



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

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

Regular Meeting Minutes of:
Thursday, February 10, 2022

Members present: John Bullard, Chair
Shana Shufelt, Vice Chair
Jim Whitin
Bob Daylor
David Brown
Constance Gee
Tony Vivenzio
Ross Moran
David Sprogis
Michael Sullivan
Ray Elias
Ray Raposa
Donna Amaral
Phil Weinberg

Members absent: Brian Valcourt
Sean Leach
Mark Rasmussen
Jake McGuigan

John Bullard called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM

1. Introduction:

All members and attendees from the public introduced themselves.

2. Acceptance of 1/18/22 minutes:

Bullard suggested an edit to the minutes relating to the vote and carried motion that was taken for the recommendation to the Select Board that the Buzzards Bay Coalition write and submit an EOI for an MVP Grant for the 100% design completion, detailed costs and considerations of a possible shared community sewer system and stormwater control structure for the "Let". Michael Sullivan motioned to accept the minutes with the suggested edit as mentioned above, seconded by Bob Daylor, with none of the members in opposition and one abstention from David Sprogis, the motion carried.

3. Creation of Subcommittees:

Bullard reiterated the discussion from the last meeting relating to the creation of subcommittees in order to focus on several major topics such as: agriculture, health, water, infrastructure & safety, and engagement & funding. With those subcommittees, Bullard emphasized that there should be a focus on understanding what different impacts affect different sectors of our life including; higher temperatures; sea level rise; increase in ground water; delayed frost, etc. Bullard expressed that help from outside of the committee would be needed and welcomed as helpful resources, especially if at no-cost due to the heavily strained budget of the Town departments. Bullard suggested that the bulk of the work be handled at the subcommittee level. With the

committee itself meeting periodically to share and gather information. Bullard entertained a discussion of subcommittees, which included the following feedback from the members;

- Michael Sullivan: suggests brainstorming as a first step in order to create a list of high priority projects, which would aid in affirming the various subcommittees needed.
- Jim Whitin: expressed that establishing a successful structure would be the first step among the various subcommittees and acknowledged that some categories will ultimately overlap each other due to their broadness (ex. water overlapping with infrastructure, etc.). Whitin suggested some specific topics that should be examined, such as: marshes and their deterioration due to sea level rise; health of the river as a whole due to changes in sea level and climate, and reexamining the 2018 MVP to review the topics and how they're managed. Whitin emphasized that issues within the next 5-20 years should be prioritized and the extensive work included in the 2018 MVP should not be overlooked.
- Bob Daylor: concurred with Whitin that the committee should focus on a broader outlook versus beginning with a focus on specific projects. He acknowledged that there are actions by other committees and departments in Town that run parallel to this committee. Daylor suggested organizing work into subcommittees which would ultimately bring research together (collecting data in each of the areas of charge, identifying the risks they pose and start tackling those risks). Furthermore, Daylor expressed that the broad topic of water could potentially be broken down into separate components and addressed under multiple subcommittees, with a focus on an array of issues such as;
 - Land based and fisheries (oyster fishery)
 - Sea level changes, coastal processes, risk assessment/ management to the Town due to the vast amount of waterfront
 - Water quality issues (drinking water), and the health of the river as a whole
 - Coastal erosion and storm related issues that may affect infrastructure (highways, utilities, sewers, old water systems)
- Tony Vivenzio: voiced his concerns and questions relating to what exactly the desired outcome of the committee will be, and questioned if the Town had any specific and actionable tasks or projects in mind. Vivenzio voiced that a clear end-goal in mind would facilitate more accomplishments in dealing with such broad topics.
- Phil Weinberg: stated that the decisions this committee makes relating to land use and natural resource protection will ripple forward into the future. Weinberg suggests that each subcommittee evaluates what issues may fall into their purview, followed by having the chairs meet to prioritize and allocate topics to the most acceptable subcommittee. Weinberg expressed that the committee may want to get involved with and provide feedback on regulatory land use regulations and provisions.
- Bob Daylor: motioned that the Climate Resilience Committee form five subcommittees consisting of: agriculture; health; water; infrastructure & safety and engagement & funding, with the committee as a whole to report annually to the Select Board, seconded by Whitin, with no opposition from committee members, the motion carried unanimously. Daylor went on to express the suggested approach of the committee's work plan to include: collecting available data relating to climate change; evaluating the risk in each of the subcommittees' areas of charge; and that those charges be representative of the Town of Westport. Furthermore, Daylor noted that annually reporting to the Select Board enables the committee to pursue funding opportunities relating to studies and forthcoming projects of high priority.

- David Sprogis: expressed that he is in favor of the five subcommittees and would like to incorporate recreation into one of them. - Bullard suggested keeping the topic of water as one subcommittee, and recognized that the topic will include beaches, and address recreation as well.

4. Solicitation of volunteers for subcommittees and possible subcommittee chairs:

This item was addressed under item #3 of the agenda “creation of subcommittees”.

5. Group Brainstorming re: impacts of climate change in each of the five areas:

This item was addressed under item #3 of the agenda “creation of subcommittees”.

6. Beach Nourishment:

Whitin informed the committee that the Buzzards Bay Coalition is managing a twelve acre saltmarsh restoration project with NOAA and has notified the Town that approximately 70,000 cubic yards of clean March Island sand is available at no cost to the Town, with an additional 36,000 cubic yards to potentially be available in March 2023, which could be reused for local coastal resilience projects. Whitin stated that an analysis has been done relating to the types of soil and believes that this could be a great opportunity for Westport to utilize on East Beach, citing that erosion has been a significant issue. It was noted that the sand would most likely be brought over by barge, dumped onto the beach, mobilized with a bulldozer onto the town-owned portion of the beach and would accumulate along the beach by the tides. It was noted that the Beach Committee has expressed interest in the surplus of sand relating to its potential benefits to Elephant Rock, and that they have accumulated funds of approximately \$200,000, along with the ability to stockpile. Bullard encouraged discussion amongst the members, which included;

- Mike Sullivan: acknowledged that utilizing this sand could have great potential, however, more specific information is needed before he is comfortable weighing in on a recommendation, and suggested contacting DCR and including them in the conversation.
- Davis Sprogis: voiced that he is in agreement with Sullivan and noted that bringing in foreign sand could interfere with data collection and analysis of future coastal studies.
- Jim Whitin: Suggested that the committee indicate our interest in the surplus of sand to Buzzards Bay Coalition and request further information and expressed that if we did accept the surplus of sand, that it could potentially be placed on the Town-owned portion of East Beach at the end.
- David Cole: recommended that the committee review the aftereffects of the dredging project, and indicated that fill was previously removed from the channel in the harbor and relocated back into the harbor a few years later. Cole emphasized that the committee should exercise a significant level of caution before considering acting on this opportunity.
- Phil Weinberg: expressed that the committee needs to take into consideration the fact that the individual property owners along East Beach own their property down to the mean low tide and doesn't think that this committee has jurisdiction over nourishing their property.
- Tony Vivenzio: stated that he's in agreement with Whitin that getting the free sand is a great opportunity that Westport should take advantage of and reiterated the recommendation to “elevate East Beach Road and Coastal Dunes on Abutting Properties” on the implementation timeline (pg. 96) of the May 2021 East Beach Corridor Vulnerability Study. Vivenzio expressed that addressing the existing coastal processes that are contributing to erosion should be remediated prior to nourishment.

- Jim Whitin: mentioned that a 3-year study of the East Beach area/ Gooseberry Island/ the Causeway and portions of West Beach will be underway in the near future that will focus on the concerns raised in this meeting and in the 2018 MVP. Whitin suggested that input relating to the incorporation of the free sand from the company that will conduct the study would be beneficial.
- Ray Raposa: expressed that the amount of sand being offered is exceptionally large and questioned whether the Town would have the means to store it.
- Dave Sprogis: reiterated that the diminished sand along the beaches of Westport has simply relocated elsewhere and expressed concern over the same occurrence if more sand was to be brought in. Sprogis also voiced concern over having a build-up of sand in areas that could possibly contribute to further problems and require remediation.
- John Bullard- recommended that the committee table the discussion for the next meeting in March and gather more information through communication with Mark Rasmussen.
- Phil Weinberg: suggested that if there are available funds for a study, the committee should request a recommendation on this topic by an expedited date in order to allow adequate time for the committee to act.

7. Set next meeting date:

Members unanimously agreed that the next Climate Resilience Committee will be held on Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 5PM.

Mrs. Shufelt motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Daylor, the motion carried unanimously.
The committee adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Accepted 3/10/22