

MVC Adaptation Master Plan Subcommittee (AMPC)

Stakeholder Listening Session #7: Island climate committees

August 9, 2020, on Zoom

Key points (by town)

Aquinnah (Energy and Climate Committee)

- The board of selectmen has expressed concern about climate change
- The town has a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Aquinnah is seen as facing less fire risk than some towns
- Consider forming an Islandwide climate committee (the adaptation equivalent to the Vineyard Sustainable Action Committee)
- Efforts are underway to build resiliency for municipal buildings; solar, battery storage, microgrid
- The Tribal Town Hall is designated as a Red Cross Shelter
- Other climate-related concerns include the following:
 - Low-lying roads vulnerable to flooding include Oxcart and Lobsterville roads
 - Storms and sea-level rise
 - Fresh water availability during storms
 - Salt water intrusion
 - There is a hand pump on State Road (not necessarily potable); are there other “springs” or artesian wells where hand pumps could provide fresh water in power outages?
 - Elderly residents: Consider a survey of those to be checked on in storms
 - Need for two-way radios
 - Poor culverts on public and private roads; the town applied for an MVP Action Grant to study culverts; what needs updating? (Lobsterville culvert renovation was paid for by the Tribe)

Chilmark (Climate Change Working Group)

- Desire to focus on topics specific to Chilmark over a 30-year time span
- By 2050, the Menemsha docks will be underwater on average about 5.5 days a week
- Outreach and education should cover personal property adaptation
- Long-term impacts of climate change will affect town funding and tax base
- Hariphs Creek Bridge, connecting Aquinnah and Chilmark, is almost 10 feet above sea level, so damage would likely result only from a storm stronger than any recorded in Island history; the bridge is state-owned, and the state has emergency pontoons they can get here within days if the bridge fails; the stability of the shoreline under the bridge is more of a concern
- The idea of rebuilding Menemsha is controversial and people tend to avoid it

- Wildfire risk is critical in Chilmark and across the Island; we need an Islandwide action plan for wildfire mitigation (the fire tower is not always manned); the Chilmark Fire Department is well educated on wildfire, and is thinking about a second level of volunteer firefighters for that purpose

West Tisbury (Climate Advisory Committee)

- The Chilmark/West Tisbury Community Building Resilience (aka MVP) Workshop report is vague, and the board of selectmen has not been following up on it
- The climate advisory committee is working to develop a hurricane preparedness card
- Sea-level rise is less of a concern than in most other Island towns, since there are no harbors and not much public coastline
- Fire risk is relatively high, in part because the town includes about half the state forest; there are differing opinions about fire risk mitigation, such whether eliminate lawns altogether, or water them to keep them from drying out
- Concern about lack of state forest management in general
- West Tisbury has received a Clean Energy and Resiliency (CLEAR) grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to have an engineering firm help develop a plan to provide power to town buildings so they can offer critical services and potable water during prolonged power failures
- Important to identify what buildings have approved public water sources [the town has 18 “non-community” public wells and about 2,700 private wells, according to the MVC]
- The MVC Coastal District of Critical Planning Concern (DCPC) covers each Island town
- There is pending legislation to change the required town meeting vote for zoning bylaw changes from a 2/3 majority to simple majority