

## Minutes

### Martha's Vineyard Commission Climate Action Task Force (CATF)

Friday, August 7, 2020

#### Zoom

CATF members present: Dan Doyle, Liz Durkee, Alex Elvin, Rob Hannemann, Tristan Israel, Bob Johnston, Kathy Newman, Donna Paulnock, Ben Robinson, Alan Strahler, Bill Straw, Richard Toole, Kate Warner

Others present: Liz Argo (CVEC)

#### I. Recap of 8/3/20 discussion with Eversource; discussion of Eversource cluster studies

Members briefly discussed their meeting with Eversource representatives on Aug. 3, with a focus on Eversource's decision to review distributed energy resources in clusters, rather than one at a time. Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative (CVEC) Director Liz Argo said a new 58MW cluster study that includes the proposed 1MW solar array at the Oak Bluffs landfill has raised concerns, since the study could delay the project by more than a year. She planned to voice her concerns to the DPU if the study ends up stalling the project, which is similar to arrays in Tisbury, West Tisbury, and Aquinnah. She suggested that the CATF serve as a watchdog as the process moves forward, and take part in future communications with the DPU. She also suggested submitting a second questionnaire to Eversource related to the cluster studies, in addition to a more general questionnaire being drafted by the CATF. The CATF agreed to provide whatever support it could.

#### II. Discussion of questions to submit to Eversource

A preliminary list of questions following the CATF's meeting with Eversource on Aug. 3 was revised and narrowed down to the following:

1. What scenario analysis has Eversource done for Category 4 hurricanes, ice storms and other severe weather events on the Island? What is the potential duration of outages under each scenario?
2. Eversource has stated that undergrounding last-mile connections is unfeasible from a cost perspective. At what point will undergrounding become feasible in terms of resiliency?
3. Can Eversource do a peak-load analysis (seasonal and daily) from the average load scenario, including the CATF's projected increase in both EV adoption and electric heating and cooling? (Assume this is similar to today's summer peaks, but proportional to the overall increase in electricity use.)

4. How much diesel fuel did Eversource/NRG burn on-Island in 2018 and 2019, and so far in 2020?
5. To date, it seems that increasing the electrical supply to the Vineyard and improving infrastructure on the Island have come as a direct response to greater usage. Given the Island's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2040; and the projected increase in extreme weather events, flooding, heatwaves, drought, and wildfire associated with climate change, what steps is Eversource now taking or planning to take to ensure the resilience of our power supply and meet the potential increase in demand?
6. As discussed at our meeting on August 3, please provide a map of areas on the Island that are best suited to community solar arrays.
7. Given its benefits in regard to mitigating peak demand and responding to outages, when will Eversource integrate smart metering on the Island?
8. Please explain why a cluster study is needed for the Oak Bluffs Capped Landfill PV/Storage interconnection if the point of interconnection is robust enough to handle the increased power from the diesel generators brought online in the summer.
9. What is the timeline for upgrading the Falmouth Tap Switching Station, and what will that project mean for the Island?

### III. Discussion of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration analysis

Members discussed how to begin evaluating the Island's capacity for CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration and develop strategies to increase that capacity. Members suggested collaborating with Island conservation commissions, scientists in Woods Hole, and Harvard Forest Director David Foster to determine how best to establish a baseline of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration according to land use on the Island, including coastal water bodies and salt marshes. Alex Elvin said detailed GIS data for land uses on the Island currently exist, but tracking changes since 2000 is difficult since the GIS land use categories have changed. Tristan Israel emphasized the goal of preserving open space, conservation land, and neighborhoods that contain contiguous trees and vegetation, including through zoning tools, which will require significant public education and support. The recent CATF Transportation Strategy Working Paper states that about 50,000 acres of forest would be needed to offset the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transportation on the Island in 2018; the Island currently has about 36,000 acres of forested land.

In terms of overall messaging, Rob Hannemann stressed the importance of distinguishing between the CATF's greenhouse gas reduction and CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration goals. Ben Robinson agreed to put together a list of contacts to pursue in developing the sequestration baseline.

### IV. Other business: schools, airport, vulnerable populations

Members agreed that continued discussion with Island schools should wait until October at the earliest, given the focus on Covid-19 and reopening for the school year. They agreed to stay up to date

on activities related to the new high school building, although Rob reported that the high school building committee has not meet since January. Ben said he believed the building committee would likely reach out the CATF as they review their sustainability goals, and he suggested that Marc Rosenbaum or Steven Turner could provide guidance. Plans to transition to an electric school bus fleet (and a decision to lease diesel buses instead) should also be followed.

Tristan pointed to the need for more communication with the airport in terms of energy use, including clarity on a proposal prior to Covid-19 to increase jet traffic. Ben noted the potential for large-scale solar generation on the airport property. Rob added that the energy papers incorporate the use of jet fuel, but do not fully capture the airport's greenhouse gas footprint.

Looking ahead, Tristan agreed to set up a meeting with the Dukes County Health Counsel, Dukes County Commissioners, and the CATF to discuss climate change adaptation. Tristan also reported that he has connected with a Brazilian clergy member who may be willing to participate in the task force meetings, but not until September. Ben suggested that an in-person meeting to facilitate involvement from the Brazilian community might be more effective if there is a language barrier.