Meeting of Harwich Energy and Climate Action Committee

Small Meeting Room, Harwich Town Hall

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Present: Valerie Bell Chairperson

Jacqueline Pentz-Greene Vice-chairperson

Charlie Czech (remotely) Member

Glenn Miemiec Member

Rosanne Shapiro Member

Carole Ridley Guest

Copy: Julie Kavanagh Select Board liaison

* There were no members of the public who requested to speak.
* Last months meeting minutes were approved.
* Carole Ridley, of the Pleasant Bay Alliance, was a guest speaker at todays meeting and provided a very informative presentation as to what the Alliance provides to our community. The Alliance has been awarded a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant in the amount of $292,710 to develop a *Pleasant Bay Climate Adaptation Action Plan*. The goal of the Climate Adaptation Action Plan is to protect the integrity of estuarine ecological functions and enhance resilience of low-lying public access points and water protection infrastructure (e.g., for stormwater or wastewater management) in and around Pleasant Bay from climate-induced adverse effects. The Plan builds on other climate resilience work undertaken by the Alliance, including the Jackknife Beach Living Shoreline Project in Chatham. The living Shoreline Project will provide benefits to wildlife habitat, water quality improvements, shellfish habitat and protection to a popular recreational area. The proposed ribbed mussel reef will provide habitat to ribbed mussels and associated wildlife, and will protect eroding fringing salt marsh, where considerable losses have been observed. The project seeks to accomplish this goal by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Use the best available science and leading-edge research tools to assess climate threats to barrier beach, salt marsh and other intertidal resources, sub-tidal eelgrass resources, inner shoreline and low-lying public access points and water protection infrastructure in Pleasant Bay.
2. Identify creative adaptation solutions that utilize best practices and maximize use of nature-based approaches to protect natural coastal processes and enhance resilience of the barrier beach, inner shoreline, and threatened resources, public water protection infrastructure (e.g., stormwater or wastewater management) and public access points.
3. Engage the diverse stakeholders in the four surrounding communities, including climate vulnerable populations, in understanding climate threats and developing a Climate Adaptation Action Plan prioritizing resilience strategies and actions necessary to achieve the project goal.

Ms. Ridley observed that one of the goals of the Alliance is to provide information on their mission to the constituents of the four towns represented by the Alliance; Harwich, Brewster, Chatham, and Orleans. She also provided that there are a number of areas that the Alliance are focusing on; Watershed Planning, Climate Resilience, Wetlands Protection and Water Quality Monitoring. For anyone looking for additional information, it can be found at pleasantbay.org.

* The Energy Presentation that the Committee made for the Council on Aging was discussed. All members agreed that it went well but the turnout could have been larger.
* Valerie Bell met with the Town Administrator Joe Powers pertaining to a possible charging station at the School House Parking Lot. The application to Eversource to evaluate the location has been submitted. The town now needs to consider contracting to provide technical assistance in developing a site plan and request for proposal for building the charging station. It was also stated that there might be grant monies available through the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act.
* It was recommended that we reach out to the Building Department to see whether they could send a representative to our next meeting to discuss our participation as a Green Community and how it impacts our building codes. Glenn Miemiec will contact the department.
* Glenn Miemiec reported back to the Committee on his recent meeting with the Cape & Vineyard Electric Cooperative (CVEC). The meeting went well and was simply to educate him on the role of CVEC and the role he would have as the town of Harwich’s representative. There will be additional follow up as to the possibility of construction of a Solar Facility on property owned by the Town on Queen Anne Road.
* Next Meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2023
* Meeting Adjourned at 4:40 pm.