

**Town of Northport
Climate Resilience Committee**

Minutes (*indented and in italics*) from 31 Jan, 2024

NEXT MEETING: 20 March 2024

PRESENT: James Kossuth, Molly Schauffler, Susan Conard, Gordon Fuller, Celine Bewsher, Tinsley Morrison

Before the meeting officially got started, we spoke briefly about receiving Janae Novotny's resignation from the committee. Susan added one item to the agenda: talking about "carbon cash-back" policies. And we talked about getting the Zoom AI app to take our notes. Tinsley agreed to open a pro-zoom account and be responsible for sending invites and recording meetings going forward.

AGENDA:

- Approve 12/13 minutes
Minutes were approved with no changes.
- Update on recent other climate-related meetings: Susan, Molly, anyone else

Susan attended the Waldo County Climate Coalition (WCCC) meeting in Belfast where it was decided that WCCC will function as a coalition of organizations that are interested in climate-related activities. It is open to the public but is evolving to consist of one representative from each local climate group. Susan is ours. They are working on their mission statement. Their main objective is to be a place for information exchange and collaboration.

*The other group that Susan is part of is [The Citizens Climate Lobby](#) (National Org.) Waldo County Chapter. The main focus of this group is the carbon tax & credit concept, otherwise known as "[carbon cash back](#)," which is a [carbon tax and dividend plan](#). They are attempting to get Maine towns to sign on and say "we approve of this idea," Belfast has signed on. Should Northport sign on as well? Would have to go through the procedural channels. We agree it's worth consideration, but Molly stated that we need to prioritize our own committee work. *Susan will bring a copy of the warrant to the next meeting, we can read and determine if this can go directly to the Select Board for their consideration.**

*Celine brought up the [Governor of Maine's webinar on recent storm damage](#). Many of us attended. It was eye-opening. Her take-aways were related to:
1) Grant structure/prioritizing grants– the Land Water Conservation representative is coming to meet with us (Northport reps) on Feb 2 to complete*

the preauthorization phase of the grant that we are trying to get to implement the shoreline stabilization work.

2.) With climate change and storm damage being the “new norm”, we should take advantage of emerging technology/ data (projections, etc). We might need someone (Information Coordinator? Data collection officer? to head this up and help Northport take advantage of the emerging climate data technology and distribute useful information to the town as warnings and status updates.

The first step would be to write a paragraph description and title for the position for which we wish to recruit this tech-savvy individual. Celine has taken on the task of writing up the job title and description.

Susan added that we could get some ideas from the Belfast Climate Action Plan.

James asked if any of us attend the [Island Institute's recent webinar](#), where they talked about training citizens to gather data.

Molly asked: what if we partnered with neighboring towns to install tide gauges for measuring tides? Gordon mentioned that one has been installed on the Bayside dock - reach out to U of Maine Cooperative extension.

Molly will talk with U of Maine re: tidal gauges

Celine will reach out to Island Institute re: tide gauge.

Belfast has one and has been working with highschool students. This would be an interesting lead to follow with our own middle school students. Celine will contact their science teacher.

Gordon will look into the existing tide gauge at Bayside dock.

- [“NCRC task board”](#) google spreadsheet has been created should be useful. Molly made some good changes to it already. I am going to adopt her heading language here in our agenda for easier tracking.

- Let's take this opportunity to hear from Celine and James regarding formatting the grant tracking tab. Does one of you just want to do this?

Celine and James will format the grant tab.

Celine suggests we add another tab for data modeling. Molly added a data resources tab. :)

Celine spoke to Gabe who does not need volunteer hours but he may contact James re: helping with our website.

Molly asked and James confirmed that we had a [Midcoast Tech School](#) teacher contact him regarding volunteering for this type of work.

James will ping him.

Tinsley agrees to be the point person to work with whoever we get to work on our website. This needs to be coordinated with Town Office (James or Vicki)

- **Resilient Infrastructure:**

- Vulnerability assessment: I have scanned and started the digital mapping project. Christine has been photographing trouble spots. I expect this will come together and be accessible to the committee (and others) by our March meeting.

Tinsley spoke about needing to do more research to decide on the final map format. A custom Google map? Or using Adobe to generate a PDF that can be updated. Tinsley will work with Christine to work this out. We need to be aware of privacy, but the map can be made available exclusively to our group and anyone we share the link with, not public. Susan asked if we have access to GIS. James said the town contracts with someone who does our GIS mapping. Since I don't have GIS training or software, maybe we can just give the map that I come up with to our GIS contractor to let him turn it into GIS? James said we need to figure out what we want then we can figure out how to do it. Tinsley will continue working on the map and we will see what develops.

- Photo evidence can be uploaded to our shared drive in: Vulnerability mapping/photos. Just make sure I can identify when, where, and by whom it is taken.

Molly mentioned that Amon is always concerned with trees so let's be sure to take pics of trees that are downed on roads and James added that we should definitely also look for and photograph trees that look like they could come down in a storm and cause a problem.

- **Engage Northport residents**

- Website: are we engaging a student volunteer to help with this? Can we have access to the town Wordpress account? How do we get started here?
This topic was discussed above.
- Meetings: update (Celine) on planning two spring meetings (one for town, one for shoreline property owners who abutt proposed areas for stabilization work)
Celine stated that the property owner's meeting timing will be dictated by the Gartley and Dorsky timeline, most likely summer, not spring.

Molly asked that we discuss the other (town-wide) meeting and brainstorm what we will plan for that:

Celine feels that it's really important for all of Northport to be aware of what our committee is doing, high-level basics of what we are doing and steps we are taking (vulnerability map, grants for improvements/resiliency

work, website). Then we can get citizens to really consider the map in break-out groups (?) and get their input and then gather that information to form objectives for the next grants/projects.

Susan mentioned that the meeting will also be an opportunity to bring in some more volunteers. Celine made a point that we don't need to wait for the meeting to scout volunteers and we all agree. In addition to the data/tech person that we are seeking, we could also be looking for someone with grant writing expertise (Paul Hamlin?) Possibly from the retired population?

Molly brought up: regarding the grant writing tab of our task board, that we should organize the grant list by the need that they are to address (shoreline stabilization, culvert work, improved energy efficiency, etc) The grant should follow the need.

Celine is attending a meeting re: infrastructure grants so will have more info after that.

Molly: there is an EPA Building Communities grant with a rolling deadline (ending in November) for infrastructure greening. Has potential for the new town hall or for bringing electricity to/from the transfer station.

Susan asked if we can just start listing the grants that are out there on the grants tab, and yes, we can and will do that.

- Town newsletter subscription push:
 - Did someone at the office make a new sign up sheet or is this something that we should do?

Someone at the town office will make this, Molly will talk to them about it.
 - Who wants to take on putting a reminder in the Northport News section of the Republican Journal?

Molly will email John Burgess and ask him to run our reminder.
- Should we pursue a town-wide social media program such as the one Lincolnville has? <https://nextdoor.com/city/lincolnville--me/>

We are going to hold off on this for now. Not sure it's right for our community at this time. We should get our website done first and remain aware that a social media communication platform is a future option.

Celine suggests that the Northport Newsletter can be printed and posted in a few places such as Wentworth's, Scone Goddess, Edna Drinkwater. Gordon will do this. Also Shore road Bulletin board, Ruggles Park,

Transfer Station, and wherever it makes sense to post them so that people will see them.

Should we laminate it? Sure, if there is a laminator at the office.

- **Energy efficiency**

Dave has had to pull back but remains interested. Susan and Molly have stepped up to proceed with the energy efficiency audit, and are exploring/researching what is required and could be gained by installing a solar array at the capped landfill site. We have roughly ½ acre of land that could be covered with solar panels. The big issue holding us back on this is the need to bring wires to the transfer station. Is this worth looking into —assuming we can get financial help with grants?

*Opportunities for **adding insulation** (as a first step to improved efficiency) should be addressed wherever appropriate.*

- **Next Steps:**

1. Does NVC want to be included (NVC office, pump house)? (Janae?)

Yes, NVC does want to be included in an efficiency audit.

Celine will ask Bill (Bayside Overseer) if we can please get two or three years of energy consumption data (fuel oil, etc) for NVCO and pump house (volume & cost and dates.)

Is there an opportunity to insulate the NVCO?

2. Still need:

- Oil for the school (volume, date, cost) for FY22, FY23, FY24
- Pellets for the school (vol/wt, date, cost)
- CMP for the school (monthly kWh, date, cost)

The school is probably our biggest account. They have made some efficiency improvements like heat pumps and have switched to LEDs (hey have three heat sources: pellet boiler, oil fired furnace, and the heat pump system)

Is there an opportunity to add a solar array to the school roof? We have a feeling that the school (?) does not want to do this. But Susan went on to say that because of net-metering, it would make a lot of sense to have a large array at the landfill that would eliminate the need for putting them on various roofs, but the question remains if we can get a grant for bringing wires to the NTS — if not, it makes more sense to put panels on as many roofs as make sense (new town hall, school, etc)

Celine mentioned that in interest of getting a grant, we would need the support of the school. Is there an actual reason to think they would not support a town solar-array? We don't know. We would need to engage them via the school board.

- Data for NVC if they want to be included
See above (getting data from Bill)

○ **To Discuss:**

1. What do we want to learn from an audit?

We are looking for data to support decision making in terms of improvements and new infrastructure. What can be improved and is worth investment. What are the opportunities for decreasing or eliminating fossil fuel use?

Tinsley asked: Are there any other possible sites for a solar array that are already close(er) to existing electrical wires? Susan thought maybe by the town office? This led to a brief discussion of orientation vs. sun-tracking tech.

2. Let's look into the possibility of getting a free audit

Susan will chat with different green energy company contacts that she has to get an idea of what we can do and what is available.

Molly asked James if it's too soon to get a professional opinion on the feasibility of a town solar array and he replied that, no, it wouldn't hurt to get that info now. We agree that this is a good next step: ask someone from [ReVision Energy](#) or similar company to come have a look at our site and tell us if we are "crazy or not" ;)

*Molly wants to consult with MCOG and/or Community Resilience Partnership/Tanya Rucosky @ [Community Resilience Partnership](#) about what **grant opportunities** there may be for running wires to a landfill solar array.*

If we can't get help with powering the transfer station, Susan asked, does it make sense to buy into one of the public solar farms?

3. What, if anything, would we like to have to report to the SB?

- **Environmental stewardship:** Regarding priorities E8, 9, & 10—these all have to do with identifying and protecting our ecologically vulnerable areas (like shoreline and wetlands, etc). A good first step would be to review the [comprehensive plan](#) that the town has in

place and report on what we are already doing and if and how these policies might be updated.

Molly said that the question to consider is: do we have sufficient policy outlined in the plan as it exists to protect our vulnerable areas and to support our goals of climate resiliency? Does it need to be updated? (yes, probably)

Rather than reading every word, let's start by skimming through it and looking for sections that deal with public lands. Tinsley agrees to do this. This step is a good one to be able to say we did for our grant writing credibility. Susan mentioned that the Maine [Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife has good maps for reference](#). We may be able to work with them to help make private property owners aware of the vulnerable habitat that they own. Susan will try to get a map layer that we can incorporate into our vulnerability map.

Molly said that one simple task we can accomplish is to get some updated habitat maps for our Comprehensive Plan.

- Anything else we want to talk about?

We need more committee members! Let's do what we can to recruit volunteers.

- Homework! Everybody please choose a task to work on and report about at the next meeting :)

Celine: reaching out to Island Institute, looking at grant tab of task board and working with James on format, contacting Edna Drinkwater for tide gauge project engagement, draft job description of the data resource person

Gordon: printing and distributing Northport Newsletter, investigate existing tide gauge at Bayside waterfront

Molly: talk with someone at U of M re: tide measuring sticks, create and post engaging newsletter sign-up sheet at town office, ask John Burgess to post Newsletter sign-up pitch in his Republican Journal column, consult with MCOG and Tanya re: available grants for bringing power to/from transfer station

Susan: copy Belfast Climate Resiliency plan into our resources folder, talk to solar companies to see if we can get a consultation for our solar array project feasibility, see if we can get an up-to-date habitat map layer to add to vulnerability map and to update comprehensive plan, bring copy of carbon cash back warrant to next meeting.

James: reach out to person who was interested in website work, send energy usage form letter to Janae, reach out to Revision energy to ask for a consultation on our plan (power to/from landfill), put a pitch for NCRC volunteers in newsletter, post sign at town office recruiting NCRC volunteers

Tinsley: type up minutes and update the task board, continue working on map, read Comprehensive Plan and make notes.

- Schedule the next meeting :)
Wednesday, March 20, 10:00, NVCO