

## **Minutes**

### **MVC Climate Action Task Force**

**Friday, November 20, 2020**

#### **Zoom**

CATF members present: Richard Toole, Ben Robinson, Kate Warner, Rob Hanneman, Alex Elvin, Erik Peckar, Kathy Newman, Alan Strahler, Joan Malkin, Dan Martino, Tristan Israel, Bob Johnston, Phil Wallis, Beckie Finn, Liz Durkee, Bob Johnston

#### **I. Discussion with Courtney Rocha, MVP Southeast Regional Coordinator (EEA)**

Action grants can be requested up to \$2 million. These grants prioritize Nature Based Solutions and equitable projects that also give focus to climate vulnerable and/or Environmental Justice populations. That category accounts for 8 out of 100 points in the scoring regime. MV has an aging population (climate vulnerable) & racial segments that would comprise an EJ population (as well as the Wampanoag Tribe).

Any proposal that focused on the transition workers will need to make to emerging, green industries would need to make a compelling case that their current jobs are at risk owing to climate change. This thinking should be expanded to include workers who commute from the mainland and face disruptions in reliable travel.

The Wampanoag Tribe cannot be an applicant to MVP given the way the bond which funds the program is codified. MVP is working towards allowing the Tribe to apply independently.

There was some recognition that MVP represents a small piece of the larger infrastructure funding puzzle. MVP brass will be thinking strategically about how to best lobby for federal infrastructure funding, but that is not Courtney's focus.

Courtney indicated that applicants should be judicious with vendors to ensure they are not overestimating costs; this will help ensure that planning efforts do not monopolize a disproportionate share of the available funding. She noted MVP is unable, however, to suggest particular vendors.

CATF members should stay on the lookout for a compilation of best project examples that MVP is putting together. Moreover, a Nature Based toolkit will be released soon as well. Oak Bluffs exploration of a Salt Marsh DCPC is a great example of a nature based solution; Liz noted that a funding mechanism is already accounted for given the Town's conceptual right of 1<sup>st</sup> refusal would be given to the MV Land Bank.

Even though the MVP Action grant funded for Oak Bluffs was not specifically nature based, the town was able to demonstrate that beach nourishment would not be swiftly washed away at the site near the Steamship. Furthermore, they articulated very compelling co-benefits.

Micro grid projects have not been scored very favorably. That being said, they will be considered if a strong nexus can be made that shows significant benefits to the environment.

Courtney noted there are other programs ramping up in the name of resiliency: Resilient Land Initiative and other funding opportunities, addressing culverts, dams and seawalls.

A regional application can raise the award amount to \$5 million, though Courtney does not believe this has ever been awarded. Courtney is hopeful that a new \$10 billion bill being promoted by Gov. Baker would create a new revenue stream into climate resiliency programs. She also noted that proposals cannot combine state funds for a single application. Federal funding can be applied.

**Next application round: early Spring 2021.** The benefits of reaching out early are two fold: the application can be strengthened and it precludes wasting time on applications that will not be competitive.

*Funding for Priorities not identified at Community Resilience Building workshops*

If a new local priority gets identified, the Core Team can reconvene and revisit the notes; new ideas can be redeveloped; program has evolved and even if there's a loose connection, it will be given fair consideration by MVP review committee members. Towns should reach out in advance to run it by the regional reps, and explain the context.

## **II. Climate Adaptation Booklets**

Meghan Gombos completed her presentations to the Boards of Selectmen. There was discussion about how to best comprise the committees on Resiliency that BOS' were asked to form. There is the possibility of bundling the charge into the work of existing committees such as the Town Energy Committees. Several members noted the virtues of trying to enlist new members altogether, especially given the scope of work involved. Select Board Member Art Smadbeck in Edgartown has been positive and indicated and likes the prospect of newcomers getting involved on such a committee.

There was also discussion around separating the committee work of those charged with energy transformation and those charged with adaptation. As Chair of VSEC, Rob noted the need for professional services for the Energy Roadmaps akin to those secured for the Climate Adaptation booklets.

West Tisbury has taken the approach to appoint one member from a number of related committees or departments to the climate resiliency working group. This ensures their respective groups are kept apprised. Ben noted that CATF's Climate Resilience Committee could serve as the coordinating entity for the work taking place for these different groups. Dan said he would generate a list of relevant town committees, boards, or departments that should be coordinated with, or at the very least kept apprised.

The topic closed with agreement that getting new committees set up at the start of the New Year is a good goal. ICAN has a good network of people and outreach could be done with them to generate interest.

### **III. Letter to Elected Representatives**

Markey, Keating and Harding are elected representatives we should begin conversing with to ensure they understand the last mile issue that MV contends with. This is doubly important in the lead up to future infrastructure funding. We must articulate our needs and get their offices engaged and familiar with our efforts. Discussion ensued over whether the letter should possibly come from an entity/group with more stature. Dukes County of Commissioners was floated.

Bob Johnston suggested that joining forces with the Cape and Nantucket might accelerate funding back to the island. There was some collective concern over diluting influence if we join in with the Cape, but there was interest in perhaps partnering with Nantucket. Ben would begin to draft a letter.

Lively discussion continued around dispelling the myth that MV is a juggernaut of an economic engine for State coffers. The island represents a trifling amount compared to Boston, though Alex noted we generate the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in per capita tourism dollars in the State.

Liz chimed in to note we need to be more self-sufficient and train people to do the work here. In turn, we can then complete the projects with people, on island. Norm added that we need to show we're shovel ready on priority projects and be sure we alert elected reps of this.