

CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE

Town Of Stonington Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting
November 19, 2020 - 7:00 pm

Zoom

Present: Susan Hibbard, Rick Newton, Sharon Lynch, Julia Parry, Lyndsey Pyrke-Fairchild, Dennis Unites, Dana Hewson, MaryEllen Mateleska,

Board of Selectmen liaison: June Strunk

Call to order at 7:03pm

- October meeting minutes approved
- Task Force discussion on Emergency Declaration as revised by team
 - Concern was raised on the use of the phrase “climate change emergency declaration” as it may be seen to politicize the issue. Suggested alternatives included Climate Action Plan or Sea Level and Coastal Resilience Emergency plan. Keeping the document in alignment with other CT towns’ declarations could lead to the additional funding opportunities that may otherwise not be available.
 - Task Force voted, 7 to 0 to 1, in favor of keeping the original emergency declaration wording but feels that it is important to continue to have this conversation.
 - Task Force members reviewed the document, line by line, to review suggested changes.
 - Declaration will be circulated to Task Force members via email for final review prior to final vote.
 - Comments from the public from the Zoom chat:
 - I agree with Roger, I thank all of the committee members for allowing and encouraging such an open dialogue. I really appreciate that and applaud you
 - Sarah, she/her, : As per the NYT today, humans today are emitting 14x more carbon today than was being emitted during the "great dying," a period 250 million years ago where climate related reactions killed 70% of species. Not a perfect comparison scientifically, but a sobering one.
 - Tessa Getchis : <https://go.southernct.edu/climate-emergency/>
 - Tessa Getchis : Do you have the precipitation data that shows an increase in precipitation (especially extreme events) in the northeast. That is very telling data. I can share it with you via email if you don't already have it.
 - Roger Kuhns : This is a Link to Surging Seas from Climate Central for projected sea level rise, and you can use the program to look specifically at Stonington. https://ss2.climatecentral.org/#12/41.2747/-72.2296?show=satellite&projections=0-K14_RCP85-SLR&level=5&unit=feet&pois=hide
 - Tessa Getchis : Extreme precipitation: <http://precip.eas.cornell.edu>
 - Tessa Getchis : Extreme precipitation: <https://journals.ametsoc.org/jhm/article/20/4/673/344213/Changes-in-Extreme-Precipitation-in-the-Northeast>

- Jason : Please consider incorporating the following “that the board of selectman urges the department heads, committees, boards and commissions to establish plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by both the town and the wider community, placing the highest priority on providing the benefits of a clean-energy economy to all community members on an equitable basis...” and issue a report after 6? or 9 months?
- Roger Kuhns : A key point of a Climate Emergency Resolution is to raise the awareness and the need to seek funding for climate impacts.
- Roger Kuhns : • The Town of Stonington’s climate mobilization should: (1) accelerate adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying local and global climate impacts with benchmark dates to monitor success; (2) protect trees, forests, and other open spaces because of their ability to draw carbon out of the atmosphere, and store it, and to help maintain the quality of our water supply by reducing runoff and erosion; and (3) ensure that the costs of such mobilization efforts do not unfairly burden those who are economically disadvantaged, and that the benefits of a realized, sustainable future accrue to all.
- Roger Kuhns : The emergency nature of this resolution is such that budgeting decisions should reflect the emergency and fund actions that protect Stonington from increasingly costly climate impacts.
- Suggestions for projects for the UCONN Climate Corps Spring 2021 session have been forwarded to the First Selectmen.
- Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 7:00pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:48PM

Mary Ellen Mateleska