

Oct 2, 2019

From the MVP Action list, our top priorities are

communication  
fire protection  
grid resilience  
public water supply  
storm water management

We are one of 2 towns that does not have a harbor. But we will experience flooding as sea levels rise, as rainfall becomes more intense and as ponds such as Tisbury Great Pond get breached. Streams and ponds will back up and spill out onto adjacent properties and roads.

We do not have a structure in place to accomplish the things on our action list. Other towns have a staff person who is an obvious first person to begin on their work. And other towns have applied for and gotten grants already because of this.

There are 3 facets of this work: emergency preparedness so we are ready for extreme weather events and fire, adaptation so we are ready for the impacts that the climate crisis will bring and mitigation so that we are doing all we can to slow the crisis that is affecting our species and planet.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

In terms of emergency preparedness, we have an emergency manager who is working hard on island emergency issues. The island, at present, has one Red Cross certified shelter that can accommodate 136 people. Our town does not have a shelter although the older emergency plan mentions the School and the Ag Hall. There are a small number of people on the island who are certified to be Red Cross people if we have a big emergency. So the reason Russ wants people to evacuate in the event of a big weather event is that we currently only have 2 choices: shelter in place or evacuate. Aquinnah is choosing to deal with this by creating an unofficial shelter and by training town residents to be a Community Emergency Response Team. (CERT) If we want to do this, we need to choose what spots would be shelters and prepare them as best as possible. And train people to be in charge should an emergency arise.

*Chief Mincone told me after the meeting that the School has received a grant to put a film on the windows. (I have heard from a contractor that that is a way they protect glass from shattering in Florida)*

Aside from doing the MVP process, the Town has yet to address the adaptation and mitigation portions of the work. Other towns have groups formed or forming comprised of the different town boards and staff to serve in an advisory capacity and to keep this work at the forefront of the business of the Town. We need this.

Our group might include representation from:

Selectmen, Executive Secretary, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Energy Committee, Planning Board, Highway Department, Finance Committee, Board of Appeals, Police and Fire Departments

When discussing emergency planning for the town, it should include Police and Fire Departments, School administration, managers from whatever buildings we are choosing to use, Council on Aging, Library and others

## **Adaptation**

Our 5 top priorities are all under the category of adaptation.

**Communication.** Russ is working on in terms of getting people registered on the Code Red website and in filling out MRC (?) forms

We will need to do more on this topic so our town is well-informed and so that people know how to get help—from neighbors or emergency staff

We also need people to understand the 3 facets of the problem and get on board to help with each one. (poster of 6 talks is a start...)

**Fire Protection.** I contacted Chris Bruno, the manager of the State Forest, and he passed me on to Josh Nigro of the DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control. He is a District 1 Forest Fire Warden. He told me that because of the SW prevailing wind, the subdivisions in Edgartown that are on the northeast side of the State Forest are in the greatest danger and that they are working on a grant application with the Edgartown Fire Chief to work on a State Forest fire protection plan. He also told me that there was a special training given here and that our Fire Chief, among others, had done the training. The State Forest has no water reserves within its boundaries. Apparently, when this has been suggested there have been concerns about our sole source aquifer.

**Grid Resilience.** In the longer term, the resilience of our electric grid and expansion to accommodate greater electric use is something that has to be coordinated with Eversource. It is possible that Charlotte Ansel, Director of Eversource's Clean Energy department, will come down and speak with the MVC Climate Task Force in October. That will be helpful in terms of long term planning. Our town challenge is how to provide back-up power and water in times of extreme weather events. One possible approach is to identify and prioritize the Town buildings that we would like to have available for power and water in such times and provide them with solar arrays and battery banks so that they can function, in a good, but perhaps slimmed down capacity. This is a possible grant topic.

**Public Water Supply.** There are two pieces to this: having water available for the long run that has not been tainted by saltwater intrusion. And having the power to pump that water so that our townspeople can get water even if we have a prolonged power failure. The first part may need hydrologic study. The second part ties into the grid resilience piece.

We will also need to consider saltwater intrusion of private wells, particularly in places like the properties that abut Tisbury Great Pond but over time, more properties may be affected. A plan for how to deal with this will need to be devised.

**Storm-water Management.** Our town has many brooks, streams and ponds. There are dams along them. We have ponds that abut major roadways and brooks and streams that go underneath major roadways. The Conservation Commission, Highway Department and possibly Planning Board are going to need to devise a plan for how to: manage water in times of flooding, keep our roads passable and, provide spaces along these waterways for surface water expansion. A plan needs to be devised that incorporates nature-based solutions and we made need to get grants and hire consultants to help with this.

## **Mitigation**

Our energy committee has been working for some time with the island's other energy committees as a group called Vineyard Sustainable Energy Committee. (VSEC) They will be proposing a non-binding referendum warrant article at the annual town meeting

asking for support of our being a 100% renewable energy island by 2040. As part of this, the energy committee will be asking both the town and its citizens to make big changes to meet this goal. Strategies will include: all electric buildings that make some or all of their own power, all electric transportation and the need for the infrastructure for that, increased local food production and increased waste reduction including composting.

### **Grant information:**

**Further planning and coordination.** It seems that this activity could possibly get funding through the Green Communities, not through the MVP program. (or the Town needs to fund it.) We would need to finish our last GC grant first.

### **MVP grant**

Being issued first week in Oct. Grant applications will be due early to mid November. Grants will be awarded in January 2020. The grant can propose work through June 30, 2020 or June 30, 2021. There is a required match of 25% by the Town in cash or in-kind services. Match money cannot come from other State grants. There will be another grant opportunity in late spring 2020.

Last time, \$26,000,000 was requested, \$12,000,000 funded. Funded 36 projects, rejected 32. Average grant was \$360,000. Oak Bluffs got \$2,000,000; Edgartown got \$130,000.

Focus is on manageable projects that can be completed on time, nature-based solutions are encouraged. There will be some sort of energy resilience category. Grant ideas have to be tied into our Town MVP Action List. Grants with other towns encouraged.

One possible approach to forming a climate advisory committee, suggested by Oak Bluffs Con Comm staff:

Step 1: organize a meeting in each town with all the relevant boards and address:

- Overview of climate impacts
- Explain difference between adaptation and mitigation and give examples of each
- Overview of the responsibilities/authority of each board (so all the various board members know what the other boards are charged with doing)
- Review MVP Identified action priorities and discuss other town priorities
- Discuss how the town boards can work together to accomplish priority projects
- Set up an in-house Climate Committee with a rep from each board that meets monthly to update actions, grant opportunities, etc. and to keep moving forward on projects (and perhaps also realize that a climate coordinator position would be valuable)

Step 2: After each town has done this, the MVC could organize regional meetings (All-Island Con Com, Planning, Highway, etc.) for board members from all towns to share ideas with each other and also work together to address regional issues and pursue regional grants