

Wellfleet Energy and Climate Action Committee

Minutes for 16 November 2023

Remote Participation

Present: Suzanne Ryan-Ishkanian (Chair), Carol Magenau (Secretary), David Mead-Fox, Cynthia Franklin, Gorham Brigham (alternate), Nancy Gralla (alternate)

Guest: Steve Tupper (Cape Cod Commission)

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

The meeting was recorded.

Business

[19:20] Magenau stated that a slight change was made to the **October minutes** at Green's request, and that she communicated with the folks who record the minutes so that someone who was attending but not using his/her camera would still appear on the video as being present. **Motion to approve** minutes of 17 October as amended made by Brigham, seconded by Franklin, voted 5-0-1 with Gralla abstaining since she did not attend.

[19:23] Ryan-Ishkanian welcomed Nancy Gralla as our **new alternate member**. Gralla introduced herself, mentioning that she is working with Third Act Massachusetts. She is also an alternate on the Recycling Committee.

[19:25] Turning to our **Climate Action Plan**, Ryan-Ishkanian stated that she had been in touch with our incoming Assistant Town Administrator Silvio Genao, who will be working with us on the Climate Action Plan [CAP] but could not attend tonight's meeting. She welcomed our guest Steve Tupper from the Cape Cod Commission to discuss working with the Committee on the Plan. Tupper stated that he has a background in transportation and had worked with Silvio when Silvio was DPW director in Eastham. Tupper reviewed the history of Wellfleet's involvement with the Commission on developing a CAP, which was put on hold almost immediately due to staffing issues. He mentioned that he is also working with Eastham on their plan, focusing primarily on a greenhouse gas emissions inventory. The Commission staff have been tracking relevant developments at the state level, and have reviewed our draft CAP that was supplied to them. Steve characterized the plan as "very impressive" but suggested the following:

- Consider changing the viewpoint to be a town plan, rather than committee plan
- Mapping out the process for including town staff and committees as well as public involvement

Mead-Fox suggested that the newly approved Town Planner position would be appropriate to involve in this planning process. Magenau asked what the process would look like for involving town staff and the public. Tupper suggested direct conversations with town staff, and a public meeting with perhaps a survey. He emphasized the importance of setting priorities in the plan. He also sees the public process as an opportunity to highlight what the Committee has already

accomplished. Franklin asked about the timeline for accomplishing the plan, and Tupper sees things getting underway in early 2024. Franklin postulated that it would be an iterative process where results of conversations with town staff would be brought back to the Committee. Tupper suggested that a written document be drawn up by Commission staff after the conversation involving the ATA. Ryan-Ishkanian asked if Tupper foresees any future meetings involving the whole Committee, and Tupper said that's up to Wellfleet but he's happy to return to future committee meetings. Brigham asked if Tupper could point us to another town doing the same work from whom we might gain insight. Tupper replied that not all committees are developing a plan as such, there are different strategies going on. He commended the work being done in Eastham and Brewster, and stressed the importance of tracking and accountability as well as fitting into existing planning processes. Franklin requested more clarity on the Commission's role in our process. Tupper said he sees the need for general support but does not see the Commission running the process. He sees the Commission helping with content of the Plan, bringing it to the public, getting and processing feedback, and creating the final Plan, but at the direction of the Committee and town staff. Gralla asked whether the climate plan recently released by the state (Melissa Hoffer's office) [\[https://www.mass.gov/info-details/recommendations-of-the-climate-chief\]](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/recommendations-of-the-climate-chief) is relevant to our process. Tupper responded that part of the funding covering the Commission's work with us comes from the state, and the state is keen to have towns prepared to go after federal funding. The report clarifies the state's priorities and introduces some concepts like the Decarbonization Roadmap that we should take care to incorporate. Ryan-Ishkanian asked whether having a CAP would strengthen our position for getting grants, and Tupper said generally yes, for some opportunities. Tupper left the meeting with our thanks. [19:51] Ryan-Ishkanian stated that she had distributed her draft on grant opportunities and requested feedback. She will incorporate the draft sections contributed by others into the plan created by Elkin and send the updated draft to Tupper. Franklin asked when the meeting with the ATA was scheduled for, which is Nov. 29.

[19:54] Mead-Fox reported that he was unaware of further developments on the **specialized stretch code**, and suggested contacting Bob Higgins-Steele of Truro.

[19:54] Ryan-Ishkanian reported that she and Magenau were taking over the **Global Covenant of Mayors** reporting from Robert [at his request], and have a meeting scheduled with someone at CDP [Carbon Disclosure Project] which manages the reporting for GCOM.

[19:57] Under new business Brigham suggested that we **contact Eastham** about their planning process, perhaps inviting them to a future meeting. Magenau suggested talking to Truro, who have done a lot with planning.

[20:03] Magenau reported on her conversation with Chris Wisniewski of the Recycling Committee on her **social media** posts. She posts some on Facebook but mainly on Instagram, where she feels that regular weekly posting helps gain followers. Followers are gained by using hashtags, and also reciprocity, so she follows all town businesses. Her posts are visual with short texts.

[20:06] Franklin has yet to follow up on a possible **student recruit**, due to a back injury.

[20:07] Elkin was not present to discuss proposing to the Selectboard that the Town **purchase only renewable energy**. Brigham stated he was reading about a report from the Energy Information Administration about **building electrification**. New England is lagging behind other regions. Brigham would like to see this addressed for town buildings. He agreed to send out the article if he can find it.

[20:10] Ryan-Ishkanian reported no activity on contacting bike shop owners about **electric bike subsidies**.

[20:11] Ryan-Ishkanian has sent an email to Paul Hilton at Cape Cod Collaborative about **electric school buses** but has had no response. Follow-up is needed, and Elkin had previously suggested involving Wellfleet's representative to the Nauset school committee. Franklin suggested supplying that person with a packet of information about the issue, and/or contacting them about our effort to promote this.

[20:15] Returning to the question of **building electrification** Brigham stated he had found the article from EIA, but asked if there was a functioning **committee email address**. Magenau said no. Ryan-Ishkanian said the address given on the town website for the committee does not work and that she would contact the town. Magenau said we each have to create our own mailing list.

[20:19] In Elkin's absence Brigham spoke about the **broken solar arrays** at the Library and Fire Station. [Mead-Fox left the meeting at around 8:20.] At the Library the inverters were turned off because they were suspected as the cause of random alerts from the smoke detectors. Although turned off by the Fire Department, is it DPW's responsibility to turn them back on? At the Fire Department, one inverter was turned off, and in the case of the other, it stated that the blower motor (which removes heat) was at the end of its life. The larger issue is what the arrangements are for maintenance of the town's solar installations. Magenau stated her opinion that it was really important that someone follow up on these issues. Brigham wondered where the budget for maintenance would come from. Ryan-Ishkanian said she would try to follow up with Elkin.

[20:24] For new business Ryan-Ishkanian reported that she and Magenau attended an excellent **panel discussion put on by Truro's Climate Action Committee** at the Truro Public Library on *Outer Cape Water Sources*. There were panelists representing the town of Truro, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, the National Seashore, and one other organization. Ground/drinking water on the Outer Cape is in good shape, but not so the ponds or the estuaries. Ryan-Ishkanian suggested that we encourage more **collaboration on public outreach** with our neighboring towns. Brigham spoke in favor of this idea as well. Magenau reported that she had attended a successful event on solar put on by Eastham, and that the involvement

of outside experts was a big plus. Brigham raised the possibility of a travelling show that would be put on in more than one location.

[20:31] Magenau reported attending a meeting on the **Electric Sector Modernization Plans [ESMP]** that Eversource and the other 2 utilities are being required to develop by the state. These plans address upgrading the grid and include projections about the demand for electricity through 2050. A Grid Modernization Advisory Council has been formed. Eversource’s plan includes a deficit in electricity (i.e. not enough to meet projected demand) starting around 2035 and continuing to 2050. (Brigham suggested this may be a reflection of our inability to know the status and number of projects and technologies in the future.) At present peak demand occurs in summer, but by 2050 this is expected to flip, with peak demand occurring in wintertime due to increased demand for heating and electric vehicles. Eversource is planning new substations in Falmouth (2025) and Dennis-Brewster (2035). Magenau mentioned attending a legislative lobbying meeting with Citizens Climate Lobby where Congressman Keating’s climate staffer mentioned being excited about fusion technology, which has been in the works for some 40 years but may be near a breakthrough. Maybe Eversource is hoping to be saved by fusion technology...

[20:41] Gralla expressed concern about **offshore wind projects** foundering and asked for thoughts and advice. Brigham said he was planning to raise the topic of “anti- groups.” His understanding is that concern is being voiced about cables under the beaches in Barnstable which are already in place but not turned on. One of the complaining individuals purportedly represents the State Policy Network, funded by the Koch brothers. Brigham recommends the book *Dark Money* by Jane Mayer. He suggests a future discussion on pushing back against **disinformation campaigns** with facts, and would like a central point of contact for this effort (perhaps the Commission?). Magenau mentioned learning at the CCL lobbying meeting that there are only 3 ships worldwide capable of transporting the largest wind turbines, and they’re booked 5 years out. This means that delays from public opposition can have disastrous consequences to projects. Ryan-Ishkanian suggested that Brigham get in touch with Steve Tupper about the issue of countering pushback against environmental projects.

[20:53] **Motion to adjourn** was made by Brigham, seconded by Magenau, voted 5-0-0. Meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Next meeting: Dec. 21 at 7:15 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary C. Magenau

Carol [Mary C.] Magenau, Secretary