



## 2024 REPORT

Logo designed by Donna Blackburn



## **Mission:**

The mission of the Edgartown Climate Committee is

- to collect and record information through the lens of climate change;
- to educate our community with information to support the process of adaptation;
- to remain committed to being organic and ongoing in the pursuit of knowledge and action;
- to fortify our objectives by conveying the power of will as we urgently and tenaciously strive to protect our community in facing and resolving the harmful effects of climate change.



## **Update on Past Key Initiatives:**

### **Past Key Initiative #1: Zoning Bylaw Updates to Respond to Climate Change**

Planning Board submitted 3 climate related zoning bylaw changes for the April 2024 Town Meeting warrant with the following results:

- **Tree Protection Amendment - withdrawn by the Planning Board**  
Sent back to the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee to re-orient the amendment to prevent clear cutting. Clear cutting amendment has been submitted for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.
- **Impervious Surface Lot Coverage Limitation - defeated**
- **Residential Lot Intensity Bylaw - approved**  
Limits the aggregate amount of Gross Floor Area of residential structures on a lot to 10,000 square feet, or 12,000 square feet if the only fossil fuel use is for a backup generator, all buildings are either connected to the Town sewer or use an enhanced nitrogen removal septic system, and all driveways and parking areas use permeable surfaces.



## **Past Key Initiative #2: Continue Conversations with Town Department Leaders**

Climate Committee Members met with Town department and committee leaders as follow up to our 2022 and 2023 meetings

- Exploring department responsibilities relating to climate change
- Identifying information the department wants the public to know about what they're doing related to climate change
- Learning new department chair climate change concerns and program updates
- Discussing MVC Climate Actions which list their departments as partners



## **2024 Key Initiative #1: Continue Conversations with Town Department Leaders**

### **Examples of Department Conversations:**

#### **Board of Health**

As of September 2024, Health Agent and Health Assistant are already implementing MVC Climate Actions and incorporating them into their work plans with a focus on education and compliance

- Dual language communication of all public health information is critical
- Now offering English and Portuguese fertilizer/pesticide application class required for licensing
- Working with all island communities on septic guidelines education to include septic use and maintenance

#### **Fire Department**

The Climate Committee shares Fire Chief Schaeffer's concern about increasing forest fire risk from lack of maintenance in the State Forest, especially given the increase in frequency and scale of fires across the country and in Canada

The Climate Committee:

- Wrote and called the offices of both Representative Dylan Fernandes and Senator Julian Cyr requesting action to remove dead trees and brush from the State Forest in coordination with the Martha's Vineyard Fire Chiefs



- Remains in contact with the MVC State Forest Task Force
- Contacted newly elected State Representative Thomas Moakley; he shares the fire risk concerns and is responsive to outreach
- Attended the DCR 'listening session' at the Regional High School
- Currently is monitoring the DCR's plans to remove the stand of white pines which have received mixed reviews

### **Council on Aging**

The Council on Aging's 2025 warrant article for a Feasibility Study will lead to an investigation of best options for their future building needs. Ongoing street flooding, traffic, and inaccessibility create hurdles at the current Anchors building.

The Council on Aging is continuing ongoing work with the Police and Fire Departments to build a database of vulnerable older adults to be managed by the Town Emergency Manager, Chief Schaeffer.

### **Affordable Housing Committee**

Climate Committee members shared 4 climate issues which are germane to housing planning:

- Reduce use of fossil fuels
- Re-use existing buildings and minimize disturbance of otherwise undisturbed land
- Enable sewer connection or addition of Innovative Alternative (IA) Septic Systems to existing 1500 gallon septic in order to stop nitrogen from entering the watershed and causing harmful algae blooms
- Locate housing near public transportation and town centers to reduce reliance on private automobiles



The Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee noted that the delay in the Meshacket Road affordable housing project resulted in design improvements, and the project will have solar panels and electric heat pumps.

## **Board of Trade**

The Board of Trade has an ongoing project to develop cohesive signage for the whole Town

- Discussed signage relating to historic and predicted storm tides and sea levels. The Board of Trade's Erin Ready suggested that, once the template exists, the Climate Committee might put forward a proposal for that kind of signage.
- The Board of Trade's Julia Tarka expects the first round of signage to be pedestrian, bike, car, and safety oriented. It could indicate where public EV chargers are located, prioritizing signage for the Dark Woods Park and Ride and the VTA shuttle service to try to mitigate the number of cars circling downtown seeking parking.

The Board of Trade makes space available at Christmas in Edgartown for groups to have information tables to make themselves more visible. They would welcome participation from the Climate Committee.

Julia Tarka noted that none of the MVC Climate Actions related to "Economic Resilience" have been defined or moved forward by the MVC. The Climate Committee followed up with Liz Durkee, who reported that she is working on a grant application for a study of economic resilience needs in the face of climate change.



## **Shellfish Department**

Our meeting with Rob Morrison focused on the effect that the Southerly storms have had on Shellfish Department projects.

We discussed the oyster reef projects that are ongoing for Nantucket and New York City and agreed that it would be worth looking into this, possibly for the Fuller Street Beach area or in Sengekontacket or the Edgartown Great Pond.

## **Police Department**

Chief McNamee directed our attention to the need to make the Chappy Ferry more resilient to sea level rise and more frequent high wind situations. The Police Department sometimes is in the position of relying on the Harbormaster for transportation to Chappy when there is a need and the Chappy Ferry is not available.

The Police Department usually replaces 2 vehicles a year. They cannot yet purchase electric vehicles because of concerns about the availability of service and repair facilities on the Island.

We had a meeting in December with Acting Chief Dolby to discuss proposed leaf blower regulations and enforcement.

## **2024 Key Initiative #2: Climate Change Action Flyer updated and distributed**

### **Two Sided Flyer**

Side one of the card lists climate change actions the Town of Edgartown is currently taking

Side two of the card lists climate change action recommendations for visitors

### **Distribution**

- Edgartown realtors for their rental packets and a pdf for their websites and/or to email clients
- Flyers available at Edgartown Library, Church Street and Triangle Post Offices, the Edgartown School, and the Town Hall
- Town businesses were provided with flyers to display

## 2024 Two Sided Flyer

# Climate Change

2024

### Edgartown climate actions this year:

- Edgartown voted at Town Meeting to ban the sale of “nip” bottles to cut down on single use plastic and reduce litter across the Island.
- Edgartown voters approved funds to develop and propose updates to the Zoning Bylaw to enable the Town to respond to ongoing climate change.
- Edgartown is now part of the Massachusetts Green Communities program. A Green Communities grant will provide LED lighting at the Edgartown School and contribute to the cost of six new pumps for the wastewater treatment plant, significantly reducing Town electricity use.
- The Town’s ranking matrix for capital programs was updated to include a 10% weight value for projects that support climate resiliency.
- A ten acre solar array is in the works at the capped Meshacket landfill. It will generate roughly 4.8 million kilowatt hours of energy per year, saving more than 3,400 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.



2024

# Climate Change

### Actions you can take:

- **REFUSE** items which will become trash; **REDUCE** what you use/ buy; **REUSE** what you can; **RECYCLE** what you can't reuse.
- Bring **reusable** shopping bags and recycle clean plastic bags at Stop & Shop.
- **Shop local** to support Island farms, local fisheries, and small businesses and to reduce your carbon footprint.
- Buy a shellfish license and **harvest** some shellfish.
- Carry a personal **water bottle** and go to [vineyardconservation.org/tap-map](http://vineyardconservation.org/tap-map) to find **FREE** water bottle refill stations.
- **Compost** food scraps; don't put grease down the drain; and don't use a garbage disposal.
- **Use less water** to wash dishes, shower, shave, and brush your teeth.
- **Only** toilet tissue goes in the toilet; no wipes or personal products.
- **Don't idle** your vehicle, even for a short amount of time.
- **Dispose** of fishing gear, balloons, straws, and other plastics properly so they don't end up on beaches or harming ocean wildlife.
- Ride our **electric** public buses and bike or walk when possible.
- **Keep off** dunes and marsh grasses. They provide important habitat and protect the Island from storm surges.



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### **2024 Key Initiative #3: Share knowledge and best practices**

**Climate Action Task Force** - Participated in this MVC climate group for monthly discussions/seminars on climate topics

**Climate Action Fair** - The Climate Committee participated in the May 2024 Climate Action Fair at the Ag Hall. Every Island town Climate Committee hosted information tables, providing public outreach/education

**MVC Climate Action Plan Community Coordinating Committee** - Participated in monthly meetings to share information and ideas

**MVC Land Use Subcommittee** - Participated in meetings twice a month to discuss possible regulation of land disturbance



## **2024 Key Initiative #4: Leaf Blower Warrant Article**

Participated in weekly zoom meetings with other Island town Climate and Energy Committees, interested citizens and the Vineyard Conservation Society to create consistent leaf blower regulations for all towns to submit for 2025 Town Meeting Warrants.

Met with Edgartown Health Agent and Health Assistant and with Acting Chief of Police to inform them of the proposed regulations prior to submitting them and request their input.

Met with several landscape companies to request input and support prior to article submission.

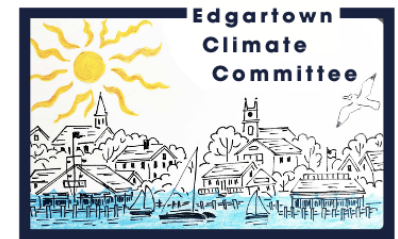
## **2024 Key Initiative #5 Participate in Master Plan and Harbor Management Plan**

### Edgartown Master Plan

- Climate Committee Chair Julia Livingston has continued to participate in the final stages of the new Edgartown Master Plan.
- The Climate Committee advocated for the Master Plan to include a specific proposal to protect Dock Street and the Dock Street parking lot from anticipated sea level rise and more intense and more frequent storms.

### Harbor Management Plan

- Climate Committee Member Peter Kirn participates in Harbor Management Plan meetings
- The Climate Committee advocated for including the electrification of the Chappy Ferry



## **2025 Climate Committee Goals:**

1. Obtain approval of leaf blower regulations in Edgartown by informing the public (residents/homeowners/landscapers/any leaf blower operators in Edgartown) about the proposed leaf blower regulations to reduce noise and eliminate harmful emissions
2. Continue conversations with Town department leaders re: climate actions and department projects which are climate related
3. Create and distribute 2025 Edgartown Climate Action Flyer to visitors/residents
4. Continue to share and learn best practices from fellow town Climate Committees
5. Continue participation on both Master Plan and Harbor Management Plan
6. Continue to advocate for zoning bylaw changes relevant to climate change

Respectfully reported by the Edgartown Climate Committee

Julia Livingston, Chair  
Kevin Loughlin, Associate Chair  
Jennifer Blum  
Josey Kirkland  
Peter Kirn