is 50%, or \$7.5 million (\$500K x 15).

The RAP program has two aims:

1. To enable the development of solar & storage projects at local critical facilities.

They are working to make grants to towns, non-profits, and WTGHA [Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)] for resiliency projects.

2. To provide benefits to income eligible ratepayers across the island.

They have successfully de-coupled low-income support from solar projects and they are collaborating with Cape Light Compact to enable direct benefits to individuals. They are also offering participation in low-income shared solar projects. To be income-eligible, individuals must meet 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). So far, VP has distributed \$350,000 to about 450 households, leading to a 15% reduction in their electric bills. They hope to get to 500 households.

R2 and R4 are automatic, so that should increase the reduction in electric bills to 57%, and combined with other programs, they should get to 85% savings.

The first \$500K was delivered when the project closed in November 2021. The second delivery was not achieved: VP has not reached commercial operation due to delays. Hopefully the second \$500K will be available this summer. After that, it will be automatic. The municipal allocations for each town are about \$500K; Aquinnah's is a little higher because it's isolated, and Tisbury's is a little less because it's not. Of Tisbury's \$487K, \$236K has been committed to the Senior Center, so there's another roughly quarter of a million dollars available for another project. The West Tisbury Library (which will serve as a shelter) has been awarded \$375K, and VP is buying down the purchase agreement.

The status of the Tisbury Senior Center Project is as follows: the Town has executed the contract; CVEC has chosen a developer; the developer has met with the fire chief about the roof; and the developer will file an interconnection agreement with Eversource.

At this point, Melinda arrived, and the meeting was called to order.

Rachel asked how many residents in Tisbury have been receiving assistance, and if Richard has confidence that they will see all the money. Richard said that the current \$7.5 million is 90% guaranteed; it is not affected by executive orders of the Administration. The second \$7.5 million has been federally approved, but the funding is tied to the success of wind project; Southcoast Wind is taking a two-to-four-year break; and the money may not happen for a while. He noted that these are uncertain times.

Richard said that he could come back to another meeting. VP manages the Mass Save Program which distributes \$3.5 million to about 200 households for heat pump rebates. Those who earn 80% of AMI have 100% of their costs covered. Rachel asked Daniel to invite Richard to come back and present that program to us.

The Commonwealth has been involved in the RAP program, and VP was required to form an advisory committee with members from all towns, the County, & WTGHA; Vineyard Wind, MVC and DOER provide ex officio members. Tisbury's representative is Kirk Metell, who was appointed by the Select board, and who has never attended a meeting. Rachel noted that both VP and Vineyard Wind are here in Tisbury and our citizens need help. She suggested that the Select Board to appoint someone else to the VP advisory committee. Richard said all members of the Tisbury Climate Committee (TCC) would be welcome at meetings, but they need a designated representative from the TCC, ideally the CVEC rep. Daniel said he has replaced Bill Straw as the CVEC rep and expressed interest in attending the meetings. He said we needed a motion to ask the Select Board to appoint him as Tisbury's representative to the VP advisory committee. Melinda so moved, Rachel seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

At this point, Richard left the meeting, and the Committee moved on to the regular agenda:

Update about the Cape Light Compact grant funding for the Town. RISE Engineering visit to the Tisbury Fire Station. This is on schedule.

Daniel reported that Rise engineering went to the Fire Station last Wednesday to look at water heaters and decarbonization projects with Chief Ralston and Kirk Metell. Chief Ralston was excited about the project, and Laura Selmer said we had ample time.

Leaf blower By-Law discussion – Update with comments from DPW and landscaping companies. Get existing regulations from the Town Clerk. Reach out to Select Board to see where this article is in the process of getting on the warrant. Public session? Need follow-up.

Daniel asked Rachel if she had obtained a copy of the noise regulations from the Town, and Rachel said yes, the Town clerk had sent them. There is a time-of-day limit: it specifies no excessive noise at night, early in the morning, and on weekends. She noted that if residents can hear noise 50 feet from a property line, they can make a noise complaint, and the police will handle it. Rachel said the Vineyard Conservation Society (VCS) has scheduled an information meeting, and Kate said Zada Clarke had sent us a poster about it. Rachel said the FinCom hasn't decided whether to recommend it, and Daniel said he wanted to reach out to the Select Board to see where the Warrant Article (WA) stands. Rachel said the FinCom was meeting with the Select Board tomorrow to go over Warrants, and she and Louise could report back from that meeting. Daniel commented that the draft WA fits in with the noise regulations.

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

This item was postponed until Bill is present.

Climate stabilization fund questions. Presentation about the reduction in fossil fuel use from the all-electric school at Town Meeting?

Rachel reported that there are no appropriations for climate actions this time around because we didn't file a WA, but there is money available. She added that we need to tell residents at the Town Meeting how much money we're saving at the school. Melinda agreed that a statement would be nice, along with a thank you to the school committee for using the extra money they had for solar panels. Melinda said she could run it by Deborah Medders, who will fill in as moderator for the Town Meeting, because the current town moderator resigned. Rachel said we should write something up and run it by Deborah; she added that she could ask Deborah about it if she's at tomorrow's meeting. Daniel said we had plenty of time to write up a one-minute statement.

Next Green Communities Project / Update on EV Charging stations in Tisbury

Melinda asked if anyone knew where the EV charging station plan stood. Daniel said it still needs to be signed by the Town Administrator (TA). The RFP is still in a pile of things on the TA's desk. There followed a discussion about the existing chargers at High Point Lane and the Senior Center. At least the one at High Point Lane is being used by the public without being charged for its use. Daniel spoke to Kirk about this problem, and Kirk thought a 4-hour parking sign might help; Daniel told him we were considering upgrading the chargers and Kirk gave him a thumbs up. The grant requires public access, but the chargers could be upgraded to require payment; as an example, the ones under the Vineyard Wind building use RFID cards. Melinda suggested that we add the upgrades to the existing RFP for new chargers at Beach Road and the Park & Ride. Daniel asked if VP covered EV chargers, and Melinda and Louise said no.

At this point (6:50 PM) Melinda said she had to leave and asked if there was anything else that required a quorum. As a result, the next meeting was scheduled for March 31, and the formal meeting ended. Before she left, Melinda wondered if it was too soon to issue an invitation to the new TA to attend a TCC meeting.

Report from the Climate Action Plan Community Coordinating Committee meeting on Feb. 21

Cheryl reported that Liz Durkee is retiring, and they are looking for someone to replace her. She presented a summary of the meeting, including the following, along with announcements of meetings scheduled for several of these items:

- Updates from the Towns and the County
- Leaf Blower articles
- Revisions to The Vineyard Way website
- MVP 2.0
- MVP Action Grant
- Plant Local Initiative
- Storm Tide Pathway mapping

Cheryl also said she had a slide deck about flood plain bylaws from Barnstable County that she could send out to the group.

Daniel said he would invite the new TA to the next meeting, and that it would be a good time to go over Bill's climate goals for the Town with him. Rachel said she had looked up the new TA's previous city, and it didn't have the level of citizen involvement we have in Tisbury. She said that and Town Meeting will be a big part of his learning curve.

Kate asked if we needed to reconstitute the TCC, since we have several members who are not able to attend meetings, and a smaller group would make it easier to have a quorum. Rachel said the Select Board appoints committees after Town Meeting, and it might make sense to have a 7-member committee.

Adjournment: The informal portion of the meeting ended at 7:14 PM.

Next Meeting: March 31.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands