

HEAT IS AN ISSUE OF CONCERN FOR WINCHESTER

The Winchester Climate Action Advisory Committee, with endorsements from the Board of Health, Health Department and Fire Department, is asking the Winchester Select Board to adopt the following 'Heat Statement':

Recognizing that climate change will continue to impact Winchester in many ways, including an increase in the number of high-heat days; drought; bacterial blooms that close our beaches; increased extreme rain, snow, ice and wind storms; increases in vector-borne diseases; and other impacts of climate change, the Select Board unanimously voted approval of the [2020 Winchester Climate Action Plan](#) and established the 2020 Climate Action Advisory Committee to systematically implement the new Climate Action Plan.

Among the many climate impacts identified in Winchester's 2020 Climate Action Plan, heat and drought are called out as urgent and insufficiently addressed vulnerabilities in Winchester at this time.

Additionally, the Winchester ["Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan"](#); the Winchester ["All Hazards Mitigation Plan"](#) (2021 update); and the [Winchester 2020 Master Plan](#) all now identify heat and drought as urgent concerns.

At this time, with summer months approaching, the Town/Select Board calls for greater public awareness regarding the health concerns and increased fire risk due to more frequent high heat days, and recommends (with initial designated responsible parties):

1. A Comprehensive Heat Response Strategy for Winchester (developed by the Health and Fire Departments)
2. A Public Relations campaign focused on educating all sectors of Town regarding the health risks of heat, and precautionary steps that residents, businesses and workers can take to prepare for high-heat days (delivered by Health Department; w collaborative input from the Fire Department, Board of Health and Climate Action Advisory Committee)
3. Identification of new and existing communication networks within Winchester to effectively deliver the heat campaign information (Town Manager)
4. Protection of Winchester's tree canopy and promotion of additional tree planting town-wide (developed by the Conservation Commission, Town Planner, Climate Action Advisory Committee and other relevant groups)
5. Designation of, and support for, daytime cooling centers (Public/Private partnerships, perhaps including the Jenks Center, Library, Schools, Sanborn House, Wright-Locke Farm and Faith community buildings)

6. Identification of appropriate overnight cooling centers (Fire Department and Town Manager; might include sites outside of Winchester)
7. Consideration of necessary generators to ensure A/C in Winchester cooling centers (Capital Planning)
8. Improvements to, or replacement of, the existing splash/sprinkler park at Borggaard; installation of additional splash/sprinkler parks (Capital Planning)

Specific tactics may include:

1. Expand a voluntary data base for vulnerable residents, including the elderly or individuals with asthma, heart or other heat-impacted health conditions, to register for a 'check on' program by our emergency personnel (Council on Aging, Fire, Police and Health Departments)
2. Significantly update websites for the Climate Action Advisory Committee, Board of Health and Health Department regarding preventative measures to reduce risks of high heat and recognize symptoms of heat stress (Climate Action Advisory Committee, Board of Health and Health Department)
3. Develop and produce hard copy educational brochures regarding heat exposure symptoms, risks and preventative measures (Health Department)
4. Develop and deliver locally-focused heat educational events, such as in-person workshops; webinars; and other media events (Fire, Health and School Departments, Council on Aging and others)
5. Consult with potential daytime cooling centers (e.g. the Jenks Center, Library, Schools, Sanborn House, Wright-Locke Farm and Faith communities) regarding what materials or adaptations might be appropriate, e.g. independent generators; funds for water and food; recreational options
6. Outdoor splash/sprinkler parks (Capital Planning)
7. Consideration of additional facilities for safe outdoor recreation including more facilities such as benches, tables, bike racks, water bottle filling stations, portable bathrooms and hand washing stands at our parks (Select Board)
8. Support for our businesses in facilitating outdoor dining, perhaps including structures with roll-down screens (Planning Board and Select Board in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce)
9. Promotion of existing MA state grant options for residential air conditioning, especially for elderly and vulnerable populations including Air Source Heat Pumps (which both heat and cool)
10. Develop drought-preparedness tips for residents and businesses (Fire Department and Climate Action Advisory Committee)