

Climate Action Committee Meeting Minutes January 15, 2025  
Historic Meeting Room, Town Hall main floor

Members and others attending: Lili Flanders, Chair of CAC; Mark Gebhardt, co-Chair (by Zoom), Alex Limpaecher, Member of CAC; and Georgia Neill (CAC volunteer)

1. Assign Notetaker: Mark C. Gebhardt
2. Public Comment: Bob Higgins-Steele, Co-Chair Energy Committee

Bob Higgins-Steele asked to speak to the CAC about the Energy Committee's recommendation of having the town own several solar energy sources (on buildings, canopies or arrays on the ground). This has been discussed at Town Meeting in the past and recently with the Town Manager. Previously the lease option was preferred, but the concern of the EC is that it would generate very little revenue over time. If the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is extended by the new federal administration, the Town would get a 40% reimbursement as a tax credit for renewable energy. Although owning solar arrays initially would involve taking on some debt and delay income streams for a while, it ultimately would create an income stream that could be put toward a Climate Action Sustainability Fund that could be used to support a Climate Action Coordinator. The funding for the current Climate Coordinator (Chris Palmer) was approved for one year at the last Town Meeting. If we lease, there is no up-front cost and no TM approval needed, but revenue is considerably less than the own option.

It is recognized that it will take time for us to assemble/built the arrays in various places in Truro and get connected to Eversource. To make money from the grid probably takes ~5 years. Included in our packet today were proposals for various sited in Truro for these arrays, either on building roofs, canopies or on the ground. We would have to find someone to maintain the grid (repairs, etc.) – possibly hired initially as consultants.

**EC Ask:** EC wants permanent funding for a Climate Coordinator, ownership of solar arrays in Truro and reinstatement of a Climate Action Stabilization fund with ~\$50K to give us a second year of funding for CC position (and beyond). **Wants CAC to be in agreement (see discussion below).**

3. Review and approve minutes from 12/4/24 meeting – **approved 3/3 votes.**
4. Review and discuss Cape Cod Commission's CAP Communications Framework (website provided in the agenda – <https://www.capecodcommission.org/resource>)

A discussion was held on the focus of both the EC and CAC. CAC focuses primarily on private businesses and citizens and communication of education materials. Although there is overlap, the EC focuses more on the Town of Truro (energy use buildings and vehicles, etc.). We need to agree on goals and If we agree on an approach, gain the support of town people regarding our recommendations at Town Meeting.

The Cape Cod Commissions Communications Framework was reviewed and discussed. It was felt a focus on means of communication to the public (see Page 49) was important. We might consider revamping the CAC pages on the Town's website, and using an E-newsletter, Social Media, and Interactive Maps.

We also might **consider having our own website**. We could add our videos from Library series, pamphlets, etc. There is a concerned citizen's website on climate that is quite good (not clear if it is still in effect. (Joan Holt)

Buildings and cars are the primary focus of our efforts.

We could use email lists for one-on-one communication updates.

Is the database for new personal EVs, home heat pumps and solar panels updated as they get installed in private homes? Will check.

**Actions:** get word out about rodent control, focus on communication about cars and buildings, be repetitive, decide on what platform(s) we want to communicate. Banners at the Truro Library on our progress on decarbonization might be useful to show the town community including information about time goals (2030, 2050, etc) and how we are meeting them.

We will ask if we can have/make our own website and, if not, bring in Katie R(?) to update our section of the town website. **Discuss more at our next meeting.**

5. Review and Discuss Energy Committee Decarbonization Roadmap materials:

EC wants to create solar arrays, get income from those arrays and prefers that the Town own the solar arrays. EC wants our support.

We discussed the potential negative impact/cost to Truro if we DO NOT have a Climate Coordinator to move our recommendations forward. Chris Palmer will be not just doing climate action, but also decarbonization, etc. Consider changing the name to a Sustainability Coordinator.

Lease of solar arrays – cheaper initially, but very low income over time.

Own – loss initially but then gradual increase in income - MUCH more income than leasing (graph shared by Lili). Brian Boyle is crunching the numbers.

**CAC supports this plan:** we need both a decarbonization plan and a Sustainability Manager (currently called a Climate Coordinator but this position is more than that). **Vote 3/3 in favor.** Lili will go before the Select Board on Jan 28, 2025 to make our recommendation. Members will attend as well.

Barnstable Sustainable Manager got a grant for \$43M for microgrids – will support his position for 450 years!

6. Update on Library Info Sessions: Do we have a budget? Lili will check.

January – no meeting

Feb 21: Stephany Ellis – rodent control

March – Wampanoag

April – Warrant articles – solar, fertilizers, pesticides

May - Cape Cod Light – speaking at May Library meeting on electrifying homes and solar

June – meet the Climate Coordinator.

7. Updates on ongoing projects, incl. Truro CAP, Truro Talks articles, pesticide & fertilizer, HRP, grants, divestments, budget, etc.

Application for Green Leaders Grant submitted – should hear in a month or two.

Divestments: Georgia trying to gather information. There is a public relations person who directed her to other options.

EC warrant – article for authorizing borrowing money for solar arrays (\$1,709,000.00)

**CAC agrees: vote 3/3 in favor.**

8. Discussion of meeting format going forward:

Can our meetings be hybrid to allow for guests and other committee members who cannot come in person.

**Discussed – decided to make meetings at Town Hall hybrid and the meeting at the Library in person** (on occasion we can use Zoom if one committee member cannot attend in person).

Lili will check on open meeting “rules”

9. Google Doc tutorial – Alex guided us on using Google docs.

10. Adjourn: 12:05 PM

11. Next Meeting 1/29/2025 at the Truro Library

Respectively submitted by,

Mark C. Gebhardt  
Co-Chair, Climate Action Committee  
Truro, MA