

## EDGARTOWN CLIMATE COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF ZOOM MEETING HELD ON APRIL 25, 2024

Julia Livingston, the chair of the committee, opened the meeting at 4:02 PM.

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

Jennifer Blum  
Julia Livingston  
Kevin Loughlin

In addition, Alan Strahler, Ellen Price, Jack Connell, Bruce Fowle, David Lindheimer, and Kathy Ploss were present on zoom as invited guests.

The first order of business was a motion to approve the minutes of the March 14 meeting, which had previously been emailed to all committee members. There was a motion duly seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Julia encouraged all committee members to keep doing town department interviews. Kevin said he had spoken with Chief McNamee of the Police Department. Kevin reported that the Chief is open to transitioning to electric vehicles. The Chief also said that housing costs are a major problem for hiring and retention. Kevin said he would write up a summary of the conversation. Jennifer said she is following up with Connor Downing, the Health Agent. She also said she and Josey had met with Lyndsay Famariss from the Council on Aging. The Council has started the planning for moving away from Dock Street. Among other reasons for moving, accessibility is becoming more and more of a problem because of the frequent flooding of the area.

As to the 2024 rack card, Julia said Peter Kirn had made a good suggestion about the text so it now says the Master Plan and Harbor Management Plan will guide decision making and climate actions in Edgartown for the next 10 years. Julia said she would like to have any other suggested changes to the text soon so she can run the language by James Hagerty. Jennifer suggested identifying the Edgartown locations of the free water bottle refill stations. Julia asked whether it would be better to use a photo of the crane at North Wharf or a photo of the water bottle refill station at Memorial Wharf. Kevin suggested a photo of the eroding dunes at South Beach. There was a general consensus that a photo of the water bottle refill station at Memorial Wharf should be our photo for this year.

Julia said she and Jennifer and Ellen would be staffing tables at the May 19 Climate Action Fair. She encouraged everyone to attend. Jennifer said it's a great opportunity to talk to people and find out what climate concerns they have. The Climate Committee table will have laminated 2023 and 2022 rack cards along with copies of the 2023 report recently delivered to the Select Board. Jennifer asked whether there would be a Climate Committee QR code, and Julia said she would make sure of that.

Julia gave a short summary of the April 9 Town meeting at which there were several proposed workforce housing and climate related zoning bylaw changes. All of the housing related changes were approved. The tree protection proposal was sent back to committee for further study. The proposed limit on impermeable surfaces was not approved. A new bylaw was approved that limits the aggregate amount of Gross Floor Area of residential structures on a lot to 10,000 square feet, or 12,000 square feet if the only fossil fuel use is for a backup generator, all buildings are either connected to the Town sewer or use an enhanced nitrogen removal septic system, and all driveways and parking areas use permeable surfaces.

Julia said zoning bylaw changes are hard for the public to understand. They are written in legal language because they have to be approved by the Attorney General. It may be important to prioritize just a few for next year. Julia is hopeful that there may be a new and improved tree protection bylaw next year. Jennifer suggested that, especially as to the impermeable surface bylaw, there should be an effort to inform voters ahead of the Town meeting and explain that the proposals were created to address residents' concerns. Jack suggested emphasizing that stormwater and flooding issues are connected with impermeable surfaces. Bruce suggested photographs showing types of permeable surfaces such as concrete blocks with grass growing through so the driveway looks like a nice grassy area. Bruce feels there are permeable surfaces that would work for family basketball courts, too. Kevin said he was surprised that the citizen petition about gas leaf blowers failed. Julia said she thinks it might have passed if it had included a lead time before becoming effective. David suggested that it would help if these warrant articles came up earlier in the meeting. Julia said she has scheduled a meeting with James Hagerty to discuss these ideas.

Julia asked each member of the group to take a look at the September 2022 list of possible climate related zoning bylaw changes and let her know which seem like they should be priorities for the 2025 Town Meeting.

Julia reported that the most recent MVC Climate Action Task Force meeting was about green career pathways and the ways in which climate issues are addressed in the schools. Julia said she was very impressed with what's available to the students. Ellen said it's continuing education, too, not just the students. Julia agreed that there seems to be a very significant effort to serve young people who are in the 18-25 age group.

Next was an update on our effort to get the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to do needed maintenance in the State Forest. Kevin reported that there was a good conversation with Kaylea Moore from Dylan Fernandes' office. Kevin expects a follow up call before our next meeting. Julia and Jennifer encouraged Kevin to keep trying to make contact with Bob Woodruff of the Friends of Corellus. Julia also mentioned getting in touch with Dan Doyle at the MVC and attending the panel scheduled for the Climate Action Fair on May 19. Kevin said he was planning to attend.

Bruce said he was trying to identify someone from Chappy to join this committee and hoped to be able to stir the pot when he is on Chappy in June and August.

Julia reported that there is now a version of the Edgartown Master Plan online. Julia will send the QR code to the group.

Julia said she would also forward emails about the Oak Bluffs Community Climate Discussions. Jennifer suggested that each of us should forward these along to our personal groups of friends.

Julia said there is still a possibility of Professor Susan Solomon coming to give a talk, but it is not definite yet.

Julia described a letter she had received from the US Bureau of Energy Management (BOEM) about a new large wind farm being planned for waters south of Martha's Vineyard. The letter asks the Climate Committee to be a "consulting party." Julia said she was inclined to ask Peter Kirn to be our representative for this project because his work on the new Harbor Management Plan is winding up. Jennifer expressed a concern that the Climate Committee should not be expected to approve things about which we do not have authority or expertise. Alan Strahler said there have been mitigation payments in the past for communities close enough to see the offshore turbines. He said, if we are a consulting party, we will receive information over time

that we can review to see if it sets off any alarm bells. He emphasized that we should coordinate with Richard André of Vineyard Power. There was general agreement that the Climate Committee should respond affirmatively to the letter from BOEM.

Julia reported that the Edgartown Energy Committee has asked the Climate Committee to join with them in three new initiatives: encouraging the Town to (1) purchase electric vehicles, (2) commit to be fossil fuel free by 2050, and (3) adopt the Specialized Stretch Building Code promulgated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Alan Strahler provided the background that Edgartown has been a “Green Community” for a few years and has received \$130,000 in Massachusetts grants as a result. He explained that all three of these new initiatives are part of becoming a “Climate Leader Community” - a program informally known as Green Communities 2.0. Alan hopes the Specialized Stretch Building Code will be on the warrant for the spring 2025 Town meeting. The Climate Committee voted enthusiastically to support these initiatives of the Energy Committee.

Kevin reported that the Climate Adaptation Fee Committee, for which he is the representative of the Climate Committee, has been meeting regularly to explore ways to provide financial support for climate adaptation projects. He said this is still in a nascent stage. They are talking about a disembarkment fee, but this would involve the Steamship Authority, the Massachusetts legislature, and the port towns likely expecting a disproportionate share. Kevin will keep the Climate Committee informed.

There was a unanimous vote to adjourn at 5:00 PM.