



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

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

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, November 10, 2022

John Bullard, Chair
Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair

CRC, Subcommittee Members & Staff present:

- John Bullard, Chair
- Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair
- Michael Burris – Town Planner
- Amy Messier – Assistant Town Planner
- Courtney Rocha – MA MVP Regional Coordinator
- David Cole
- Constance Gee
- Jim Whitin
- Bob Daylor
- Phil Weinberg
- Donna Amaral
- Dr. Michael Yogman
- Jeff Cantin
- David Sprogis
- Sean Leach
- Mark Rasmussen
- Ray Raposa
- Karen Schwalbe
- Laura Hadley
- James Rathmann
- Richard Ilgen
- Joseph Goldsby

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

1. Introductions:

Mr. Bullard tabled this topic until later in the meeting.

5:36 P.M.: New Town Planner Michael Burris, along with members of the CRC, associated Subcommittees, Town staff and members of the public introduced themselves.

2. Acceptance of 9/01/22 minutes: Bob Daylor motioned to accept the minutes of 9/01/22 with the correction mentioned, seconded by Jim Whitin, the motion carried unanimously.

John Bullard mentioned the publication of “State of the Coast Report” by the Trustees of Reservations which featured Westport and focuses attention on climate based threats and highlights sea level rise, storm surge impacts and projected impacts to coastal zone communities in Massachusetts, and spotlights current strategies, and proposes future opportunities. Mr. Bullard emphasized that the report indicated tidal flooding and the amount of buildings and homes that would be affected, as well as roadways, low lying bridges, docks, parking areas, salt marshes and beaches.

3. Subcommittee Reports:

- **Engagement & Fundraising:**

David Cole mentioned that he attended a meeting with Mass Audubon and shared with them the short report on what the CRC has done so far, and encourages participation in the Climate Champions Program. Mr. Cole raised the question as to whether or not the CRC will submit an application in the upcoming round of the MVP Action Grant for funding for the outreach portion of the CRC's activities, in which Jim Whittin suggested that this question be placed in the queue in order to develop a detailed request of what specific types of work and services are needed and desired. Mr. Cole clarified that the MVP grant would go towards the funding and outreach efforts of the Engagement & Fundraising subcommittee and not the general administrative support of the CRC. Courtney Rocha suggested that members meet with her to go over ideas what would be applicable and competitive for the MVP Action grant, and provide feedback on how to improve future application(s). It was mentioned that the RFR will be sometime around the end of March, with the application deadline to follow approximately six weeks later. Ms. Rocha specified that funding from the MVP grant cannot be used for Town staff, however it can be used for a community liaison that represents a generally marginalized, specific group within the community. Mr. Bullard asked Mr. Cole if he's reached out to the High School since the last time the CRC met, in which Mr. Cole stated that he hasn't as of yet, however does anticipate reaching out in the near future. Lastly, Mr. Cole encouraged the subcommittees to submit their feedback on the questionnaire he had sent out previously.

- **Infrastructure & Safety:**

Bob Daylor provided subcommittee updates which included the following;

- Infrastructure Oversight Committee: was formed by the Selectmen, which meets monthly and has recommended the hiring of a project manager to assist the town Administrator with putting together an Action Plan on infrastructure. Daylor also mentioned that there are three design plans for the Trunk Water & Sewer project of Rte. 6 in N. Westport. These designs are wrapping up and in the permitting phase and would be suitable for bidding sometime early in the spring.

Mr. Bullard asked the following questions to Mr. Daylor relating to the Infrastructure Oversight Committee, which included the following;

- Does Infrastructure Oversight Committee use state generated data or other data relating to sea level rise and storm surge?
- Has there been conversation or consideration of elevating East Beach road in order to protect it from sea level rise and storm surge?
 - Is there going to be both official town data or mapping that addresses the probability of what is projected to happen with the roads by 2030, 2050 & 2070, etc.?

Mr. Daylor responded yes to all of the above questions, noting that the state projected data are what is being used, and that the subcommittee will be looking at all of the flooded areas, and that the final report should map all of the areas with the intent to map and identify evacuation routes along with mapping the levels of flooding.

- MassWorks Grant: application for the phase 1 (Fall River to Rte. 88) of the sewer project was applied for and has been denied. A Debriefing took place earlier in the day, and it was stated that the denial of the grant application was due to the lack of developers or projects in-hand for job creation. Mr. Daylor mentioned that a Congressional Research Office Summary of all of the potential infrastructure grants and loans that Westport could be

eligible for has been presented, and Westport is currently exploring several of those avenues for increased funding.

- Harbor Water Study: The Town has hired a Weston & Samspon as a consultant, a report is expected to be submitted to the Town in the near future for the purposes of finding a water supply which would move the present three public/private water companies that sit within a flood hazard area safely away from the sea level rise and the problematic increase in salinity within their well systems.
- DEP Title 5 Draft Regulations: DEP has issued their 10/28/22 draft revisions which provide a few alternatives to towns that have TMDL limits for impaired waters (Westport River Estuary). The most recent draft regulations require that within 5 years of the designation of a nitrogen sensitive area, all septic systems within the town have to be nitrogen reducing to the latest technology. The alternative to the above is that the town could enter into an application for a water permit for the watershed, in which the town would negotiate a schedule and implement that schedule in order to avoid every individual within Westport to adopt a nitrogen reducing system. Mr. Daylor and Phil Weinberg are working on drafting a briefing for the Town Administrator, and mentioned that Westport will be submitting comments to the state on the draft regulations.
- Grant for updating Emergency Response Plan: The Planning Department will be coordinating on the public health and safety aspect, as well as looking at the response that our emergency providers would need to have (marked evacuation routes; flood hazard areas, etc.).

● **Water:**

John Bullard provided an update in the absence of Mike Sullivan, and circulated minutes from their subcommittee meeting on 10/27/22. Mr. Bullard summarized where the subcommittee is at in relation to the seven steps, which include the following;

- identifying climate change and sea level rise drivers and develop narratives for each (almost completed)
 - brainstorm water related risks to Westport – *done*
 - develop narratives for each risk – *mostly done*
 - consensus prioritizing risks – *done*
 - initial brainstorm of potential projects to address the top priority risk – *just started*
 - draft water subcommittee initial State of the Town Report – *not started*
 - finalize the State of the Town Report and submit to CRC – *not started*

Mr. Bullard explained that the subcommittee identified, prioritized and ranked issues using a point system, which included the following;

- 20 Points: sea level rise; storm frequency; impact on private property and the difficulty of getting property insurance and financing.
 - 16 Points: dune erosion, beach cobbling, breaching of the beach
 - 13.5 Points: health of the river and eco systems (salt marshes, nitrogen problem)
 - 10 Points: effect on the water table and saline intrusion into wells/septic systems
 - 5 Points: navigability of the Westport Harbor
 - 0 Points: movement of fish and impact of ocean acidification on shellfish
 - 0 Points: health of Cockeast Pond

Mr. Bullard stated that after ranking and prioritizing the issues, the subcommittee looked at potential projects for addressing the risks, which included the following; shoreline monitoring projects, public education to homeowners about the risks to their homes and the potential for vegetated buffers, rainwater systems, etc. Dave Sprogis mentioned that a factor in the ranking of the issues was areas that the subcommittee could most influence, and also what could be easily monitored.

- **Health:**

Phil Weinberg gave a brief update on the Health subcommittee and stated that the next activity that the Board of Health is doing that the subcommittee may get involved in is redrafting/ updating of the towns Emergency Response Plan since a grant has for this been received. Mr. Weinberg mentioned that there are several aspects of the response plan the subcommittee could assist with, such as; stormwater and storm impacts that would displace persons.

- **Agriculture:**

Ray Raposa gave a brief update on the Agriculture subcommittee, which did not meet over the summer, however, more subcommittee meetings will take place during the winter months. Mr. Raposa expressed concern over the “State of the Coast Report” relating to the potential amount of roads being lost to sea level rise and flooding, and stated that the loss of farmland should be a topic to concentrate on in the future, and that agricultural resiliency is the prime focus at this moment. Mr. Raposa mentioned that he is working with Al Averill, who worked as a soil scientist for the USDA on a project which will incorporate the following;

- identify farmland in town so there may be funds available through the USDA for easements on their properties
- recognize prime farmland (of statewide & local importance)

4. Other Business:

Open Meeting Law & Subcommittee Support: Michael Burriss recommended that the subcommittees follow the Open Meeting Law procedures, as far as posting the meeting notices with the Town Clerk at least 48 hrs. in advance of the meeting and taking minutes, and referenced case law that supports his recommendation. It was determined that subcommittees will coordinate with the Planning Office staff in order to properly post the meeting notices and file any necessary filings. Mr. Burriss requested that each subcommittee appoints a “clerk” that will be responsible for taking the meeting minutes. Mr. Whitin suggested that every member on the committee should read the Open Meeting Law Guide and complete the online test that is provided through the Mass.gov website to ensure their understanding and compliance.

Hazard Mitigation Letter of Intent: Michael Burriss updated the CRC that a LOI has been prepared to submit to MEMA for their Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Mr. Burriss explained that the prepared letter is submitted by MEMA to FEMA on behalf of the town. The importance of having a Hazard Mitigation Plan in place is that it will open the town to more funding opportunities for projects in the future. Mr. Burriss requested a motion from the CRC to support the letter of intent to submit to MEMA. Jim Whitin motioned for the CRC to support the letter of intent for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, seconded by Bob Daylor, the motion carried unanimously.

Buzzards Bay Natural Estuary Program (NEP): Michael Burriss mentioned that there are funds available under this program which is for protecting and restoring water quality and living resources in Buzzards Bay and the surrounding watershed. Prioritized projects for this program include infrastructure projects that are either in or near environmental justice communities, in which Westport has three. These include the following; two of them are a 1.5 mile circles around the schools, and the third is a census block group that is between Sanford Rd. and Rte. 88 – bounded by Rte.6 and Rte. 177 to the north and south. Mr. Burriss stated that if anyone has any ideas for potential projects, contact the Planning Office in order to provide assistance with the application. Mr. Whitin mentioned this funding could be a potential opportunity to renew the effort to do a packaged sanitary sewer in the “Let” area (1st, 2nd, 3rd St. and Bayside Restaurant). Mark Rasmussen mentioned that he has talked with Joe Costa of the NEP, and noted that one of the items this funding is designed for is for the design of wastewater systems to deal with nitrogen pollution. Mr. Rasmussen mentioned that no match for this grant is required, however it is encouraged, and suggested that a conversation with the Selectmen in order to see if ARPA money is still available to provide some matching funds of \$30,000.00. Jim Whitin motioned to submit a letter of

support from the CRC for the Buzzards Bay NEP grant application for the “Let” wastewater system, seconded by Bob Daylor, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, January 12th, 2023 at 5:00 P.M.

Daylor motioned to adjourn, seconded by Cole, the motion carried unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 6:38 P.M.

Accepted 1/12/23