



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Sustainability Director: Marybeth Martello
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Sustainability Analyst: Janet Mosley
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Susan Morris, Chair
Laura Olton, Vice Chair
Catherine Mirick
Ellen Korpi
Martha Collins
Fred Bungler
Lise Olney

Climate Action Committee Retreat

June 5, 2023

Department of Public Working Training Room
20 Municipal Way
8:30 am

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by Sue Morris. Present were Climate Action Committee (CAC) members: Sue Morris (CAC Chair), Laura Olton (CAC Vice Chair), Lise Olney, Martha Collins, Fred Bungler, Catherine Mirick, and Ellen Korpi. Also present were Marybeth Martello (Sustainability Director) and Janet Mosley (Sustainability Analyst). Absent: None.

Citizen's Speak: None

Minutes

Approval of the May 5, 2023 minutes was deferred to the next CAC meeting.

New Climate Action Committee Member

Sue listed the criteria she and Laura used when evaluating potential new CAC members, including expertise in Climate Action Plan (CAP) areas, Town/volunteer experience, collaborative style, and leadership potential. Based on their evaluation, Sue and Laura recommended Mary Gard as the new CAC member.

CAC members expressed their appreciation for all of Mary Gard's work in Wellesley.

Sue and Laura shared the names and backgrounds of several other applicants whom the committee should work to keep engaged going forward. Ellen recommended assigning new volunteers a buddy on the CAC committee to keep them engaged over the long term.

Ellen moved to nominate Mary Gard to the Climate Action Committee. Martha seconded the motion, *and the committee voted unanimously to nominate Mary Gard as the new CAC member*. All voted in favor. The nomination will go to the Select Board for their meeting on June 20.

Martha moved to renominate Sue Morris to her position on the CAC. Ellen seconded the motion, *and the committee voted unanimously to nominate Sue Morris to continue as a member of the CAC.*

Martha suggested the idea of having a CAC open house to invite the public to get to know CAC members. Another member suggested holding the open house when the energy coaching program begins.

CAC members and Marybeth shared their appreciation for all of Laura's work on the CAC.

Work Planning for 2024

CAC members brainstormed things they would like to see happen in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. Topics fell in the following categories:

- Greater understanding in the community of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and CAC; more volunteer engagement; more integration of Climate Action in Town decision making, including Wellesley Public Schools and Planning
- Implementing CAP actions and measuring progress
- Getting the Climate Action/Sustainable Six website up and running
- Roll out the Energy Coaching program
- Increased support for heat pump installations
- Specific projects:
 - Work on reducing gas leaks, occupant climate action programs in municipal buildings, wetlands protection, municipal solar and storage projects, planning further ahead for Articles at Town Meeting, and Hazard Mitigation planning

Governance

Sustainability in Wellesley Public Schools (WPS)

- Catherine proposed a cross-department meeting with WPS staff involved in curriculum development, School Committee, CAC, Wellesley Green Schools, and others to determine who will lead in various sustainability areas.
- WPS will finalize their annual strategic plan soon.
- Marybeth noted that any project taken on at WPS needs buy-in from school leadership and/or staff.

How to integrate climate action into Town department decision making

- Important to consider CAC member and Climate Action staff bandwidth and leverage staff in other departments to help with planning and implementation.
- What is the process to get boards/committees/ department staff to integrate new tasks/events while acknowledging that departments have limited resources and must prioritize projects?
 - Debrief with department staff on what resources would be needed to make it happen
 - Bring proposal to the respective board/committee who will help
 - What role can volunteers play in helping to fill the gaps?
 - Need to use volunteers strategically as they can burn out
 - How can we foster departments having these conversations on their own?

- Send a reminder to departments/boards/committees around the time of strategic planning and budget season to integrate climate action planning into their work

Climate Action in Wellesley Public Schools

- Occupant behavior programs at schools to lower energy use
 - Need to discuss with School Committee and leadership at each school
- How to increase the number of students taking the bus, walking, and biking?
 - Lowering or removing the busing fee
 - Administration is supportive, but it is financially difficult
 - Need to highlight the other costs of not busing students – increased traffic, lost work time, GHG emissions, etc.
 - Lexington subsidized busing costs for 3 years to increase participation, but they also implemented an extensive, integrated plan in support of their effort

Develop relationships in key areas of municipal government

- Planning Board – find a climate action champion
- Natural Resources Commission – invite member to be liaison to CAC

Discussion on how to best recruit and employ volunteers

- Can Sustainable Wellesley serve as a pathway to develop a corps of volunteers?
- Need to be strategic in how often we call on volunteers so they don't burn out
- How do Natick and Newton carry out large events with volunteers?
- Need to work with Sustainable Wellesley to create a calendar of events where volunteers are needed
- Plan to revisit this topic when Mary Gard joins the CAC and can engage Sustainable Wellesley

Sustainable Six website and campaign

- Martha would like to help with the Sustainable Six campaign

GHG inventory timing

- Janet proposed shifting the timing of GHG inventory completion to align with the publication of the Annual Report.
- The committee was supportive of this proposal.

Energy

- The Municipal Light Plant/Board (MLP)/(MLB) has been finding it challenging to recruit for the assistant director position. There are some important skill sets for that position that are tied to the success of municipal solar and battery storage execution.
- Town counsel has advised that Request For Proposals (RFPs) for buildings that are not controlled by the MLP must be done together with the Departments that control them. This could impede the MLP from batching solar installations to reduce the cost.
 - MLP is pursuing additional discussions on how to approach this.
 - Ellen is reaching out to other MLPs to see how they have dealt with this issue.
- Ellen expressed frustration that the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) does not thoroughly cover threats to the electrical grid and how to mitigate them.
 - The HMP is needed for several grant funding opportunities

- The HMP follows a standard outline, so perhaps best to just get it done and then augment later

Buildings

The Buildings Working Group (BWG) is moving forward on many projects.

156 Weston Road House

- CAC hoped it could be a net zero demonstration project, but Wellesley Housing Development Corporation (HDC) does not seem to be considering this currently
 - HDC's main focus is creating housing, not sustainability
 - Need to reach out to HDC members to explain why it's worth the marginal extra cost and potential extra time
 - Is there a volunteer who could help drive this forward?

School building occupant behavior programs

- Training for custodial staff, teachers, and students to optimize performance of new elementary school buildings
 - Should be provided by some combination of the project management company, Permanent Building Committee, and Facilities Management Department
 - Training is needed on an ongoing basis
 - Urgent since Hunnewell is scheduled to open in February
 - Can the CAC look through the training materials?
 - Catherine will ask about reviewing/sharing the training materials/plan at the next School Committee meeting
- Should be extended to all school and municipal buildings
- Create occupant behavior programs based on known best practices to reduce energy use

How to make municipal building proponents accountable for their energy use

- FMD pays the utility bills for schools and other municipal buildings
- Possibly include a line on budget reports showing department energy use and costs
- Need to provide energy use reports to the School Committee and school principals
 - Catherine should ask David Lussier to have FMD to provide energy reports
- Remind departments to report on Climate Action related work in their Annual Reports as required by Article 12 Climate Emergency
 - Write a memo to departments and boards
 - Departments should report on GHG emissions reductions efforts
 - Can be an opportunity to highlight good work
- Push FMD to develop a plan to get each municipal building to net-zero

Potential changes to the Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines (MSGB)

- Recommend increasing the number of electric vehicle (EV)-ready parking spot requirements beyond what is required by the Stretch energy code for new construction
- Add a section providing guidance on how to reduce embodied energy in key building materials such as concrete, steel, insulation, and asphalt

Sustainable Zoning Bylaw Changes

- MBTA Zoning work presents an opportunity to insert sustainability language into the Site Plan Review bylaw
- Recruit a climate action champion on the Planning Board

Mobility

Potential Mobility Coordinator Position

- The CAC should write a memo to the Select Board requesting the Select Board prioritize a new staff position to coordinate mobility efforts across Town departments.
 - Martha and Sue will help draft the memo after conferring with Collette.
 - Emphasize connections between mobility and housing

Electric Vehicle Working Group (EVWG)

- MLP Sustainability Coordinator Lisa Wolf is now running the EVWG with DPW Director Dave Cohen
- EV First policy for the municipal fleet has been presented to EVWG.
 - Marybeth, Meghan Jop, and Finance Director Sheryl Strother discussed integrating a future policy into the budget process.
 - Must be approved by the Select Board and the School Committee as it will replace Wellesley's Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy required by Green Communities
- EV fleet transition plan
 - A robust vehicle inventory is needed. DPW is working on this.
 - Energy New England (ENE) is also helping to map out which vehicles could be transitioned
- EV infrastructure plan
 - EVWG ranked locations for charging locations using a matrix for ranking stations according to priority criteria
 - CAC members would like to see this work and possibly share with the public
 - Martha recommended sharing a general policy for EV infrastructure with the public within the next few months to explain the Town's planning process and priorities
- Public chargers at the Middle School are up and running with higher rates during peak hours
- The upcoming paving and other work on Central Street provides an opportunity to add EV charging in that location

Wellesley Transportation Options

- Seniors in town have asked for a 1-page guide on transportation options
- Marybeth wants to find an intern to complete the guide this summer

Natural Resources

The CAC would like to strengthen its connection to the NRC. Sue will ask NRC Chair Jay McHale if NRC Vice Chair Bea Bezmalinovic would serve as a liaison from the NRC and attend CAC meetings regularly. This would help move natural resource actions forward more quickly, including:

- Protecting and growing the tree canopy
- Eliminating gas leaks

- Protecting wetlands
- Stormwater management
- Sustainable landscaping

Waste

- What is the overarching vision for moving the Town and the Community toward zero waste and who will develop and implement that vision?
- Waste diversion efforts at Wellesley Wonderful Weekend were positive, but it required a huge amount of time for a limited amount of waste diversion.
 - Is this something CAC wants to do in the future, and, if so, how to do so with the limited time Climate Action staff have to support this work?
 - For greatest impact, would need to work with vendors to allow for easier composting and recycling of waste
- Other waste streams such as construction waste are a bigger problem
- Perhaps CAC should instead focus on how to redirect people's behavior to reduce waste
- CAC members agreed that another conversation is needed to develop a plan to address Waste actions in the CAP
 - Invite Kirstie Pecci, a waste expert at Just Zero
 - Janet can share some of her knowledge on materials and waste management based on her experience as an environmental Life Cycle Analyst and on the Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee

Adjourn

Fred moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:59 a.m., seconded by Ellen, *and the committee voted to adjourn.*

Exhibits used: Retreat slide deck