

Charter: Vineyard Sustainable Energy Committee (VSEC)

October 2016

VSEC Mission

Grass-roots efforts and community action are important adjuncts to national and international policy initiatives in responding to the challenge of climate change. Martha's Vineyard is ideally situated to play a leadership role in demonstrating what is possible at the community level in transforming our energy ecosystem to address that challenge.

In July, representatives of all six Island towns (several of which have town-level energy committees) expressed interest in exploring the establishment of an Island-wide sustainable energy committee. The Vineyard Sustainable Energy Committee (VSEC) will be focused on developing and maintaining a sustainable energy master plan for the Island (based on the Energy section of the 2010 Island Plan), providing coordination and communication among our towns regarding sustainable energy initiatives, and **serving as a united voice for Martha's Vineyard** in this critical area.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that even the aspirational goal of limiting global warming to 2°C will not be sufficient to avoid many of the results of climate change, some of which (such as sea level rise) will directly and seriously impact our Island home. In partnership with other key Island groups, the VSEC will play a significant role in achieving our potential for sustainable energy leadership.

VSEC Activities

The VSEC is not intended to replace or supersede individual Town Energy Committees in their designated activities and responsibilities, but will supplement and coordinate with those groups.

Specific initial committee activities will include:

- Developing and maintaining an Island-wide sustainable energy master plan*;
- Measuring and tracking progress in implementing this master plan;
- Coordinating with Town Energy committees and providing an idea- and information-sharing forum for sustainable energy efforts;
- Other efforts as requested.

* The Island Plan, issued by the MVC in 2010, includes a section on energy and carbon emissions and will be the starting point and framework for the Sustainable Energy Master Plan

Committee Structure

The committee will be sponsored by and will report to the various Boards of Selectmen, and will work cooperatively with key groups such as the Cape Light Compact, the Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative (CVEC), Vineyard Power, and the Martha's Vineyard Commission.

Each participating town will have at least 1 and up to 2 members (but one vote), appointed by their respective selectmen (one year renewable terms). Those towns that have an existing Town Energy Committee will be urged to have the chairperson of those committees be appointed to the VSEC.

Formal approval of participation is needed from at least 4 towns, through the assignment of representative(s), to instantiate the committee.

The VSEC will hold monthly meetings and issue an annual report.

MVC Participation

The MVC (via the Executive Director) has expressed an interest in working with and supporting the VSEC; staff support could include data gathering and analysis, publication and PR assistance, and support for grant applications and administration. The relationship is intended to be informal, at least at the outset.

Funding

Funding requirements for ordinary committee activities should be minimal; a working operating budget will be developed early on and financial, administrative, and clerical support from each town will be requested annually.

The committee may at some point propose and carry out programs requiring significant funding. State, federal, and other grants will be sought for such programs.