



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

www.westport-ma.com/climate-resilience-committee

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, May 4, 2023

John Bullard, Chair
Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair

CRC, Subcommittee Members, Staff & Others Present:

- John Bullard, Chair
- Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair
- Michael Burris – Town Planner
- Amy Messier – Assistant Town Planner
- Helen Zincavage - SRPEDD
- Jim Whitin
- Dr. Michael Yogman
- Jeff Cantin
- Mike Sullivan
- David Cole
- Jake McGuigan
- Joseph Ingoldsby
- Phil Weinberg
- Kit Wise
- Delaney Ingalls
- Lauren Miller Donnelly
- Constance Gee

John Bullard called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

1. **Introductions:**

Jim Whitin motioned to nominate Kit Wise and Wendy Nicholas as members of the Climate Resilience Committee so they can serve on the Historic Structures subcommittee, seconded by Shana Shufelt, with all members in favor, the motion carried. John Bullard mentioned that Kit Wise has nationwide expertise in historic structures, architecture and restorations, such as buildings, cemeteries, etc. and to ascertain what the impacts may be due to climate change, such as sea level rise and other elements that may impact historic structures. Bullard went on to mention that Wendy Nicholas worked for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The newly formed Historic Structures subcommittee will be comprised of Kit Wise, Wendy Nicholas and Sean Leach.

2. **SRPEDD discussion with Helen Zincavage – Green Communities Program:**

Helen Zincavage, the manager of Environmental Planning at SRPEDD was present and shared a presentation, called “Community Net Zero Planning”. Helen mentioned that one work program SRPEDD is trying to expand into more fully is green house gas and climate pollution mitigation. The [presentation](#) gave an overview on the variety of global warming indicators; what is causing the changes; the benefits of planning for net zero; where the community should start; current framework (4 step program); Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA). Helen stated that SRPEDD is looking for a pilot community (preferably one with an established climate or environmental resilience committee). Jim Whitin stated that Westport could be interested however, it will most likely take more than the grant of \$3,000.00, and would require the allocation of town resources. John Bullard suggested that the Planning Office discuss

the opportunity further and assess whether or not the program would be an ideal fit for the towns current abilities and resources.

3. Grant Updates:

- **Buzzards Bay NEP Applications (2):**

Michael Burris stated that neither of these applications received funding, however, there will be a second round of funding with about \$700,000.00 to be granted. The applications will be revisited with improvements to be made and will be re-submitted for the second round.

- **1. Assistance with MS4 program:**

- MS4 project didn't compete well since it's a monitoring program and the grant ended up funding more action-oriented projects

- **2. Community nitrogen reducing wastewater system at The Let:**

- The grant did not rank competitively with the other applications that had been submitted.

- **Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP 2.0):**

Michael Burris stated that an application will be submitted to the MVP 2.0 program, the purpose of this grant program is to revisit our climate resilience priorities listed in the first MVP (5 years ago) and will also include community outreach with a focus on communities that are not well represented and the environmental justice community. This grant program is for \$45,000.00 which would go towards selecting a vendor for the project component activities. As a second part of the grant, if awarded, the town would automatically receive an additional \$50,000 for a seed project, which can be put towards an action project. The \$50,000 would most likely be used towards developing a climate resilience plan, however Mr. Burris encouraged everyone to be open to other opportunities relating to the use of the funding if they arise. The application is due within the next two weeks, and assistance from Jeff Cantin was offered.

- **Coastal Resilience Grant Program:**

Michael Burris stated that SRPEDD has offered free assistance for helping with grant writing. Michael also mentioned that this grant would be for the reuse of the dredged materials within the harbor. The dredging materials could be used as beach nourishment (East Beach) or a possible demonstration salt marsh restoration (thin layer deposition) project. The grant is still in the preliminary phases, and requires a meeting with the Harbor Master to see if this project can even be coordinated, however it is being considered. Jim Whitin mentioned that the dredged material could also be used for beach nourishment on West Beach. Jake McGuigan mentioned that there's a concern with beach nourishment and cautions against the use of materials on East Beach since it has washed away quickly in the past after a storm event. Michael Burris mentioned that if a coordinated effort for thin layer deposition for the salt marshes comes to fruition, he would expect some permitting issues since it is currently not permitted in Massachusetts.

4. Acceptance of 3/9/23 minutes: Mr. Whitin motioned to accept the minutes of 3/9/23, seconded by Mike Sullivan, with no opposition, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Subcommittee Reports:

- **Engagement & Fundraising:**

Jeff Cantin wanted to bring attention to the public outreach opportunity for River Day, and that the CRC was offered the opportunity to have a presence there. Mr. Cantin also mentioned that he and the Westport River Watershed Alliance (WRWA) spoke to the high school about a small grant program that would allow the students to interview people about climate change and capture the content that the CRC would use at a later date for engagement. Mr. Cantin was unsure if the high school went forward with that application or followed through. Mr. Cole stated that the proposal Jeff put together was excellent and he hopes it can be reiterated to the high school in the fall.

- **Water:**

Mike Sullivan stated that the water subcommittee has had two meetings since the last CRC meeting in March and mentioned that Sam Whitin presented to the water subcommittee on thin layer deposition and marsh restoration, which he questions whether Westport would be an ideal candidate since thin layer deposition is not a current permitted activity in Massachusetts. Mr. Sullivan mentioned that the subcommittee's initial state of the "state report" relating to where Westport stands with regard to global warming threats (climate change, sea level rise, warming oceans, etc.) is about 70% finished and anticipated that it would take a few more meetings to reach completion. Furthermore, it was stated that the WRWA has an extensive study currently taking place for the purposes of gathering information as to why the marshes are dying by measuring inundation time for eight of ten different sites where marshes are. It was mentioned that one of the things that the WRWA is finding is that the inundation is not much different in marginally healthy marshes in the lower regions of the river as compared to the healthy marshes in the upper regions of the river. It was noted that the inundation time was not extremely different, however the velocity measurements of the water near the marsh and passing by the marsh are a big factor in eroding the edges of the marsh. Mr. Sullivan stated that the preliminary data collected may lead to one of the major reasons that the marshes in the lower regions of the river are failing because of their inundation time and the water going over them (which would possibly indicate that they may not be an ideal candidate for thin layer deposition).

- **Infrastructure & Safety:**

No update was provided at this time.

- **Health:**

Phil Weinberg stated that the health subcommittee has been quiescent, and mentioned that Michael Yogman has been doing some work on the mental health aspect. The health subcommittee has been focused on the topic of extreme heat days and as of yet, there has not been many of those this year. Mr. Weinberg mentioned that the town had applied for a grant to update its Emergency Management Plan, and reiterated that it's an opportunity for the health, water and infrastructure subcommittees to think about how that plan should reflect the potential impacts from flooding and other impacts that aren't currently being thoroughly addressed. Mr. Burris mentioned that the grant for hazard mitigation was for identifying the natural hazards to the town and its strategies for preventing loss of life and property through either built environment and public policy, which is a precursor to the Emergency Management Planning grant. Mr. Burris also mentioned that FEMA is delayed with releasing decisions on the grant applications, however if confident that Westport will get funding, and will notify the CRC when a decision is eventually made.

- **Agriculture:**

Bullard stated that there has not been a meeting between the last CRC meeting and this one. However, a meeting date for the agriculture subcommittee has been established, which will be May 18, 2023 at 6 p.m. in person at Westport Town Hall. Madeline Yogman mentioned that there's a lot of movement amongst the younger farmers and agricultural community, and at a follow up meeting at the Dartmouth Grange a few days after the last agriculture subcommittee meeting, it was noted that a lot of them are applying for some of the FEMA and climate resilience mitigation grants, and SEAMAP is doing a lot of work to coordinate and help farmers with the process of doing so. Mr. Weinberg provided an overview and mentioned that a recent report released by the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts did a montage of newer management and operation projects and found that they reduced nitrogen pollution from primarily animal husbandry by 23 tons a year that are not going into the Westport River (1/3 of total amount of nitrogen that was estimated in the Integrated Report that was being contributed by farms). Mr. Whitin added to Phils discussion about the TIWMP report relating to the cost of nitrogen removal within the Westport River, stating that its \$2,500.00 a kilogram, and the report from the MACD reduces this cost to approximately \$12.50 a kilogram. Mr. Ingoldsby mentioned that he attended the last Agriculture Subcommittee meeting and wanted to emphasize that there is a very narrow parameter for agriculture and suggested that the scope be expanded to include forestry and nursery operations, along with fisheries and shell fishing in order to cast a wide net in terms of defining agriculture.

6. Other Business:

- **Open Meeting Law: Forms & (Re) Appointments:** Mr. Burriss explained that we have recently had some concerns about the towns compliance with OML (Open Meeting Law) and emphasized that everyone who's term expires at the end of June, to make sure to get re-sworn in at the Town Clerks office before the next meeting and to also complete the OML certificate and return to the Planning Office. Shana Shufelt recommended that a consolidated list of people who would like to continue being on the committee be submitted to the Selectboard for a bulk re-appointment, and then those people should go to the Town Clerk to be re-sworn in.
- Mr. Sullivan motioned to approve Joseph Ingoldsby to the CRC, seconded by Ms. Shufelt, with no opposition, the motion carried.
- Mr. Sullivan suggested to ask the Selectboard to make the appointments for a 2-year term versus a 1-year term.

7. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, July 13, 2023 at 5:00 P.M.

Mr. Sullivan motioned to adjourn, seconded by Whitin, the motion carried unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

Accepted 9/28/23