

Wellfleet Energy and Climate Action Committee

Minutes for 28 September 2023

Remote Participation

Present: Suzanne Ryan-Ishkanian (Chair), Lilli-Ann Green (Vice-Chair), Carol Magenau (Secretary), Gorham Brigham, Dick Elkin, Robert Shapiro*

- Since Robert Shapiro's absence from four consecutive meetings was not reported officially to the Selectboard, he remains a member in good standing, per the Administration's Executive Assistant. He was not included in votes taken at this meeting.

Guest: Barbara Carboni

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ryan-Ishkanian at 7:22PM.

The meeting was recorded.

Business

Motion to approve the minutes for 17 August was made by Brigham, seconded by Elkin, voted affirmatively 5-0-0.

The **specialized [stretch] code** was discussed, with Elkin reporting that MASS CEC [Clean Energy Center] had created a webinar intended for towns that had not yet adopted the specialized stretch code, and he thinks there will be a presentation on this at a future date. Elkin also stated he had heard from Orleans about this issue, and they hope to pass the specialized stretch code at their special town meeting on Oct. 16. Elkin had already forwarded to the committee a document entitled *Specialized Energy Code FAQ (Orleans)*. Elkin stated that we have already passed the specialized energy code, and that the only building he can think of that it will apply to is the large housing building planned at Maurice's Campground. Since that is five years in the future, it is likely that the code will have changed again by then.

Elkin reported on **Level 2 charging stations**. Eversource is developing a new program to subsidize a Level 2 charger using wireless connectivity (wi-fi enabled) at private homes, up to \$1,400. This is a generous amount and can include wiring and perhaps an electric panel upgrade. The charger can enable Eversource to keep track of when charging takes place, and therefore implement time-of-use rates. Green asked if the Committee should be involved with informing e-v owners about this program, and Elkin said yes, once the program is clearly defined. One issue to be resolved is whether you must be an Eversource customer (as the program is currently defined) or whether all suppliers would be eligible (for which Cape Light Compact is lobbying). Eversource is in the process of upgrading electric meters across Massachusetts to enable time-of-use monitoring, but Barnstable County is last in line and many years away. (Meanwhile an upgraded meter can be purchased for \$250.). Time-of-use metering incentivizes charging at non-peak hours, reducing demand on the grid. But the wireless e-v chargers bypass the meters by supplying information directly (or indirectly) to

Eversource. Shapiro asked what does this have to do with reducing greenhouse gasses? Shifting e-v charging to off-peak hours will increase electricity demand when renewable sources are being used, namely (in the near future) offshore wind. Green stated it will also reduce the need for new transmission lines.

Elkin stated that other towns have been suggesting the possibility of combining forces on negotiating a maintenance contract for level 2 charging stations. Elkin does not think it is worthwhile to pay for the functionality of charging people for using a charger, but instead favors the idea of a flat fee for single use (for example, an overnight at a motel), or a license fee for unlimited use (for say, a charger at a beach parking lot). Without the capability of keeping track of usage, the charger is much cheaper, both initially and ongoing. For Wellfleet, we need to figure out how to address multi-family housing and rentals. Ryan asked if we should be getting in touch with motel owners about chargers. Green suggested a discussion with Suzanne Thomas about chargers at the beach and perhaps the Adult Community Center, which Elkin said he would pursue.

Ryan-Ishkanian asked Shapiro if there was any **greenhouse gas emissions data** available to send to Steve Tupper at the Cape Cod Commission. Shapiro stated that the data he has is at least two years old, and focuses on town facilities. It could be recalculated from raw data available from the state. Elkin suggested that we make a plan to convert all town buildings to run on electricity. (Ryan-Ishkanian pointed out that this is under the topic of our **Climate Action Plan**.) Shapiro stated that the data on emissions from the rest of the town is just estimates, not high-quality data. Magenau brought up the possibility of upgrading the Assessor's database to provide current information on the method of heating/cooling used in town residences. (At present there is no mechanism for systematically updating the database, although the information exists when the building is first added.) Should upgrading the Assessor's database be part of our **Climate Action Plan**? Green said insurance companies collect and update this type of information too, but it was pointed out that (like the utilities) they would be unlikely to share this information. Shapiro mentioned that we do have data on electric vehicles thanks to Magenau's Public Records Request to the DMV. Elkin stated that the Cape Cod Commission was now collecting this data thanks to that request.

Regarding the **Global Covenant of Mayors**, Ryan-Ishkanian asked Shapiro to report on the objections raised regarding our latest submission. Shapiro cited the lack of a plan, and lack of specifics about disadvantaged populations such as the elderly. Magenau and Ryan had been working with Shapiro in the past on getting introduced to the GCOM reporting, and agreed to recommit to working on it with Shapiro. He suggested a regular weekly meeting. Elkin stated that we should recruit someone for our **vacant alternate position**. [Shapiro left the meeting at this point at 8:29PM.]

Ryan-Ishkanian is working on a draft section on **grants** for our **Climate Action Plan**, addressing our role as helping to identify opportunities and working closely with town staff. It was noted that a town planner position was approved by voters in the recent election, and that a new Assistant Town Administrator has accepted Wellfleet's job offer. Both those positions will be important for us to work with.

Elkin raised the issue of the **town's purchase of electricity**, which is part of a contract negotiated with most other Cape towns. Currently we buy the “renewable portfolio standard” which is only about 26% renewable energy. But the contract allows for the town to pay extra to increase the proportion of renewable energy, and Elkin suggests that we propose doing this at the spring Town Meeting. He estimates this would be about \$30,000-40,000 annually. Green requested that Elkin put together a fact sheet on this topic for further discussion.

Regarding the **Climate Action Plan**, Green had proposed some edits to Magenau’s latest draft on **Food Choices**. Ryan-Ishkanian raised the issue of whether the “voice” of our Plan will be the town, rather than our committee, and that as the Plan is put together there will be formatting decisions and further editing for internal consistency. Ryan-Ishkanian will contact Steve Tupper at Cape Cod Commission to let him know that our new ATA will be on board soon.

Under old business, to promote the **electric bicycle rebates**, Ryan-Ishkanian has compiled a contact list of owners of six bike shops from Orleans to Provincetown. Elkin suggests writing a letter and following up with a phone call. The sponsor of the program is Cape Light Compact who may have an explanatory brochure. Elkin will contact CLC and draft a letter.

Green has been reappointed to the **Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission**. Green will request that the topic of land swaps be on the agenda of the first Advisory Commission meeting. The new superintendent will be arriving mid-November, so the Advisory Committee will meet after that.

Magenau asked about the status of her issues raised at the previous meeting: a committee calendar, committee mailing list, and committee social media person. Ryan-Ishkanian has shared her Google calendar, but Elkin said we could all use the one on the Committee website. Magenau will ask the Town Clerk whether the town can maintain a mailing list for us. The idea of a social media person (or persons) will go on the agenda for discussion.

Under **new business**, the **next meeting was rescheduled** to Oct. 17 due to a conflict with Cape Cod Climate Action Network.

Motion to adjourn was made by Brigham, seconded by Magenau, voted 5-0-0. Meeting was adjourned at 9:17PM.

Next meeting: Tuesday 17 October at 7:15PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary C. Magenau

Carol [Mary C.] Magenau, Secretary