

1/29/25 Climate Action Committee Minutes

Members and others attending: Lili Flanders, Chair of CAC; [Mark Gebhardt, Vice Chair of CAC]; Alex Limpaecher, member of CAC; and Georgia Neill, CAC volunteer.

Assign Noteaker
Alex Limpaecher

Public Comment

None

Previous Meeting Minutes from 1/15/25

Approved with minor adjustments

Communication and Strategy Discussion

Lili spoke with Katie Riconda with the general guidance:

- No to setting up our own website, rather adjusting the CAC page on the Truro website
- Truro Town has an Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn page that we can submit to
- A larger website rework is currently happening, and potentially [a...?]

Reviewing the Cape Code Climate Action Plan Communication Guidelines

There was a discussion on what the objectives should be. Emphasis was put on warrant articles since the town hall meeting was coming up. These included:

- The home rule petition regarding fertilizer. Laura Kelley will be on the Board of Health agenda for February.
- Discussion about a Divestment Warrant Article
- The Solar Plan is being put forward by the Energy Committee, which the CAC supports.

Then there were discussions on channels and how we could communicate. Ideas were brainstormed, including:

- Video, interviews with well-known players around town
- The use of video in general and getting that on the town's Instagram

- Reaching out to WOMR and setting up an interview. Seeing if the new Climate Coordinator is a good candidate for that.
 - WOMR interview could be reused for Instagram or Podcast
- Similarly having content on the Truro Public TV Channel
- Collaborating with Cape-wide groups, such as Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative and APCC (Association to Preserve Cape Cod)

Library Sessions

- Budget was discussed
- Possibility of doing a Fire Threats and Resilience Hub talk in March
- Potentially moving the Wampanoag talk to June

Action Steps

- Meet with Energy Committee on 2/5/25
- Figure out the Hubs Library Session Talk

Respectively submitted by,

Alex Limpaecher

Minutes:

Truro Climate Action Committee

Wednesday, February 6th, 10 am- Noon

Type: Remote meeting

Attendees: Lili Flanders, chair; Mark Gebhardt, vice-chair; Alex Limpaecher, member; Brian Boyle, Energy Committee co-chair; Jack Riemer, Planning Committee Member, Chris Palmer, Climate Action Coordinator, Joan Holt, public.

1. Assign Notetaker: Gebhardt
2. Public Comment: Joan Holt, Jack Riemer
3. We met Chris Palmer, the new Climate Action Coordinator. He introduced himself and summarized some of the projects he is working on. He supportive of the Climate Action Plan.
4. Discussion of decarbonization message & plans with EC – Brian Boyle presented, Bob Higgins-Steele could not attend.
 - Bob Higgins-Steele – email to Lili emphasizing the needs for resilience hubs that will be on one of the grants. In the future, they will be supported by microgrids at the Library, Community Center and School.
 - Solar Energy MVP Grants: Some grants require a 10% contribution from the town which could be substantial.
 - **Slide Presentation on Truro's Decarbonization Plans:** Brian Boyle, Co-Chair of the Energy Committee presented a slide show. Highlights:
 - In 2011 we became a Green Community. Main goal was to reduce energy consumption by 20%, then decarbonize with solar grids. Got delayed on solar arrays at the Transfer Station because of damage to the land fill membrane by a contractor. So we purchased solar energy off Cape.
 - Missed an opportunity 3 1/2 years ago when the solar plan was proposed, but got stalled.
 - Three Select Board objectives (Climate, Economy and Infrastructure) are aligned with this Solar plan.

- Decarbonation Roadmap. Reduce from 75% fossil fuel now to solar electricity by 2030 and 2050.
- Discussed the EC Solar Design for landfill: 2900- 3600 panels 1.3 to 1.63 MW (145-180 Households).
- 2500 households do not have solar panels and some would use the grid – would yield 10% reduction in electricity costs.
- Landfill Solar Costs were presented – For Truro, estimated cost per watt is \$2.71 but would be less in a bigger project: 1.6 MW project.
- Estimate in a warrant article is \$5.6M (3.11/watt, 1.6MW and 10% contingency).
- Benefits to taxpayer \$35K/year would yield \$10M in 30 years if we own the solar project (much less income if it is leased)
- Electricity generated is worth 2x the cost of the bond. The 30-year bond will get partly paid off each year because we make a profit. If we lease, the financial benefit will be much less.
- Year one is negative, but that can be modified depending on how much we borrow (70%, 80%, etc.). Even with some doomsday proposals (solar electricity sold at a 25% discount, we still make money.
- what if IRA goes away – don't get a rebate and the curve moves right so the benefit wouldn't occur until after 10 years. Net gain in 30 years is \$7M, not \$10M.
- This analyses were vetted by Liz Argo, a specialist formerly from CVEC, who agreed that the numbers were solid.
- Plan Town Meeting Warrant to borrow and spend \$5,600,00 for this project. Requires 2/3 vote. Also want to establish a Revolving Energy Fund in 2025 ATM Warrant. energy@truro-ma.gov

Discussion: need to balance supply and demand for solar electricity.

5. Discuss communication strategies w/EC

- Library session available for informing public about this plan in April

- **Social Media platforms** (Facebook and Instagram) to disseminate the plan, **Newsletters** (Truro Talks), **short video** summarizing the slide presentation.
- In addition to cost, there are other benefits such as climate benefits that positively affect other agencies/committees (Conservation Committee, Part Time Taxpayer organizations).
- EC has a Podcast, and we could distribute link.
- [Engage town people]
- Link the DPW renovation with these energy grids – they are complementary and both require initial financing. Might be resistance to doing solar at the same time we are doing DPW.
- Chris Palmer pointed out the need to:
 - get this on the Warrant for ATM,
 - then consider “big players” (Truro Vinyards, etc), and,
 - third, the towns people (can set up tables outside post offices and transfer station to reach people)
- Also, discuss at Pre-Town Meeting

6. Discussion of the Climate Action Plan w/EC members (Brian Boyle)

- Revised by Alex and includes the need for a Whole Government Approach
- CAP was not approved in Aug 2023, but the SB was supportive. There was interest in a Climate Action Summit using the CAP as a template.
- We want to have a CAP (not mandated by State), but goal is to have it approved by the end of the year.
- Chris suggested that the EC take parts of it to modify and ask the Transportation folks to weigh in. Add long view of financial support from Solar Energy Grids.
- Planning Committee – minimize the impact of flooding. Jack Riemer supportive of cooperation and WGA. Need more collaboration. He will address at a future Planning Board meeting. Look at Cape Cod Commission report/action plan for Barnstable County.

- We are competing with other issues: affordable housing, traffic and others. Not sure where climate change is on the priority list.
 - Town Council to look at legal issues of the solar landfill project. Community Solar project might compete in the future with our own solar projects.
 - Solar Simplified Company – works with communities to sign up citizens to get guaranteed decreases in electric bill (10% reductions for all residents).
7. Updates re: Wampanoag speaker for library info. session, budget, etc.
- Georgia listened to a talk last week to help find a speaker
 - Do we have a budget to hire speakers for the library series?
 - March is open: We will try to get Tim Collins to speak on fire safety. Open Space committee is concerned about fire threats (recent Independent article). Combine with resilience hubs.
 - February meeting is on rodent control (methods other than anticoagulants)
8. Adjourn at 12:00PM

Respectively submitted,

Mark C. Gebhardt

Vice Chair, Climate Action Committee