

**Town of Northport
Climate Resilience Committee**

Minutes (*indented and in italics*) from 20 March 2024

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, May 1, 2024, 10:00AM

PRESENT: James Kossuth, Molly Schauffler, Susan Conard, John Krueger, Celine Bewsher, Tinsley Morrison

NEXT STEPS/TASK SUMMARY:

1. **Plan our June Community Resilience Engagement meeting**
2. **Create a list of work for John Clifford, our town Intern to start when he arrives in May.**
3. **We need to research what an energy audit/assessment will cost.**
4. **With as much documentable public input as possible, finalize the list of hazards that we want to include for Northport in the Waldo County Hazard Mitigation Plan**
5. **Draft mission statement (using the second paragraph of our letter for the town report as a template.**

AGENDA:

- Approve 1/31 minutes
*Approved (with one change, pointed out later by James)
Molly suggested putting the "action steps" at the top of the next minutes would be helpful.*
- Welcome John Krueger, our new committee member!
John was given the floor to talk about what brought him to join the committee and his background: He has lived in Northport about 12 years, but had about 40 years living in Liberty, Maine before that. He served Liberty town government as a Selectman for 23 years, including a term on the Liberty Planning Board, and a term on the Liberty School District board. He was inspired by the friendliness of Northport to get involved and volunteer once more. His background as a chemical engineer (degrees from MIT), directing the Maine State Health Lab, and his work on environmental issues make him a welcome addition to our committee!

We then went around the table and gave John a brief introduction to each of us with some background info.

*James, after his humble introduction, announced that the town is going to be getting a **summer intern, named John Clifford**, from Liberty, graduating from Thomas College this spring with a degree in Political*

Science and Environmental Studies. Among John's many tasks will be working for the Climate Resilience Committee. He will be here for May, June, July, and August. We should make a point of figuring out what would be good tasks for him.

- Update on recent other climate-related meetings: Susan, Molly, anyone else
 - Citizens Climate Lobby Carbon Tax warrant/Maine Town Climate Champions
The Citizens Climate Lobby is attempting to get towns to sign on as supporting a carbon tax and dividend legislative effort, and have collected approximately thirty Maine towns so far.

James explained that if this issue is going to the town meeting as a warrant article, it would need to be finalized and approved by April 22nd, so it would have to go before the board on April 8th to ask them to include it as a warrant article. But, if it is simply a resolution for the board to consider and adopt (or not), then that could happen any time. So, we need to decide which format we want to follow. (If it is brought to the select board and the select board does not want to take it up, 25 signatures would be needed to then include it as a warrant article for the town meeting.)

Molly asked Susan to put together a package of information for the Select Board to review and consider. Susan will do this.

John asked if this will be brought up for vote at the town meeting, which he thinks would be a great opportunity to initiate conversations around the issue.

There will be an [EnRoads](#) presentation coming to Belfast this spring or summer. We all agree that it would be cool to push that out to Northport residents and try to get engagement, or even see if it could be hosted in Northport.

- "NCRC task board" updates
*John was added to the energy efficiency subcommittee.
Dave was taken off as the point person.*

- **Energy efficiency**

- Town energy audit progress
Molly made and shared a table of town facilities energy use for FY 22 & 23 and asked: what do we want to learn/accomplish from an energy audit? What are our goals and priorities?

Susan said that it (the energy audit) should look at actual usage and then look at the structures, and then figure out what are the best ways to improve efficiency and decrease energy use and make some recommendations. She also noted that Efficiency Maine is now covering

energy audits for individuals (*this is something we need to put on the website!*) but does not know what they are doing for towns.

John mentioned that we have an obligation to set a good example. They just did an energy assessment at the Belfast Co-op which cost about \$2000, half of which was paid by a grant. They were able to show significant future savings by upgrading equipment. We can perhaps do the same thing, in light of the new town office. The Co-op used a local guy, who's name he will look up.

The first thing we need to figure out is what will an energy assessment/audit cost?

When asked if we have a budget, Molly let us know that a Resilience Fund warrant is on the agenda for the town to vote on in June.

Molly brought up the new Town Hall project and noted that it is, in many ways, a climate resilience project. As we fund-raise, let's make a case that the new building will supply: a community evacuation center, a meeting place, and all sorts of resources for the town that we don't have now, including energy-efficient systems.

- Solar at landfill update

James talked to [Revision Energy](#) and the upshot is that it would not be cost-effective to bring power to the landfill to carry solar panel generated energy back to the town. We will have to have solar on the roof of the new town hall (and the fire station) as there is very limited space.

- **Resilient Infrastructure:**

- Shoreline stabilization, engineering study update?

Celine brought John up to date with a brief history of the shoreline stabilization effort. Results of the study are on track and should be available mid-April with a ballpark estimate of costs for the prescribed work including priorities. We are only considering publicly owned land for this effort, though there will be conversations with shore landowners to encourage tying-in stabilization work.

Regarding funding for said stabilization work: grants and funding are going to be tricky for us as well as for private land owners because of policy: town does not have a working waterfront (like Belfast or Lincolntonville) and landowners are limited by second property classification and income level.

We are mid-process of applying for a [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#) grant for the work (up to one million with matching funds required) and there are some complications to be dealt with so that we meet eligibility, with mapping to show parking and well as spending an equal amount of funds on recreational areas (including access to recreation for whole community), so we are now including the Bayside dock.

There will be other sources of funding, one being the [Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund](#), but we are not currently eligible because Waldo County does not have a hazard mitigation plan. *But we are working on that and will hopefully have our hazard mitigation plan by the end of the year. We may then be eligible for those funds in 2025.*

Working with MCOG has not produced much yet. *Celine will contact them again. Celine will also investigate Islesboro's success with getting a sizable grant to repair their storm damage, and find out who their contact is/was. Janet Anderson is the Islesboro Town Manager.*

Tanya Rucosky of [Sunrise County Economic Council](#) sends out a bi-weekly email full of climate resilience related information, including funding opportunities. *Molly will commit to sifting through it and pulling up potential funding opportunities for us and will add them to the funding tab of our task board and let us know when something comes up. Celine will reach out to Tanya to have a conversation, hoping to learn more about our funding opportunities.*

The frustrating issue is that there does not appear to be much funding available for Northport's shoreline stabilization because we do not have much publicly owned shoreline nor a working waterfront.

Raising the Bayside wharf/dock must be looked at as a priority. We don't think the dock is "historic," which, weirdly, would disqualify it from funding. (*not sure I understood this)

Another grant is in process, we have been assessed and "pre-approved" and now we need to apply by June.

- Vulnerability assessment: Our map is coming together but not yet ready to share. We had a brief map conversation, listed the types that we have and what we are working on.
- **Engage Northport residents**
 - Website: would it be helpful for Tinsley to start loading content onto a private Squarespace account page for approval purposes?

The middle school teacher who had volunteered to help with web stuff is currently working on another project for Northport, so Tinsley asked if it would be helpful to just start building a website on her Squarespace. The answer is YES. Tinsley will start working on this.

Molly asked: what can the intern work on? We don't have to answer now, but we should make a plan and take advantage of the coming help/resource. We can have a list of things ready to go when he gets here.

- Town newsletter

Molly sent a poem about subscribing to our town newsletter to John Burgess, but he didn't publish it. We did get a bunch more subscriptions thanks to the sign that Molly made for the town office. We now have 454 subscribers.

- Community Resilience Engagement meetings

We are going to call this "Community Resilience Engagement Meeting" or "Community Resilience Workshop," rather than confuse it with the "town meeting." It's more relatable without the word "climate" in the title, and resilience is just a good and widely applicable thing.

Thus began a discussion about scheduling it, which was lengthy. We eventually landed on Wednesday, June 12 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

We should try to get Audi from MCOG to attend, to witness the process but also to help facilitate discussion about priorities for spending any funding that we do wind up getting.

Susan raised the point that it's important to be able to attract inland Northport residents, not just Baysiders, as inland representation has been small in the past, potentially biasing the results of the meeting. We need to make clear the different types of things that will be covered in the mtg, like a new town office and inland storm damage, so that inlanders are more invested in the meeting. We need to develop the agenda soon so that we can make sure this is addressed.

- Tidal gauges

Gordon and Molly did make enquiries re: the existing tidal gauge at Bayside. It was deployed by [Pen Bay Stewards](#), data was collected, but nobody currently knows where that data is now.

We like Celine's idea of working with the school to just install a high-water mark post and let the students collect the data. The point of it is just to engage residents, so perhaps a cool informational sign would be useful

too. We can track it on our website. Celine talked with a teacher at EDS, who likes the idea and presumably will make it a part of next year's curriculum. We also have a volunteer from Bayside (Art?) who will build it.

- **Environmental stewardship:**

- Comprehensive Plan updates

Tinsley read the Comprehensive Plan, and is kind of amazed by how good it is and fun to read, but also by how terribly out-of-date it is.

WE need to figure out which maps are missing, and update as needed.

The Planning Board as of now doesn't seem interested in updating the plan, so if we want this to move forward, we would have to start with the

[Planning Board: Reeves Gilmore, Mike Parker, Richard Coleman, Jim Nealy, Al Grimshaw, Dana Kennedy](#)

Molly explained that the plan's history is that Northport has never been too enthusiastic about a Comprehensive Plan, and they only did it to meet state requirements. It was a contentious process.

- I'd like to briefly consider the implications of the possible land seizure and subsequent pollution planned by Nordic Aquafarms/Belfast. What, if anything, can/should we do to protect our town and Penobscot Bay waters?

No. With any luck, we won't have to fight this.

- Anything else we want to talk about?

Nope! Out of time.

- Homework! Choose something to work on and report about at the next meeting :)

Everyone is clear on what they need to do.

- Schedule the next meeting

Wednesday, May 1, 10:00, @NVCO