



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

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

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, July 13, 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
- David Cole
- Jeff Cantin
- Jim Whitin
- Michael Sullivan
- Michael Yogman
- Wendy Nicholas
- Bill Napolitano
- Lauren Miller- Donnelly

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

1. **Introductions:**

Bill Napolitano was present and mentioned that this is the first CRC meeting he has attended and that he recently retired from SRPEDD. He expressed his interest in the MVP program since he has always been involved program. Bullard stated that Mr. Napolitano was involved in the original MVP work with Westport and helped convene the early work and Westport citizens around resilience.

2. **Approval of 5/4/23 Minutes:** No minutes were approved at this time and were deferred to the next meeting.

3. **Michael Burris – Resilience Westport Document Outline:**

Mr. Burris summarized the intention of the Westport document outline that was previously sent out to the CRC members, which included some organization behind getting a Climate Resilience Plan together. The idea behind the plan should be that it needs to be an action oriented plan that spells out the CRC's recommendations to the town for future policy making. Two different outlines were circulated, one with suggestions on how to organize the plan document, with the suggestion of organizing it around four different and guiding themes of broad topic areas (preparedness, built environment, wellness and nature) that could be used to identify how interdisciplinary the policy sections are. Mr. Burris stated that the policy recommendations will have many different stakeholders with multifaceted impacts. The four themes would inform five different policy areas (natural resources, water, health, land use and infrastructure & safety) which would be a representation of the topics being explored in each subcommittee. Mr. Burris explained that for each topic area, there should be a goal (general outcome for the topic area) and a series of actions (policies the town needs to put in place to help reach that outcome) to accomplish that goal. Burris opened the topic for commentary which included the following;

- John Bullard: water subcommittee is the farthest along with developing risks, drivers and actions. Expressed that this outline is beneficial to the subcommittees to help keep a consistent structure.
- Mike Sullivan: suggests the possibility including a problem statement
- Michael Yogman: targeting who the audience is for this document is important
- Jeff Cantin: what a realistic timeline is for this document? Should the CRC be thinking of an interim product that summarizes what the CRC knows/ has gathered so far?
- Jim Whitin: should be a living document that's ever-changing over time and not a definitive finalized product. The document should be accessible for people to use the information by making it compartmentalized as the information changes.
- David Cole: there needs to be a timeframe regarding items of the most urgency and the more general framework.
- Lauren Miller-Donnelly: would like more information and clarity on the CRC's subcommittees.

Mr. Burris stated that the audience would be more general and aimed at the residents of Westport, but to also provide enough information for local decision makers to craft future policy. Furthermore, the policy recommendations should be established, since this is a good opportunity to have define those problems and use that as a platform to get grant funds to implement them.

- **Engagement & Fundraising:**

Mr. Cole recommended that Jeff Cantin take over the leadership role for this subcommittee. The Engagement and Fundraising meeting will meet in order to change over the title of chairman of the subcommittee. Jeff Cantin stated that the first public engagement opportunity took place during River Day a few weeks back and two page handout with basic information such as; the CRC itself; subcommittee structure; the topics each subcommittee is focusing on; facts about climate change from the Trustee's report and how it could affect Westport.

- **Water:**

Mr. Sullivan mentioned that the subcommittee met last week in-person at the WRWA River Center and worked on the following topics; identifying large drivers of climate change issues and how they might affect Westport; brainstorming topics and issued that require further study. Mr. Sullivan noted that the subcommittee is approximately 75% through their work and hope to have a report by the fall.

- **Infrastructure & Safety:**

Bob Daylor mentioned that he is doing a piece on groundwater with the water subcommittee, with nothing else to report for infrastructure & safety.

- **Health:**

Phil Weinberg stated that the subcommittee has not come together recently, and that Michael Yogman has been looking into the mental health aspects of the topics. Mr. Yogman provided a brief update that he had a meeting with the high school students and the superintendent at lunch regarding childrens mental health, in which he gave a talk on perinatal depression and anxiety.

- **Agriculture:**

No update was provided at this time. Mr. Bullard mentioned that he reached out to Fred Dabney who is one of the founders of SEAMAP to see whether the CRC can provide technical assistance on the Ag. subcommittee on the theory that if the CRC provides a good report, it can benefit not just Westport, but the whole region (Dartmouth, Little Compton, Tiverton).

- **Historic Structures:**

Wendy Nicholas stated that the subcommittee has not had an official meeting at this time. Ms. Nicholas stated that Kit Wise would work on some mapping of historic structures in Westport that are within the flood zone in order to identify properties at risk. Ms. Nicholas mentioned that a few years ago the Newport Restoration Foundation sponsored a workshop called “Keeping History Above Water” that worked with eight communities that are also threatened by sea level rise and climate change, and that she plans to tap into the work that has been done through the workshops to see if information can be pulled together that’s insightful and useful to Westport. Mr. Burris mentioned he would be happy to help Mr. Wise with GIS mapping.

4. Other Business:

- Yogman motioned to appoint Joseph Ingoldsby to the Agricultural Subcommittee, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, with no opposition and all members in favor, the motion carried.
- Mr. Burris mentioned that a few months ago the Planning Office applied for the MVP 2.0, and gave the news that Westport has been selected for funding and in receipt of \$95,000.00. Mr. Burris explained that the grant is for taking a look at Westports initial Municipal Vulnerability Plan, and to revisit those initial priorities and then do a wider public engagement process in order to facilitate more community involvement. The program places an emphasis on social justice and environmental justice communities within town. Mr. Burris will provide an update in the near future once more information is released.
- Bill Napolitano congratulated Mr. Burris on the MVP 2.0 grant award and stated that the motives behind doing the MVP 2.0 is to increase the reach of the core committee that put together the original MVP plan and to make an effort to touch all of the corners of the town and to make sure all of the population is represented.

5. Future Meetings

- **Decide on meeting time:**

Bullard mentioned that there are some individuals at the last meeting who expressed that they would prefer to meet at 6 p.m. instead of 5 p.m. for future meetings. Ms. Messier will send out a poll to the CRC members within the next day to see which time is most preferred throughout the committee.

- **Set date for next meeting:**

Bullard stated that the next meeting will be on Thursday, September 28, 2023 at the meeting time of either 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. depending on the poll outcome.

Mr. Yogman motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, with all members in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 P.M.

Accepted 9/28/23