

West Tisbury Energy Committee
Minutes of December 13, 2023
Meeting via Zoom
-Approved 10 January, 2024

Present: John Christensen, Michael Gately, Sue Hruby, Nicola Blake, Kate Warner, Richard Andre
Amelia Smith (admin)

John Christensen called the meeting to order at 8:32 AM

The revised minutes of November 8th, 2023 were approved unanimously by roll call.

John Christensen – Aye. Michael Gately– Aye. Sue Hruby– Aye. Nicola Blake– Aye. Kate Warner–
Aye. Richard Andre – Aye.

Kate reported that the work on the roof of the Grange has been put on hold because of the extent of the work that needs to be done. The Historic District Commission and the Preservation Trust are potentially open to putting solar panels on the roof, once the project reaches that stage.

All approved admitting Kate Warner’s committee report notes into the record.

John Christensen – Aye. Michael Gately– Aye. Sue Hruby– Aye. Nicola Blake– Aye. Kate Warner–
Aye. Richard Andre – Aye.

Richard reported that all of the island libraries now have an induction stovetop available to borrow so that people can try them. From the Capital Improvements Planning Committee, he reported that the library has no capital requests and that the fire station is moving along to correct and replace the exhaust systems at both stations. A lot of that work is covered under OSHA/worker safety grants, which can cover 90% of the cost, and it will also be more energy efficient. A select-board appointed group will be looking at housing needs for accommodating emergency services employees. West Tisbury will need to have two bunks or bedrooms for EMTs.

There was a discussion of using the **CLEAR report** to guide decisions and of sharing those reports with other decision makers to prioritize energy projects, such as getting the Public Safety Building rolling with solar and battery power. If the Library RFP is approved this will be the next project. Kate mentioned that the school has to reduce its energy use by 20% in five years, (3 ½ years left now) to keep our participation in Green Communities. There was further discussion on how to get this information in front of the Capital Improvements Committee and other committees. For another meeting, Kate will summarize suggestions of the CLEAR report.

Cape Light Compact (CLC): Nicola reports that CLC is looking for funding to allow more one-stop-shopping, doing work in house. People are having trouble getting rebates in a timely manner because of unsuccessful partnerships with a succession of vendors - hence considering bringing that work in house. There has been low uptake of the local green program option despite marketing - likely because of generally high energy costs. CLC is looking at changing the threshold for moderate income rebates because of high costs here.

Liz Durkee will present updates to the Climate Action Plan to the Select Board today. Sue and Nicola have been on the Visioning Committee, which will have a forum on April 26th and 27th. There is a discussion of creating a combined administrative position in the West Tisbury Town Hall, which would include the functions of the Building Department Clerk, the Climate and Energy Assistant, and work for Howes House. Kate said that it would be preferable to have someone who specializes in energy, and that CLC has an RFP for a person who would go one day per week to each of four Cape towns and then spend one day at the CLC. She wondered if this was something that could be done here.

John made a change to the budget to include training and seminars, and an increase in pay/step grade for the assistant. There was a vote to approve the **budget**, including an increase in the communications budget.

John Christensen – Aye. Michael Gately– Aye. Sue Hruby– Aye. Nicola Blake– Aye. Kate Warner– Aye. Richard Andre – Aye.

Getting to Net Zero report: Kate asked for people to pass suggestions along to her. The report will be available online. It is a project of the Martha’s Vineyard Commission with input from all of the island’s energy committees. There was also a brief discussion of how and where to distribute this report.

Specialized Code Warrant Article: Kate took the text of the Warrant Article from Bill Lake. It was approved by Aquinnah and the wording has already been through the Attorney General’s office. She is compiling a “frequently asked questions” list for the warrant article. There are only a few differences between the Specialized Code and the Stretch Code. EV wiring is required for all new houses, and mixed-fuel houses must be pre-wired to accommodate all-electric systems. 200 Amp service has been the standard but it is now becoming 300-400 Amps because of the EV charger requirement. For houses over 4000 square feet, mixed fuel houses will need enough solar to reduce the HERS rating to zero, with some exceptions allowed for shaded roofs. Wood stoves may put houses in the mixed fuel category, but generators do not. Island Housing Trust is already building very efficient houses. Joe says most people are putting in heat pumps.

31 Massachusetts towns including Boston have approved the specialized code, and it is required in order to be part of the Climate Leaders program. Kate wants to submit the warrant article to the Select Board for approval now.

There was a unanimous vote to put this article on the warrant:

John Christensen – Aye. Michael Gately– Aye. Sue Hruby– Aye. Nicola Blake– Aye. Kate Warner– Aye. Richard Andre – Aye.

For the **Annual Report**, Kate had circulated a list of bullet points. Members of the committee have been assigned to write about the following:

- Nicola: EV chargers being installed at the school and Cape Light Compact.
- Kate: The move to have town EV chargers for a fee only, and Energy Committee representatives on the Facilities and Capital Improvements committees
- John: Public Safety Building’s new exhaust system and future solar.
- Sue: Resilience hubs and the Bainbridge Island climate emergency preparedness model.

- Richard: Library RFP being issued for solar and batteries with help from Vineyard Power. Michael will compile these reports into a single report and circulate the compiled set before the January 10th meeting.

Chargers: The town hall charger is now wrapped in pink tape with a sign asking for people to go across to the library parking lot. The school chargers were going to be done by the end of the year, but there is trouble with needing a new pole from Eversource, and the asphalt plant being shut down by cold weather. Maverick is saying that it should be done early in the new year. John and Nicola will take over Amelia's role in coordinating this project.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of who should be leading the day to day work on these projects. John suggested that it would be best if the Energy Committee had a supervisory role, and that the actual doing of the projects was too much for an all-volunteer committee, that it is not sustainable.

There is an organizational gap, and a need to get other committees involved and perhaps to push for a facilities/energy agent. Sue said, "Part of the issue is that the town does not take seriously the fact that we're in a climate emergency... People don't get it. If they did, they'd be putting resources against towards it. But I think we're starting to see some changes. ... Is it going as fast as we would like? No, not at all. But we've made huge progress this year." Kate asked Sue to write this up as a preamble to the committee's report for the town report. Another priority is putting energy and climate issues into the planning process for the town's 25-year agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 AM.

Next meeting will be on 10 January, 2024 at 8:30 AM