

MVP Core Team meeting minutes 3/10/2021, 7 pm Via GoToMeeting

Present: Liz Callahan, Elisa Grammer, Chip Wallace, Wendy Reed, Rick Parker, Nancy Pau. Also present Mike Sebulis and Leila Pike of [GEI Consultants](#).

Action grant

Nancy Pau reported that our state MVP contact, Michelle Rowden, has received 160 letters of interest about potential action grants. Ms. Pau will have a call with Ms. Rowden for her feedback; Mr. Parker and Ms. Grammer will also try to listen in. Ms. Pau noted that of our two areas of interest—invasive plant control and drowning roadways, notably River Road—the latter could use more detail. She noted that coastal zone management programs could include flood storage areas, a living shoreline scheme, or other initiatives. A first step is assessment of vulnerabilities.

Mr. Parker suggested that the Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW), Wayne Amaral, should be involved. Ms. Pau added that swales and storage have worked well over the year. There could also be an evaluation of roadside ditches and culverts. Ms. Reed confirmed that there has been no Town-wide assessments of culverts. She added that the Town is working on a storm water bylaw, which is slated for Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Sibulis (a West Newbury resident) and Ms. Pike (in Maine) discussed their work. Ms. Pike has experience as a coastal and riverine modeler. She said that they typically model several scenarios, looking at rising tides and sea levels, costal storms, and severe, prolonged rain events, then putting the three together to examine flooding. This includes a look of the assets that may be vulnerable. Mr. Parker said that ongoing erosion is also a problem, threatening River Road. Mr. Sibulis and Ms. Pike said that there are solutions for this—some can be in hardscape engineered installations and some through a living shoreline approach, and both can be used together as well. Mr. Sibulis said that his group had done work of this sort on the Merrimack River.

Identifying vulnerabilities as a first step allows development of priorities. *It was generally agreed that in about two weeks Mr. Sibulis and Ms. Pike will provide this group a menu of options, with costs of evaluation work that could be done.* Ms. Pau said that our budget would likely be limited by the Town's obligation to

match 25% of the grant, which can be provided in kind, perhaps including value of the Greenbelt/Town acquisition of land on River Road. Ms. Pau noted that the group will also be reaching out to another consulting firm about this.

Changing from Working Group to Town Committee status

--**Name:** After discussion, the group agreed, by unanimous roll call vote, to name the committee the Climate Change Resiliency Committee, focusing largely on fortifying West Newbury against, preparing it for, and helping it to recover from adverse effects of climate change. The Energy Advisory Committee will be the Energy and Sustainability Committee, working as before on energy efficiency and renewable energy resources while adding a larger focus on reducing our contribution to greenhouse gases and promoting environmental objectives through a variety of means, with a scope that could range from rain barrels to composting.

--**Draft mission statement:** The group discussed the draft mission statement, deciding to add language to spell out the concepts contained in the term resiliency—"to prepare for threats, to absorb impacts, and to recover and adapt after disruptive events." Adding language about working with other affected departments and committees was also discussed

The Climate Change Resiliency Committee's mission is to promote, through action, education, and funding support, West Newbury's resilience to climate change, promoting its ability to prepare for threats, to absorb impacts, and to recover and adapt after disruptive events. Working with other affected Town departments and boards, the Committee will build on the Town's Municipal Vulnerability Community status to seek action grants and take other steps to address the climate change vulnerabilities and to take on action items identified in the Workshop conducted with representative stakeholders.

--**Committee members:** Ms. Grammer noted that the Town's [policy on committees](#) identifies two kinds of committees: some are statutory (like the Planning Board or the Historical Commission) and have more specific requirements for number of members, Committee jurisdiction, etc., while others

are of an advisory nature and are more flexible, like the Energy Advisory Committee, which has no authorizing bylaw or statute, and no required number of members with a simple majority as a quorum. *It was generally agreed that the Climate Change Resiliency Committee will be of the latter type. It was also agreed that the Committee's initial recommended membership will comprise the MVP Core Team (those present at February's meeting), and that the Committee will seek members on and coordination with Boards/Commissions/Committees including Open Space, Conservation, Energy Advisory, Planning, Aging, Capital Improvements and will seek to coordinate with the Department of Public Works and other Town departments or organizations affected by climate change.*

Updates on MVP identified issues

Invasive plants

Ms. Pau reported that the subgroup is active working on websites and will be offering native and pollinator plants at the West Newbury Garden Club's May plant sale. She described a timing issue with the proposal for an item on the Spring Meeting warrant to fund interns for work managing invasive plants—now is the time to advertise for interns but we will not know until Town Meeting whether funding is available. Mr. Parker said that Selectman Archibald and Town Manager Jennings supported going forward, noting that the advertisement for interns could say that the position is contingent on funding approval. Ms. Pau said that the people who would manage the interns include Patricia Reeser and Carol Decker, members of the Open Space Committee.

Composting

Ms. Pau said she has found four households interested in getting group rates in a Black Earth Composting promotional program. She is also trying to get estimates about curbside pickup at the schools.

Electric vehicles

Energy Advisory Committee Chair Chip Wallace said that the Town now has a hybrid police vehicle, and the Town hopes to apply for a grant for a second hybrid police vehicle in the fall. It's not clear that a fully electric vehicle is now available to meet police needs. The police have been very receptive to this. Mr. Parker added that there have been discussions with DPW about converting from gas-fired to battery powered hand tools and lawn mowers. The DPW Director was

surprised at some of the products already available, which can have advantages in fuel costs and maintenance.

Storm water & roads

Ms. Reed reported that the stormwater bylaw has been deferred to Fall Town Meeting.

Communications

No update.

Power outages

No update.

Protecting & securing water supplies

Ms. Grammer said that a concern is that one jurisdiction might make worsen another's climate change problems in seeking to solve its own is something West Newbury should watch out for. She attended the virtual meeting in which Newburyport presented its [Climate Resiliency Plan](#), which suggested various actions (including "Review West Newbury's current wellfield and any future proposed wellfield expansion Plans for an excessive drawdown, or any other adverse impact, to the city's reservoirs") to be taken in West Newbury for the purpose of protecting Newburyport's water supply from the Artichoke Reservoir. She said that in the question and answer period, she suggested discussing these matters with West Newbury, and noted that the question of West Newbury's wells had already been litigated and that with the common interests both jurisdictions have, it may be that the promising new wellfield found in West Newbury could be a common solution.

Green Fair & moving the Town toward MA climate objectives

Mr. Wallace reported that the Energy Advisory Committee is working on this, including identifying date and location.

Other matters

It was agreed that the Committee will start taking action to review and approve the minutes.

It was agreed that the Committee will set a standard meeting time of 7 pm on the second Wednesday of the month. The next meeting will be April 14, 2021.

Adjournment: 8:53 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer

Meeting materials: none