

Energy Climate Action Committee Meeting
Minutes – 12/13/2022

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Start: 7:10pm

Members Present: Michael DeChiara, Leslie Cerier, Miriam DeFant, Gail Fleischaker, Nate Heard, Graeme Sephton, and Zoe Weizenbaum.

Members Absent: none

Visitors: Mary Jo Johnson

1. **Motion.** Gail moved and Nate seconded; “To accept the minutes of the 11/8/22 meeting, as amended.”

Vote: Unanimous on rollcall vote; 7/0.

2. **Eric Giordano** postponed his presentation on Regenerative Design principles to some future meeting.
3. **Debrief on the CCA Forum:** An open discussion, everyone thought it went very well. Nate, Michael and Gail and all were congratulated.

Next Steps; A Special Town Meeting.

Nate said he will update the FAQ’s.

4. **Consideration of climate-related resiliency regarding beaver management:** Mary Jo Johnson reported on recent beaver wildlife research that has measured and proved the significant contribution beavers make in woodland and wetland environments. That research provides strong evidence that beavers provide a buffer against drought and other weather irregularities by regulating runoff. They also improved water quality in both wet and dry years, and contributed to general forest health, biodiversity and therefore resilience (see URL links provided by Mary Jo below).

Michael observed that beavers already fall under various Town, State and Federal regulations, and are not explicitly in the ECAC charge.

Miriam confirmed from experience that complex multi-party perspectives and negotiations were quite typical of some beaver/human conflict situations.

Mary Jo observed that even though trapping and shooting may seem like an easy quick fix, that beavers keep coming back and this quick fix therefore has its own significant recurrent costs.

Gail proposed a motion, Nate seconded; That Michael write to the Selectboard communicating the sense of the above discussion, emphasizing the climate and resilience-related contributions that beavers provide, and suggesting that the Select Board convene a meeting of the ConCom, Board of Health, Highway Dept, Police Dept, and Wendell ConCom, all of which have had to deal with Shutesbury’s beaver-related issues in the past, with a request that the combined group come up with a policy for dealing with beavers in a variety of settings/situations.

Vote: Unanimous on rollcall vote; 7/0.

5. **ECAC's priorities based on MVP/HMP plans:**

The official ECAC charge is broad, so there was a further general discussion in order to narrow and define what were the highest priorities of the committee. Then we each chose the issue(s) that each member was willing to work upon in assigned workgroups.

Workgroups: Michael proposed they meet once before Jan. 17 and report back to the full committee. Workgroups are a public body unto themselves, and therefore each group will need to notice meeting with Grace, hold meeting in open public meeting, and take minutes.

The Workgroups are:

- **Stormwater** - Michael, Miriam, Zoe
- **Municipal Solar** - Graeme, Gail, Nate, Michael
- **Invasives/Native Plants** - Nate, Leslie, Zoe
- **Communications for Vulnerable Populations** - Gail to engage Emergency Mgmt Team

6. The **next meetings** will be Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 7 PM and February 21st, 2023 7PM

7. **Motion.** Leslie made Motion to Adjourn, Gail seconded.

Vote: Unanimous on rollcall vote; 7/0.

Meeting adjourned: 8:50pm

Respectfully submitted by Graeme Sephton

Possible Future Topics;

Promoting systems-level sustainable living to reduce energy/carbon footprint
- Promoting conservation among residents

Beaver informational references:

Related 2022 Federal Legislation (pending) and a handy one-page summary at:

https://delbene.house.gov/uploadedfiles/beaver_act_one_pager.pdf

Beaver, qualify as a nature-based solution for hazard mitigation and climate resiliency:

https://resilientma.mass.gov/mvp/content.html?toolkit=nature_based