

Minutes

MVC Climate Action Task Force

Friday, January 15, 2021

Zoom

CATF members present: Richard Toole, Ben Robinson, Kate Warner, Rob Hannemann, Alex Elvin, Erik Peckar, Kathy Newman, Alan Strahler, Joan Malkin, Liz Durkee, Dan Doyle, Adam Turner

Others in Attendance: Melinda Loberg (briefly, by phone)

I. Infrastructure Bill update

While the most recent attempt did not yield passage for the bill, there is a lot of support for the bill. Nonetheless, MA Attorney General Maura Healey came out in opposition to the bill. In the lead up to the next iteration, CATF will draft a letter to the Governor that points out specific reasons an infrastructure bill is relevant to our island priorities, along with a discussion of what the bill entails. Ben will send a draft to Dan and Liz for review and edits.

II. Storm Tide Pathway public meeting recap

The meeting earlier in the week generated a good turnout of over 50 attendees. The CZM funded grant will allow for mapping of flood pathways now as well as future years; it is important because FEMA Flood Maps are inadequate; it will include a link to the National Weather Service; Liz got good feedback following the meeting.

The model used for Provincetown's Center for Coastal Studies (the 3rd party analytics team for the grant) will be ground-truthed; it will show over time where our flood prone areas will be, especially along roads; this will benefit planning for both CRC and DPWs; we still need matching funds of about 50K; what are in kind activities that islanders are capable of?

III. List of CRC items and CATF action items

What is CATF's role?

What do we want done that working c'tees cannot complete?

For one, a broad approach needs to be taken on education to better mainstream climate change and its impacts. A list of organizations, on island, and what they do will be a valuable reference for working groups throughout this effort; more attention is needed towards energy goals, governing structure and how we relate to the towns; climate related jobs and workforce training, are other areas that need focus.

The Steamship needs to be better engaged to determine whether they are committed to electrifying their fleet; they will need the most outside financial support to pull off such a transition. This should be partially addressed within any infrastructure bill that passes. We should first reach out to SSA to determine whether they're already giving this consideration. A small team of members should set up a small meeting with our SSA Board member and their GM, as opposed to a public meeting. We need to show them we can be a partner and advocate for them while we have high profile officials with island ties and a climate focus.

Washington-state ferry system electrification initiative was spearheaded by their governor.

Federal infrastructure bill would be a perfect fit for the Steamship. If nationalizing the grid is also an outcome of a future bill, we should figure out what the implications are for us and Eversource. Steamship would be the best big ticket, high profile item.

We need a package for our legislators when we reach out.

Nantucket made out well with the wind farm community benefits because they had a special federal designation; they were a national seashore or a national landmark; that triggers a benefit package. Could the Vineyard work toward a high stature designation? It would be a multi-year process.

Other funding options include vulnerable roads, but most of them are state-owned roads. Should we coordinate with the State on such a request, or should that be left to the State's apparatus? We should position ourselves to leverage such funds should they be received by the state and put toward roads in vulnerable areas. SSA is considered an extension of the state highway system. Perhaps we should package our request as our roads and ferry system connecting us and our supply chain to the mainland. Our harbors are another complement to this network.

Roads and harbors are resilience planning, while SSA electrification is a mitigation action.

Additional items

Is there federal assistance for low and middle income retrofits of homes that need to electrify their power source? Cape Light Compact's program is a mere pilot program; if it's successful, it may be scaled up through Cape Light Compact; they could potentially receive a federal block grant. They are also applying for a Rural Utility Assistance program.

Liz will work with MVC staff to determine what items were found in previous bills; do we have the appropriate entities in existence to help channel these types of funds? We should start with Keating's office. Adam will first try to get a copy of the bill presently being considered. We will begin with SSA, and then assess if Nantucket should be contacted. Chuck Larsen is a good contact there.

Lobbying needs to be one of the central goals.

IV. Woodwell Climate Center

Climate modeling and Climate sequestration projects will be bundled together and may be over \$100K. They will raise over half of the funds. The work will merge well with IGI's efforts and the MV Farm Bureau.

What is five or ten year priority list? This will help define where we are headed.

V. Town-generated solar power

Stranded assets in West Tisbury and Aquinnah

Alternative On Build Credits (AOBC program); allows a town to generate more kw than it needs, but the savings can then be returned to the town through a rate reduction on all of its meters; it is a complex and nascent program.

Are there legislative changes that would help mitigate Eversource's resistance to change?

VSEC is presently discussing 2021 goals

VI. Additional Goals

- Energy subcommittee for CATF is also working through its goals.
- Get CATF more involved in student education; a climate education program, or climate week
- Small project funding is needed for projects that quickly emerge (we need development skills).

VII. CATF Annual Report and 2021 Goals update

Reporting at a full MV Commission meeting at a date with large turnout expected is a great way to inform a big audience. It will be good exposure for additional press as well, given our public hearings are covered by the newspapers.