



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

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

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, December 14, 2023

John Bullard, Chair
Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair

CRC, Subcommittee Members, Staff & Others Present:

- John Bullard, Chair
- Michael Burris – Town Planner
- Amy Messier – Assistant Town Planner
- Jim Whitin
- Michael Sullivan
- Joseph Ingoldsby
- Phil Weinberg
- Donna Amaral
- David Sprogis
- Constance Gee
- Jake McGuigan
- Jeff Cantin
- Mark Rasmussen
- Michael Yogman
- David Cole

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

1. **Introductions:** no new introductions at this time.

2. **Approval of 9/28/23 Minutes:**

Michael Sullivan motioned to approve the minutes of 9/28/23, seconded by Michael Yogman, the motion carried unanimously.

3. **Open Meeting Law Certifications & Swearing in:**

Mr. Burris stated that a requirement from the Attorney General's Office is to have the Open Meeting Law certifications on file, and that he will contact whoever has not submitted a certification to date.

4. **Updates from Michael Burris:**

- a. **MVP 2.0 Update:** Michael stated that the town has contracted with SRPEDD's environmental division to administer this grant. The current phase of this project is for the development of a social resilience roadmap, and identifying the populations in Westport that may be disproportionately impacted by climate change and trying to do some initial engagement either with people who work, or have family within those communities. Once this information is gathered, a core team will be assembled, which will include municipal staff, representatives from boards and committees, along with community members with ties to youth, agriculture, disabilities, low income and caregivers. The project will require approximately 80 hrs. of volunteer time and they would be reimbursed

through the grant. Michael stated that he has reached out to the advisor of the Environmental Club at the Westport High School since having a youth from the club on this project would be valuable.

- b. MVP Action Grant Expression of Interest:** Michael stated that he has been working with Jason Claremont of Buzzards Bay Coalition and Ross Moran of the Westport Land Conservation Trust to submit an expression of interest (EOI) to the MVP program for habitat restoration and stormwater improvement. This request for funds will be sought to improve habitat conditions for sea-run brook trout through the designs of culvert replacements and data collection. Locations of interest are Cornell Road at Angeline Brook, Drift Road at Lyons Brook and Drift Road at Snell Creek. Michael stated that the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program (BBNEP) could be used as a potential match source for this grant and anticipates applying to that as well.
- c. Hazard Mitigation:** Michael stated that the Town was finally awarded for this program and received \$19,800.00 to create a hazard mitigation plan and we will be issuing an RFP in order to find a consultant. This specific plan will identify the Towns risks and hazards and provides a series of policy recommendations to mitigate loss of life and property during storm events as well as general hazards (extreme heat, etc.). A kick-off meeting with the grantor is scheduled for January.

5. Subcommittee Reports

a. Engagement & Fundraising:

Jeff Cantin gave an update and stated that the subcommittee has not participated in any outreach since the CRC last met in September, however if there are any outreach opportunities in the near future the subcommittee will reach out and participate with the materials that they have acquired to date (info sheets, banner, etc.). Mr. Cantin reminded the committee that approximately a year ago they had put together a list of events that would be relevant for the committee to participate in/ engage with, and welcome any input further identifying those opportunities as they come. It was mentioned that pulling together a list of future list of grant opportunities to keep on the radar will be forthcoming.

b. Water:

Michael Sullivan stated that the subcommittee is approximately 85% done with their report and predicts that a finished draft report will be ready in time for the next CRC meeting. Mr. Sullivan also mentioned the ongoing project of the impact of the causeway relating to the beaches, Westport River and the inlets, and mentioned that tidal gauges were able to be installed on either side of the causeway which will gather data and will remain in place until the spring.

c. Infrastructure & Safety:

John Bullard mentioned that he will be meeting with an official from Umass Dartmouth to see if a student could potentially work with Bob Daylor to co-author a paper.

d. Health:

Phil Weinberg submitted a report and provided an overview which included the following; distinguishing between direct impacts related primarily to temperature (physical, physiological, mental health) and collateral impacts of increased temperature (sea level rise, flooding, extreme weather events, saltwater intrusion). Mr. Weinberg stated that he mainly focused on the physical and mental health aspects, in which a big assistance in developing the report was looking at the Commonwealth's 2022 Climate Assessment Report and Hazard Mitigation Report, as well as integrating some of Westport's specific data as well. It was mentioned that the other aspect of the Climate Assessment Report and Hazard Mitigation Report is that they established three priorities, with the number one priority being vector transmission through mosquitos and ticks for disease

transmission of Lyme disease, tropical and bacterial diseases, followed by extreme heat on mental health and lastly, air quality (pollen and its impact on respiratory diseases).

e. Agriculture – draft report:

Joseph Ingoldsby stated that since the last meeting the agriculture subcommittee has reached out to farming and fishing members of the community via a letter with questions focusing on temperature, precipitation and sea level rise with the hopes of gaining feedback on how those topics affect them and the greater farming community. Mr. Ingoldsby mentioned that he has followed up with key strategies that could be taken, and would like to have a community meeting with the farmers and fisherman in the area in order to document and have first-hand experience of the changes that are occurring within town. It was mentioned that the questionnaire has been sent out, however no replies have been received as of yet.

f. Historic Structures:

No update at this time was available.

6. Discussion Items

a. Use of RCP 8.5 Presentation– David Sprogis gave a presentation on using Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5, which is a scenario used in climate modeling to project future greenhouse gas concentrations and their potential impact on global climate – this presentation focuses on sea level rise. (this presentation can be viewed [here](#), starting at 41:00 through 1:02:28).

b. Presentation Commentary:

- Phil Weinberg: in favor of Westport adopting RCP 8.5 since the state has also chosen this model.
- David Cole: reviewed the presentation and concluded that comments from most experts are very much dated and noted that there was no effort to present views of persons who might have divergent or recent views. Mr. Cole states he does not think Westport should adopt the recommendations without more information from more recent and divergent sources.
- Mike Sullivan: believes it would be problematic for Westport to use a different standard than the state uses as the gold standard to compare projects with others throughout other towns, cities, etc.
- Jeff Cantin: agrees with Phil Weinberg and wants to remain transparent and over-prepared.
- Jake McGuigan: does not think that we should be using the most extreme weather scenarios
- Jim Whitin: believes that the prediction that the state uses is extreme, however, that does not mean that any of Westport’s suggestions require or suggest that the Town needs to do something based on RCP 8.5. Could potentially be an issue with funding/grant opportunities if RCP 8.5 is not used or considered.
- John Bullard: agrees that RCP 8.5 is a low probability and high impact scenario, however, that does not mean that it shouldn’t be prepared for.
- Constance Gee: would like clarification on the grant and funding opportunity comment made by Mr. Whitin relating to using or choosing not to use RCP 8.5. – Michael Burriss clarified that if the Town doesn’t select a particular number to use, it could be viewed as the Town not taking a position on the odds of potential environmental events happening, which could be looked at negatively by grantors.
- John Bullard: does not think that the final report will have a section that addresses RCP 8.5

7. Other Business: John Bullard suggested that for future meetings going forward, there would be a standard agenda, however there would be one subcommittee at a time thoroughly going through their report with the idea that the whole committee would have an opportunity to give feedback, brainstorm, etc. so that the

whole committee gets an idea of the subcommittee report while it is still in draft form. Mr. Bullard suggested that the first subcommittee to follow this format would be the Water subcommittee since it is robust. Mr. Sullivan agreed to present the draft at the next meeting of the CRC.

8. **Next Meeting Date:** Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Whitin motioned to adjourn, seconded by Sullivan, with all members in favor, the motion carried unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Accepted 2/15/24