

Wellfleet Energy and Climate Action Committee

Minutes for 21 December 2023

Remote Participation

Present: Suzanne Ryan-Ishkanian (Chair), Lilli-Ann Green (Vice-Chair), Carol Magenau (Secretary), Gorham Brigham, Dick Elkin, Cynthia Franklin, Nancy Gralla

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ryan-Ishkanian at 7:18.

The meeting was recorded.

Business

[19:19] Motion to **approve the minutes** for 16 November 2023 made by Ryan-Ishkanian, voted 6-0-1 with Green abstaining.

[19:20] The **Climate Action Plan** was discussed. Ryan-Ishkanian reported that she and Magenau had met with Steve Tupper (Cape Cod Commission) and new Assistant Town Administrator Silvio Genao. They are both expected to attend our January meeting, and will be proposing roles for the Committee, the Commission, and the town staff. The resignation of the Town Administrator could be a problem for moving the Climate Action Plan forward. Ryan-Ishkanian said that the plan needs to move from being from the “voice” of the committee to that of the town. Green asked what the process for creating the plan would be, and Ryan-Ishkanian said Tupper would speak to that at our next meeting. Magenau stated that the main thing they want to know from us is whether the whole committee will be working on the plan or a subgroup. Elkin stated that the committee has repeatedly submitted a section on climate action to the Local Comprehensive Plan, but that overall plan has not been finalized. He said there are regulations concerning the Local Comprehensive Plan, but none regarding a climate action plan. Franklin proposed that the Climate Action Plan be taken to Town Meeting after approval is secured from town departments and the Selectboard. Ryan-Ishkanian sees the Commission playing a strong role in public outreach. Green stated that we need to be very careful about what is written, and she hopes the Commission would review the Plan from a legal and regulatory viewpoint. Elkin stated that involving the Commission slows things down and that we should try to build target dates into our agreement with the Commission. Franklin stated her feeling that the Committee could deal directly with town departments. Elkin repeated his opinion that the Hazard Mitigation Plan represents the adaptation portion of our Climate Action Plan, and is properly the responsibility of town departments, whereas the mitigation portion involves influencing behavior of townspeople and is appropriate to our Committee. Magenau reiterated the desirability of buy-in from the town for our Plan, and that the Commission wants to know who on the Committee will be involved in creating the Plan. **Motion** made by Green and seconded by Elkin that all committee members take a role in the Climate Action Plan, voted 6-0-1 with Brigham abstaining. Elkin asked whether his draft Plan would be thrown out. Ryan-Ishkanian responded that it was shared with Tupper who thought it was a really good start. Elkin highlighted two proposed sections that need discussion and represent a change in policy: converting town buildings to fully electric over some time period; and purchasing 100% green energy for town buildings. Magenau asked if anyone knew the

timeframe for the hiring of the new town planner position, since it seems likely that person would be involved in the Climate Action Plan process. Green asked if anyone knew the schedule for Green Communities grants, and Ryan-Ishkanian agreed to find out.

[19:52] Magenau reported on the **Global Covenant of Mayors** [GCOM] that she and Suzanne were taking over the reporting from Shapiro at his request. They have a meeting scheduled with someone at CDP [formerly Carbon Disclosure Project] which handles climate reporting for a large number of organizations including GCOM. Magenau expressed gratitude to Shapiro for handling this responsibility for so many years. It is very complex, and she and Ryan will be going over the sections systematically to prepare for this year's reporting. She'd like another person to help and requested that anyone who might be interested be in touch.

[19:54] Elkin mentioned that he has been contacted by the **Elementary School** asking when their **solar panels** were installed. He asked Brigham to see if he could identify the manufacturer and/or installer and give that information to Jay Norton at DPW. Elkin thinks DPW is trying to collect enough information to get a maintenance contract.

[19:57] Franklin now has a contact person who is advisor to the Green Club at Nauset High School, and also a friend with school-age kids, but wants the Committee to clarify exactly what we want from a **connection with student(s)** – social media outreach, committee attendance, community service, other? She suggests a discussion at the next meeting. Gralla commented that student input might be a component of public outreach relative to the Climate Action Plan.

[20:03] Under requests for future topics, Franklin stated that Bob Higgins-Steele (Truro) is thinking about a subgroup to look into **transportation issues on the Outer Cape**, and Franklin is interested in participating.

[20:05] Elkin proposes that the Committee recommend \$18,000 to purchase Class 1 recs to cover **purchase of green energy** for all town buildings. He recommended a WOMR podcast [Cape Climate, Cape Light Compact 121823] about electricity on the Outer Cape. Green expressed concern about the recommendation, and again requested a statement in writing. Elkin said he would produce a statement. Elkin suggests that we make this proposal when we talk to the Selectboard about our Climate Action Plan, before spring Town Meeting.

[20:14] Elkin stated that the proposal to **electrify all town buildings** by replacing fossil fuels is long term (say 10 years) and would require reorienting what we ask for with Green Communities grants. Green questioned whether these projects would qualify for Green Communities grants. Green asked Elkin to contact Jay Norton at DPW to see if he has a prioritized schedule for this transition, and Elkin agreed to do so. Gralla volunteered to participate in this effort.

[20:18] Elkin again showed information about the 3 bike shops in Provincetown that participated in the previous round of **funding for electric bicycles**. The next round has not yet been announced, but we want to encourage owners to apply right away. Franklin agreed to

work with Elkin on compiling information and calling or writing to Outer Cape bike shop owners with contact information provided by Ryan-Ishkanian, who suggests a letter followed by a phone call.

[20:25] Returning to the topic of **Green Communities grants** Ryan-Ishkanian agreed to contact Margaret Song to confirm that we are eligible to apply for the next round, as well as finding out the schedule.

[20:28] Ryan-Ishkanian reported about **electric school buses** that she contacted Laura Baghetti, vice-chair of Wellfleet Elementary School Committee and also on the transportation committee for the Nauset school district. They are working with the Cape Cod Collaborative, a company called Highland Fleets, and the MA Clean Energy Center, to identify routes and infrastructure that would accommodate electric school buses.

[20:30] Magenau expressed concern about the **non-functional solar arrays** and Green volunteered to investigate whether DPW is working on repairs and a maintenance contract. Brigham is available Jan. 8 to visit the arrays to gather information. The solar systems on town buildings were not installed under Green Communities grants but upgrading them might be eligible going forward. Elkin pointed out that funds for the maintenance contracts will need to be included in the town budget. Green said that mesh around solar panels to deter wire-chewing animals has now become standard but was not in the past, and perhaps it would be appropriate to add this to our 3 town solar installations.

[20:41] **Solar panels** are visible in the installation of Google Earth in the lobby at Preservation Hall, and Ryan-Ishkanian asked if this was a way to collect data on the number of solar installations in town. Elkin's son was involved in creating Project Sunroof, and Google is keeping statistics but not making them available. Green questioned whether this would be an invasion of privacy. Elkin will ask his son again whether the data can be made available to us, and whether there are privacy concerns per Google's attorney.

[20:47] Ryan-Ishkanian asked for volunteers to work on Outer Cape **collaboration on public outreach**, but no one volunteered. [[20:52] Franklin left the meeting.] Brigham suggested a top-down approach, where a group from the Cape decides on topics and creates a "library of programs" and towns choose from a menu. Elkin suggested that that approach has not worked, and programming happens at the local level. Gralla asked if we had any indication of what topics are of interest. Magenau suggested keeping this question in mind as we do our public outreach for the Climate Action Plan. Ryan-Ishkanian wondered how the library decides on topics, and Green suggested asking the Librarian.

[21:03] Magenau would like to see improvements in the **committee website** and would like someone to work with on it. She will say a bit more at the next meeting.

[21:05] **Motion to adjourn** was made by Green, seconded by Brigham, voted 6-0-0. Meeting was adjourned at 9:06.

Next meeting: 18 January 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary C. Magenau

Carol [Mary C.] Magenau, Secretary