

FW: climate crisis and town budget

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From: Larry French <lfrench@vt.edu>
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 11:20 AM
To: washington grove <washgrove@comcast.net>
Subject: climate crisis and town budget

March 31, 2022

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

According to the vast majority of climate scientists as well as our own eyes, ears, experience and intuition, we are in the midst of a climate emergency. My understanding is that you are “working on” the budget for the coming cycle. I hope that your work is informed by the current emergency which, I believe, requires aggressive public action at all levels of government. To be sure, we all, as individuals, have critical roles to play in our choices as to the energy sources we rely upon to heat and cool our houses, the modes of transportation we select, the kinds of food we eat, the plants we nurture in our yards, and the people we elect to public office. Nonetheless, if we rely only or largely on individuals to address this emergency, we will underinvest in efforts to produce the critical public goods (e.g. clean air and water) we need.

It is not difficult to imagine project areas that the town might collectively champion. The Sustainability Group has spent much time and effort on our collective consumption of fossil fuel and alternative energy sources. The Woods Committee has laid the groundwork for a large-scale reforestation project. The Racial and Social Equity Committee has positioned itself to address issues of inequities in vulnerability to climate threats and in mitigation efforts. I’m sure other committees have discussed the roles they may play in this crisis.

These efforts require significantly greater resources appropriate to the magnitude and urgency of crisis. I would hope that you avoid incrementalism in your budgeting and reallocate resources toward those efforts most clearly aligned with our present needs. And I hope that you will not shy away from recommending tax increases commensurate to the tasks at hand.

I look forward to your presentation in May.

Larry French
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