

Climate Change Resiliency Committee meeting minutes 7/14/2021, 7 pm

First Floor Hearing Room, Town Offices

Present: Nancy Pau, Elisa Grammer, Chip Wallace, Rick Parker, Tom Craig.

Action grant, other grants & projects

--Invasive plants

Nancy Pau reported that the West Newbury Wild & Native group may seek funding for outreach/education activities and materials for demonstration gardens, and also may get funding support raised by the [Gulf of Main Institute](#).

As to preparing an article for the Fall Town Meeting warrant, Rick Parker said that the current draft should be tuned up with a definitive discussion about supervision of the intern, what other committees will be contributing, and what the deliverables will be for the Town. The expectation is that the Conservation Agent (whose hiring is in process) will supervise. *For the revised town meeting article about interns, Ms. Pau will work on the deliverables and will consider funding amounts and Mr. Parker will work on the supervision aspects.*

Mr. Parker noted that September 8, 2021 is the deadline for Fall Town Meeting articles.

--River Road

Ms. Pau noted that the [Climate Café](#) (in which students lead discussions of climate change issues with interested citizens) is interested in interviewing residents affected by or knowledgeable about erosion along River Road. Ms. Pau stated that Shari Melto, who organizes the Climate Cafes, would like to involve Merrimac and Groveland as well. interested in River come up with list of people to be interviewed. This will need to be scheduled while college students are home—they are the ones who are trained and can train newer high school students.

Ms. Pau also said that she has been in touch with Geoff Wilson, a consultant and specialist in natural solutions for eroding shore lines, who earlier this year took a tour of River Road. He is willing to do this again with some West Newbury Town officials. September would be a target for this. *Ms. Pau noted that she has photos and notes from Mr. Wilson's visit and will prepare a report. Ms. Grammer said she also has photos and notes and will share them with Ms. Pau.*

For the purpose of getting the Town's OK to pursue an action grant, Ms. Pau will prepare a discussion addressing 1) administration burdens—what are they, who will be responsible, what will Town staff have to do? 2) how real is the money—matching obligations, timing of disbursements, etc; 3) what changes to the way the Town does business will be required—temporarily or permanently?

Ms. Pau also mentioned, as a means of citizen science engagement, a program where for about \$100/year, you set up a stand (with explanatory information) that citizen/scientists can use for a smartphone photo of a place changing with climate change. The program includes an app that allows participants to upload photos and thus help document changes over time. *Ms. Pau will provide additional information about this citizen science app so that we can consider whether to ask for funding at Fall Town Meeting.*

Ms. Grammer described the positive response from Groveland and Merrimac to the idea that the towns may be able to cooperate in seeking action grants, particularly with respect to bank erosion issues. The committee agreed to explore

- Reviewing those towns' MVP reports about bank erosion & roadways
- Joining with those towns on site walks of erosion problem spots
- Joining with those towns in the Climate Café interviews

Chair & clerk election

Ms. Grammer agreed to serve as clerk and will continue to do minutes, paperwork, and website activities. *She was reelected as clerk by a unanimous vote.* She cannot continue as chair of the committee—work involving putting together agendas, setting and running meetings.

Updates on MVP identified issues

As discussed above.

Other matters

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--Stands of dead ash trees as potential fire hazard

Ms. Grammer reported that the Tree Committee is looking into the question of large stands of dead ash trees (thanks to the emerald ash borer) as a potential fire hazard. This is occurring all over town, but a particular concern is the group of dead trees not far from the Town solar field. The committee noted that the Select Board and the Fire Chief will need to be brought into this, and Ms. Pau noted that there may be federal grant money available to address this.

--Invasive plants threatening Town fields

Mr. Parker reported that a group of West Newbury residents along with Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Wayne Amaral took a field site walk at several Town fields with Hannah Mullally of the [Xerces Society](#), who will provide some written suggestions

about what should be done. The field at the corner of Bachelor, Cherry Hill, and Moulton Streets is nearly overwhelmed by autumn olives. They also looked at the field at Indian Hill and Middle Streets and at Mill Pond area fields. More DPW mowing or other strategies may be in order. The concern is that unless control measures are taken, the fields may become unmowable tangles of invasive species that crowd out not only native meadow plants, but also native woodlands. Such a result is harmful to insects, wildlife, viewsheds, and other values important to the Town. Mr. Parker said that the Selectboard may designate an advisory group to help DPW in addressing this issue.

Approval of minutes

The committee unanimously approved the draft minutes of the 6/9/2021 meeting.

Meeting materials

Email exchange with Merrimac & Groveland