

CLIMATE COMMITTEE
TOWN OF EDGARTOWN

MINUTES OF ZOOM MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 10, 2023

Julia Livingston, the chair of the committee, opened the meeting at 4:05 PM.

The following members of the committee were present on zoom, as follows:

Jennifer Blum
Josey Kirkland
Peter Kirn
Julia Livingston
Kevin Loughlin

In addition, Alan Strahler, Bruce Fowle, Jack Walsh, Ellen Price, and Ben Robinson were present on zoom as invited guests.

First, Josey made the suggestion that we should not over emphasize the gloom and doom of climate news. She thinks descending into eco-anxiety is not helpful, and she likes to ask the students she works with to bring up positive environmental facts at each meeting.

Jennifer responded by saying that a 2023 Climate Action Day is being planned, and it will focus on uplifting ideas.

The next order of business was public comment, but no members of the public were present other than the invited guests.

Next was a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13 meeting, which had previously been emailed to all committee members. There was a motion duly seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

The next topic was Jennifer's report summarizing the meetings with Town department leaders. This is now in two slightly different formats, one to be delivered as a set of slides at a Select Board Meeting on January 17 and one to be included as the Climate Committee report in the 2022 Town Report. Jennifer gave a short summary and said she would send both to the other members of the Climate Committee for their comments, emphasizing that comments need to be made in the next couple of days in order to meet the deadlines. Jennifer encouraged everyone to tune into the January 17 Select Board Meeting and change their name on zoom so it says "Edgartown Climate Committee" after their name.

The next order of business was the letter from the Martha's Vineyard Commission signed by Ben Robinson and asking for the Town's top three climate issues. Ben explained that Woodwell Climate Research Center has offered to map out the rest of this century for the Vineyard in decadal form as to three categories. The Woodwell program is entirely funded by a UK foundation. Ben is looking for input as to what categories are of interest, especially categories where we don't otherwise have a lot of information. He feels that we need more information about changes in precipitation, drought, and heat. He said there will eventually be an advisory group, which will probably have a member from the Edgartown Climate Committee.

Julia said she thinks precipitation should definitely be on the list. She noted that storm water won't and shouldn't be draining into the ocean in the future. Kevin mentioned a focus in California on trapping storm water more effectively. Bruce said he thinks the biggest issues on Chappaquiddick are the interactions of sea level rise, drought, and their aquifer. Jennifer said it

would be a mistake to leave sea level rise off the list. Ben agreed that, even though we know quite a lot about sea level rise, the science is changing, so we may need to know more. Alan said he would like to see high winds and intense storms on the list, partly because our electricity could go out for long periods of time if utility poles are down and the lines are in tatters. A serious hurricane would be a real inflection point. Ben said he would like to show Woodwell everything we now have and ask them to advise us on what we need. Peter said the question should be, "Where do we need more data?" Kevin suggested putting together presentations of data that would really make an impression on non-scientists. Ben said that a focus on storm events might galvanize the community to action. Ben expects to get back to Woodwell by the end of this month.

Next, Julia said she was going to put together new assignments and new questions for this year's conversations with Town department leaders as a way of getting started on an updated card for 2023. Kevin and Jennifer suggested that we list positive changes such as new water bottle refill stations, new trees planted, and storm drains cleared or reconstructed. Alan said there are public car charging stations at the airport and the airport business park in addition to the ones at the Dark Woods park and ride lot. Jennifer said the new conversations with Town department leaders should include making sure they are aware of the action items from the MVC CAP that they should be thinking about. Alan reminded us that we should be sure to ask the Town department leaders for their ideas. Peter said we should have a deadline for each team to report. Julia suggested that the deadline should be our March meeting.

Kevin asked about the status of the Edgartown Master Plan. Julia and Alan responded that there is nothing new to report, and the next step is probably a new draft from the consultants. Julia asked Ben about the Army Corps of Engineers study of the ports and the aquifer, and Ben said he would be asking the Towns for input over the next few months.

Next, Kevin said that he has an appointment with Chief Schaeffer to gather input for the letter Kevin is working on to go to our two State Representatives and our State Senator about the danger of a serious fire in the State forest and the need for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to do significant clearing of dead wood and brush.

Peter reported that there is no update on the harbor plan.

Julia reported that a warrant article was filed in the name of the Climate Committee asking for \$50,000 to hire an expert to recommend zoning bylaw changes to enable the Town to adapt to climate change. She said that, after it was filed, the Planning Board asked James to increase the amount to \$75,000 and remove the language about climate change so that it could include other issues, such as affordable housing. Peter expressed the worry that widening the scope may not be a good idea, and Julia agreed. It seems to be the way the Planning Board wants to go, and all of us should keep an eye on the Planning Board agendas and tune into their meetings.

Julia said it would be great if someone who is climate oriented would run for the Edgartown Planning Board, and we should all try to think of candidates.

Julia reported that Liz Durkee of the MVC had told her the National Flood Insurance Program is requiring some zoning bylaw changes this year in order for Edgartown to stay in the program. Liz had asked Julia to follow up with the Planning Board, and Julia said she would do that.

Julia suggested that it might be a good idea to encourage the newspapers to write an article about the State program that provides low interest loans for improving septic systems before they are failing if the upgrade removes more nitrogen. Kevin suggested inviting the newspapers

to attend one of our meetings. Alan said this worked well for the League of Women Voters. Bruce said he has the names of people in Woods Hole who are experts on septic systems.

Alan asked that everybody consider tuning into the Conservation Commission meeting next week on the New England Wind 1 Connector and said he would send around the zoom information.

There was a unanimous vote to adjourn at 5:05 pm.