



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

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

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, January 12, 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
- Jim Whitin
- Bob Daylor
- Dr. Michael Yogman
- Jeff Cantin
- Mike Sullivan
- David Cole
- Sean Leach
- Jake McGuigan
- James Rathmann
- Lily MacDonald – Westport Middle/High School
- Jon Alden – EverythingWestport.com
- Constance Gee
- Laura Hadley

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

1. Introductions:

Lily MacDonald of the Westport Middle/High School Environmental Club introduced herself and explained that conversations around climate change, resilience and the environment mostly take place amongst her peers within the club. Ms. MacDonald mentioned that placing posters within hallways of the school is the current method of spreading awareness, along with recently working with the Audubon Society and the Westport River Watershed Alliance. The club is currently working on making a pollinator garden for the back of the school and visiting the elementary schools to reach them about pollinator gardens and climate change. John Bullard encouraged Ms. MacDonald to spread awareness of the CRC to her peers within the Environmental Club.

2. Acceptance of 11/10/22 minutes:

Bob Daylor motioned to accept the minutes of 11/10/22 with one edit as discussed, seconded by Michael Yogman, the motion carried unanimously.

3. Subcommittee Reports:

- **Engagement & Fundraising:**

Jeff Cantin provided the Committee with an update and stated that he, Jim Whitin, Michael Burris and Amy Messier met with Courtney Rocha (MVP Coordinator for the Southeast Region) for an introductory meeting on 12/12/22 for the purpose of gaining feedback on whether or not potential

projects would be an ideal fit for the MVP Action Grant. Mr. Cantin provided a slideshow of the brief overview of the outcome of that meeting, which included points of emphasis needed in order to build a competitive application;

- Emphasis on broad community support (reaching out to local groups and organization)
- Focus on environmental justice and on the needs of people who are vulnerable to climate change
- Innovative approaches to outreach (working with the H.S., etc.)

Mr. Cantin provided the Westport application status, the ‘Expression of Interest’ was submitted on 1/6/23; the outline and roadmap for the full application is complete; the drafting of the application is in progress and the full application will be due sometime in June. Time sensitive actions that should be addressed include the following;

- Sufficient staff time to commit to assure project completion – get clarification on match
- Demonstrate community support - Solicit letters of support from appropriate organizations
- Review the Marthas Vineyard project in more detail and talk with project planning staff

Mr. Cantin gave a brief overview of the Marthas Vineyard project and went over potential Westport project components such as (guest speakers, branding – graphics & logos, public workshops, social media, pop-up tents/ booths/tables, handouts/ fact sheets, etc.). Mr. Bullard stated that at the regular meeting of the Planning Board on 1/10/23, the board unanimously voted to endorse this application, and will provide a letter of support. Mr. Bullard opened the discussion up to the members for comment, which included the following;

- Michael Yogman: eager to talk with students of the school how climate will impact their futures
- Jake McGuigan: expressed concern over the potential issue with community engagement with regard to finding a successful way to have people realize that climate change could impact their lives (need for eye-opening approaches). Suggested that a potential pamphlet could be incorporated along with beach passes for the coming season.
- Jeff Cantin: project needs input from the other subcommittees and recommends a brainstorming session with representatives from each of the other subcommittees.
- Jim Whitin: expressed concern over whether outreach efforts are going to successfully draw attention to the major issues in town such as; the causeway, East Beach, the Head of Westport and the Point. He also asked the question that if Westport was to get the MVP Action Grant, what would define success of the grant?
- David Cole: stated that the grant could hopefully build a community consensus effort and understanding that will then provide a basis for moving on in other directions to try to seek funding as needed to solve the other large issues, such as the ones Mr. Whitin mentioned above.
- Michael Burris: reiterated that the impetus of this grant is to help develop the capacity of the CRC and that the staff in the Planning Office doesn’t have the time to dedicate to the CRC that it deserves, and receiving the grant could hopefully enable an additional person to coordinate with at some capacity with the CRC’s regular work, along with other projects, (East Beach, health oriented aspects of climate change within Westport or other initiatives that the Planning Office cannot give full attention to).

Mr. Bullard requested that Planning staff provide the CRC mailing list with the list of organizations Mr. Cantin previously mentioned during his slideshow presentation that he is seeking endorsements from, with suggestions of what the letters of support should highlight.

- **Water:**

John Bullard provided a brief update and stated the last meeting of the water subcommittee took place on 12/15/22, with their next scheduled meeting to be 2/16/23 at 6 P.M, and emphasized that this subcommittee remains very active relating to water issues, problems, and potential solutions. Mr. McGuigan stated that the subcommittee initially had approximately 20 issues they were looking at, and have successfully narrowed it down to 5/6 that are the most pressing and intend to move forward on. Minutes from the 12/15/22 water subcommittee meeting are available upon request at the Planning Office.

- **Infrastructure & Safety :**

Bob Daylor provided an update and touched upon Mr. Cantin's previous comment about branding and mentioned that the marking of flood hazard areas and evacuation routes would be a good branding opportunity if funds were to be raised. Mr. Daylor mentioned that the Harbor Water Study continues to have momentum with the coordinated efforts of Weston & Sampson. Weston & Sampson has completed their initial screening opportunity to build a more comprehensive water supply away from the waters edge by doing base geology mapping and pulling together all existing well data in the Harbor portion of the town (Crossroads down to the ocean), and have looked at areas which are most favorable. Mr. Daylor further explained that the next step in refining the most favorable locations (2-3 sites) would be to do non-invasive ground penetrating radar on those sites, and then depending on the outcome of that, test drilling would follow. Mr. Daylor stated that the Town is moving forward on commenting and trying to protect its citizens from the DEP Title V Regulation changes by working on these planning efforts that should defer the 5-year action requirement by entering into a water management planning process. Mr. Bullard opened the subject up for discussion, which included the following;

- Michael Sullivan: The Westport River Watershed Alliance will likely have a DEP Title V Regulation informational packet/pamphlet available within the next week or two for the members of the general public.
- Jeff Cantin: asked whether there was any damage assessments done after the 12/23/22 storm, in which Mr. Daylor stated that the Highway Department cleared East Beach Road, photographic documentation and observations around the time of high tide at various locations during the storm has been taken, however, to his knowledge, no financial or damage analysis has been done.
- David Cole: mentioned an article in the Shorelines from the Board of Health relating to the DEP Title V Regulation changes.
- Jake McGuigan asked why the town is looking at the Harbor as a public water supply for people that purchased homes with the knowledge of existing water issues and also expressed that there may be problems that come with the discussion of conservation lands and trying to build infrastructure.
 - In response, Mr. Bullard stated that he thinks the issue of retreat is a policy issue that Westport has to wrestle with and is essentially what MVP has put on the table with their decision to not invest in infrastructure on East Beach or "The Let".
 - Jim Whitin stated that the town is getting ready to apply for a grant from the Buzzards Bay NEP for the combined sewage treatment for the "Let", 1st, 2nd and 3rd St. and the Bayside Restaurant due to their small lot sizes. Mr. Whitin further explained that the grant would be for a 100% plan, and the cost structuring would be a question to be answered down the road, however this project would serve as

a test, and if successful, would be considered with other neighborhoods in town that have similar needs. No neighborhoods are being favored in this process.

- **Health:**

Michael Yogman stated that the Health subcommittee hasn't met since the last time, however, he did say that the chair of the subcommittee is working on the Emergency Response System with the various municipal organizations to upgrade its capacity.

- **Agriculture:**

No members from the Agriculture subcommittee were present to provide an update. Mr. Bullard voiced his concern with the subcommittee and stated that it needs reinforcements, and worries that it will be harder for subcommittee members to attend closer to, and through the summer months, since that's when they are the busiest.

4. Other Business:

- Recommendation to BOS that Michael Yogman be appointed to the CRC:
 - Shana Shufelt stated that this recommendation does not need a motion, staff will draft a letter and send to the Board of Selectmen for their next available meeting.
- Meeting Committee Resources:
 - This item was extensively addressed during the Engagement & Fundraising discussion, no further discussion needed at this time.

5. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, March 9th, 2023 at 5:00 P.M.

Daylor motioned to adjourn, seconded by Cole, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 P.M.

Accepted 3/9/23