

West Tisbury Energy Committee
Minutes of November 8, 2023
Meeting via Zoom

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

John Christensen called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM

Minutes approved by roll call on 13 December 2023.

The minutes of October 11, 2023 were approved unanimously by roll call.

EV Chargers. The select board accepted the proposed EV charger policy, and asked for the Energy Committee to give them a list of what they wanted the Select Board to do.

The committee is working toward having a “Level 3” charger at the Public Safety Building. John said that there is a lot of funding for chargers that will be coming in soon. The state was really pitching the upcoming funding, and we should be ready for that. Richard said that we are tying this charger into moving the police department toward an electric vehicle fleet, even though that’s not happening this year. An electric police vehicle could be proposed at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, or at a special meeting before that.

At the moment there is no EVIP rebate for the ChargePoint “Level 3” charger, but the EVIP rules may change on January 1st.

Eversource would put in the electrical service from State Road for free for both ChargePoint and FreeWire chargers, and there is additional grant funding for the Free Wire charger. Some advantages of the FreeWire charger are that it doesn’t need a 480 Volt transformer, and in the event of a power failure you would be able to draw power from the battery. It also avoids Peak electricity charges.

John and Richard will talk to fire chief Pachico about solar for the roof at the Public Safety Building.

The Massachusetts Climate Chief published a report on October 25th with recommendations and strategies for meeting resilience goals and building a clean energy future to achieve “net zero” by 2050. Hoffer mentions that State departments are siloed. John noted that our silos are small on the Vineyard but they’re still silos. Having an energy committee member on the Facilities Committee and on the Capital Improvements Committee, as well as meeting with Russ, the Emergency Manager, helps break those down.

Lexington built a new high school with solar and storage, which is projected to make money over the life of the debt service of the systems. John asked if we can have an energy presence on the planning for the high school, and Kate said that Matt Coffey from South Mountain is on the High School Building Committee and will bring his perspective and expertise. Kate noted that

ground source heat pumps are better supported in terms of federal rebates than air source heat pumps. Richard will talk to Matt Coffey to find out what's going on with the high school.

Richard reported that Vineyard Power is working ACE MV on workforce development and education. They will be offering an introduction to offshore wind starting in 6th grade, a solar car race for 7th graders, and an introduction to career opportunities for 8th graders. They will go to every 11th grade classroom to speak about renewables and the career opportunities around that, as well as dual-enrollment college courses. Richard is meeting with ACE MV every two weeks.

There was a discussion about getting an article about this or an energy report into the MV Times, and the committee's advocacy role.

The committee will discuss the Specialized Code in December and get it on the Town Meeting warrant.

Sue said that it would be helpful to get regular updates from Cape Light Compact and VSEC. Nicola says there wasn't anything of note from last month's CLC meeting, but added that the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program coordinator will be at the MVC tomorrow.

Richard reported that Vineyard Power was appointed the Mass Save Community First partner, responsible for raising awareness and getting people into energy efficiency programs. There were 550 home energy assessments in 2022 and about 745 in 2023, a 25-30% increase that came about from having a local organization working on this. Vineyard Power's focus now is finding energy specialists on the island, to work on the RISE energy assessments.

Kate said that when CLC did an audit of the MVC building they only looked at lighting and the refrigerators, because blower door testing is not part of their commercial building program. This was 2 weeks ago. Richard claims they do more, but there are misconceptions, misinformation, and cumbersome bureaucracy. He also spoke about the need for HVAC technicians.

Amelia will be leaving her job as assistant to the committee and the job has been posted on the town website and in the newspapers. Sue, Nicola, and John will handle applications.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25

Next meeting December 13, 2023, 8:30 AM