

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

June 4, 2021

Climate Action Plan

- Meeting with KLA, SEC staff, and Laura Olton on May 12 and 26
- Marybeth Martello reviewed and provided feedback on Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals and the action evaluation framework. Marybeth is continuing to reach out to stakeholders in all community sectors to round out the CAP working groups.
- Marybeth presented on the CAP to the League of Women Voters of Wellesley on May 14, to the Clean Comfort webinar on May 19, and to Babson College on May 24.
- Marybeth formed a CAP Communications Group that will meet in the next week to plan and implement CAP outreach.
- Janet Mosley provided data and feedback to KLA on development of the GHG emissions tool KLA is developing to forecast business as usual GHG emissions and to carry out a wedge analysis.
- June 14, 7pm - Climate Action Plan webinar for Town Meeting Members
- June 17, 8:30-10:30am – Climate Action Plan Working Group Summit

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Janet Mosley is working to update the greenhouse gas inventory methodology alongside KLA's development of the GHG emissions business as usual model and wedge analysis.

Green Communities

Janet is gathering all the final documents needed and writing the final reports for these projects to submit to DOER.

Janet is also working with departments and Marybeth to line up energy conservation projects for the Green Communities Fall 2021 grant round.

Buildings

From Fred Bunger:

Climate Action Plan for Buildings

Fred is working with Marybeth to develop the CAP buildings working group roster and is reviewing building action plans to prepare for the June kickoff with KLA. Fred's work on the Buildings CAP PowerPoint presentation continues. Fred reviewed assessor's information on buildings.

Sustainable Zoning Working Group

The Sustainable Zoning Working Group issued mark-ups for Section 16A: Project of Significant Interest and Section 22 Design Review for approval by Planning Department and Sustainability Director. Following Executive Director review and approval by CAC and Planning Board, the SZWG will work with the Planning Department to review and seek approval of other Town Departments and Boards in preparation for Fall Special Town Meeting.

Barriers to installing air source heat pumps

Sustainable zoning working group had declined to take up Yard Regulations until sustainability amendments to PSI Review and Design Review were finalized. There is concern that amendments to set back regulations would conflict with smooth passage of PSI and DR amendments. Working with MLP and Select Board representatives to respond to citizen complaints about the cost of certified plot plans required to secure a permit for heat pump installation. Meeting with Executive Director and Building Department Director June 8th.

MetroWest - Building Energy Use Disclosure

For the second meeting of the Metrowest Building Energy Use Disclosure study team on May 12, Fred reported that almost all municipalities with home energy rating requirements use DOE Energy Star Yardstick rating by HERS qualified energy assessors. Though the rating costs \$200-\$600, it includes mitigation recommendations along with the rating. The group discussed Westborough's review of a proposed Amazon warehouse/distribution center and offered recommendations on sustainability metrics. The group also touched on advocacy for a net zero stretch energy code.

Zero net energy stretch building code

Fred participated in Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BFRS) public hearing on stretch energy code. The BFRS is tasked to update the current Stretch Energy Code to incorporate IECC 2021 energy improvements. BFRS has been directed to turn over the writing of a new opt-in "High Energy Efficiency Code" to the Department of Energy Resources on July 1. Advocacy for a zero net energy stretch code will continue with the DOER. It is mandated that four public hearings be held, including at an environmental justice location.

MCAN has held several meetings to educate advocates and encourage broad participation in advocacy for a zero net energy stretch code.

Wellesley Housing Authority

Fred received gas bills for WHA and is awaiting electric bills and living area data to complete EUI calculations for WHA properties.

Mobility

From Martha Collins:

The Mobility Committee met on Thursday May 20. A brief update on the Sustainable Mobility Plan was provided. There are qualitative surveys available each week, if you would like to participate, click here:

<https://wantmangroup.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=26972520e29049e18b58de80980b0a78>

The town implemented a streatery (street + eatery) in front of Juniper Restaurant and another in front of Old School Pizza/Rice Barn. These are in place now, so check them out.

The town submitted for additional Compete Streets grants funding for a crosswalk light at State Street lot/Fuller Brook path.

Meghan reported that town engineering worked with Dana Hall to find additional parking space opportunities on the school's property so that the Grove Street construction project and on street parking was not affected.

Dave Hickey provided an update on the Walnut Street construction project. Wellesley can only have one Complete Streets grant in process with MASS DOT at a time, but the Seaver Street/Wellesley Ave. rotary project is nearing completion, so this project may be eligible for funding.

Discussion of the importance of crosswalks. The committee discussed and provided feedback on options for better connections for the trail system and for commuters along this route via sharrows (share the street with cycles), bike lanes, and shared bike/pedestrian lanes.

Select Board member, Colette Aufranc, and Assistant Executive Director, Amy Frigulietti met with the Metro-west Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). The meeting covered several topics. Two items of particular interest are:

- The MWRTA medical shuttle does not include Wellesley. MWRTA would be open to expanding shuttle service. Medical shuttles drive from Framingham and Natick to the Children's and Brigham's Hospital area, but will pick up in Wellesley/ Rt. 9 if needed).
- Colette asked about staging a micro transit at Morses Pond for the summer with a sandwich board and flyers. The Town would try to get the word out to families and the younger/student population to build that ridership. MWRTA is open to this idea.

Notes from the meeting are available from Martha Collins and Marybeth Martello.

3R Working Group

From Sue Morris:

The numbers for applications for new RDF permits continue to increase. Recycling volume is also still up due to a high volume of packaging from online purchases as well as marketing campaigns to promote the recycling of cardboard and newspaper.

DPW opened the Take it or Leave it area for the season on May 6. It is open Thursdays for drop-off, Fridays for taking items and Saturday for both drop off and pick up. This hybrid schedule is going well but once again there is currently a very large volume of goods at the reusables area.

Work on the 50th Anniversary of Recycling is continuing with September being the current plan for a celebration at the RDF. Carina, the intern, is currently going working on the video. We also found the documentary done by Dawn Marie Barrett, a former Wellesley College student in 2011 that we are using some footage from.

40 Wellesley High School students cleaned-up of the RDF grounds on May 26 for several hours as part of WHS Senior Community Service Day. The RDF had a lot of litter and trash around the facility. After the clean-up, the RDF looked great, and we hope to make this an annual event.

Gas Leaks/Gas Transition

From Lise Olney

Air-source heat pump permitting

Wellesley residents have raised some important questions concerning the requirements and restrictions for installation of air-source heat pumps on residential property in Wellesley. I am working with Marybeth to convene a group discussion on June 8 to consider how we might address permitting and zoning issues. Participants will include Planning, Building Department, MLP, and members of the sustainable zoning working group.

DPU 20-80 process sign-on letter

The Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative is assisting the Harvard Environmental Law & Policy Clinic and the Gas Leaks Allies in circulating a sign-on letter to the DPU regarding the its 20-80 proceeding. In October 2020, in response to a petition from Attorney General Maura Healey, the DPU opened this proceeding “to examine the role of Massachusetts gas local distribution companies (‘LDCs’) in helping the Commonwealth to achieve its 2050 climate goals.” The DPU investigation includes a stakeholder process to gather input in order to develop policies that will guide the evolution of the gas industry. The sign-on letter seeks to highlight the critical role that municipalities must play in planning for an orderly transition to decarbonize the gas and building sectors. The letter requests that the DPU and the gas companies think about cities and towns as partners and recommends several other framing principles for the DPU 20-80 process to support municipal greenhouse gas mitigation goals.

Hydrogen

A subgroup of the Gas Leaks Allies has been researching hydrogen, which has been widely cited as a potential alternative to natural gas. The Gas Leaks Allies is offering to make a presentation on this subject to interested groups. Two presentations on hydrogen:

- Gas Leaks Allies introduction to hydrogen (15 mins), recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdMcyrGyZOg>
- “**A crash-course on hydrogen**” (90 mins), Food & Water Action Europe, recording here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H16xFI157_8

Panel Discussion: “Getting the Gas Sector’s Energy Transition Underway,” (54 mins) *partial* recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-6ksegqbEE>.

This panel included **Rebecca Tepper**, Energy & Environment Bureau Chief, Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, as well as Nevada Assemblywoman Lesley Cohen, former chair of NY Public Service Commission John Rhodes, and Chair of WA State Utilities & Transportation Commission Dave Danner. Meeting current decarbonization commitments will involve radical reductions in natural gas use in residential and commercial buildings. States will need to lead – although so far, only about five are

working on comprehensive plans (including MA) for decarbonization. Panelists discussed state strategies including incentives, updated building codes, enforceable carbon reduction goals. Other themes of the discussion: business as usual is actually going to cost more; need for public education on benefits of the transition; how to fund the transition equitably, with protections for most vulnerable; need to stop investing in gas infrastructure; pushback from the gas industry.

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant Report

From Francisco Frias

Wellesley Electric Customers Accelerated Reduction of Emissions (WECARE)

In May, the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) staff members of the WECARE Working Group met twice to continue with the rollout of the program communication plan. The entire WECARE Working Group met once to review the status of the rollout and discuss the responses to the program thus far. The staff contracted with a graphic designer to develop the communication flyer for the program. As of May 25, the flyer has been mailed to all commercial accounts and has been included in two utility billing cycles, for a total of approximately 5,900 customers reached. In addition, a hybrid notification of the flyer and press release will be sent out in the June utility billings. There have been roughly 160 opt-outs as of May 27. The group has tested the billing requirements for the program and is working with MUNIS and IT to ensure appropriate changes to the billing software are completed by June 30. The group is in the process of preparing the necessary financial procedures to track funds and expenses associated with the program separately.

The existing Working Group participants include MLP Board members Jack Stewart and Scott Bender, Climate Action Committee Chair Laura Olton, and representing the MLP: Don Newell, Joanne Scannell, Terry Connolly, and Francisco Frias.

Electric Vehicles Program

In May, Wellesley Drives Electric had its first electric vehicle (EV) Action committee meeting. The staff followed up with the initial members to develop the group participants. They will meet quarterly with our EV specialists who will join the meeting in an advisory and guiding capacity. The group will assist in setting agendas and goals. Energy New England (ENE) held a digital event for all its Drives Electric Programs with Wellesley Drives Electric participating. The event was quite successful, and we are starting to look into planning our next digital Event for National Drive Electric Week, which is scheduled for the end of September. We expect the focus for this event to be on fleet electrification. We are still waiting to see what in-person events will look like for the future. They will likely be low contact show-style car events. The Toyota Dealership has low inventory on the popular Rav4 Prime, which is a plug-in hybrid (PHEV), all-wheel-drive SUV, and the VW dealership continues to develop its EV sales department as the ID4 continues to grow in demand. We have helped the dealership with several customer interactions. The upcoming June Newsletter will feature Jeep's brand new PHEV, a Jeep Wrangler 4xE. Not eligible for any state incentives, as its battery is rated for 22 miles of range before its hybrid engine kicks in, but Jeep has stepped into the ring and our customer inbox is getting excited about all the new vehicle options. We will also start preparing our next targeted survey and expect to work with Energy New England and one EV ambassador who manages her own marketing company to help design the questions.

The May EV e-newsletter featured the new VW ID.4 all-electric SUV, which is now available at Wellesley VW. The Wellesley Drives Electric program continues to provide EV specialist support to EV-interested residents and to collaborate with EV program partner Sagewell to increase EV driver enrollments for off-peak charging.

Solar Rebate Program

Our solar rebate program has been in effect for approximately 21 months. We have 25 completed installations. We have ten (10) more that are in progress. These 35 installations add up to 281.865 kW DC allocation against the 192 kW DC initially approved by the MLP Board. After 23 months, we are at 147%.

The Massachusetts DOER extended the program until June 30, 2021, and the MLP pledged \$50,000 to be allocated for the Solar Rebate Program extension. Currently, the “overrun” in rebate dollars stands at \$108,234, of which the WMLP is responsible for half or \$54,117.

Incentive/Rebate Program:

The MLP’s FY2021 Appliance Rebate program, through May 2021, has processed a total of 247 rebates, equating to \$18,250 paid out.

The Incentive Redesign Working Group (IRWG) officially kicked off the Clean Comfort program. The program was launched on March 31, with a press release to the town residents, in addition to a presentation at the Green Collaborative meeting. The MLP was in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Committee, and the program was co-sponsored by Sustainable Wellesley and the Wellesley High School Climate Action Club. On May 19, the group put together a Clean Comfort webinar sponsored by the MLP and Sustainable Wellesley, which was attended by 50 people. Most of the attendants were residents interested in getting information on air source heat pumps for their homes. As of May 27, there have been 44 consulting events with Abode Energy Management and three pre-approved rebate applications. Currently, we have 15 participating contractors.

The existing Group participants include MLP Board member Ellen Korpi, Sustainable Wellesley member Mary Gard, Climate Action Committee member Fred Bunker, Wellesley resident Judson Jaffe and representing the MLP: Joanne Scannell and Francisco Frias. Both Phyllis Theermann from Sustainable Wellesley, and Martha Collins from the Climate Action Committee, have been actively helping in this group.

Home Energy Audits

During the calendar year 2020, ENE did 28 Home Audits, including the 14 remote audits. Through April of 2021, ENE had completed 11 In-Home Audits, 16 Remote Audits, and 16 online audits through EnergyXpert.

We are working with ENE to advertise their program along with the EnergyXpert Self-Service Home Energy Assessment program. Through the platform, customers can perform an online home energy assessment by answering a handful of simple questions. The platform will provide individualized insights about their homes’ energy use to improve their overall performance. Additionally, the tool is integrated with a marketplace, giving real-time suggestions and information on rebates available to them. The Clean Comfort program has recommended each participant get a Home Energy Audit to get a complete understanding of how well their homes are up to date with weatherization. We will continue to promote this program through email promotions and by including the information in the new resident package for new MLP customers.

The Massachusetts DOER spending requirements for Residential Conservation Services (RCS) is .25% of Gross Revenue.

Shave the Peak

The MLP started the second year of the Demand Response Program, Shave the Peak. An email blast was sent to approximately 2,800 residents detailing how the program works and how a customer can enroll in the program. During the summer of 2020, we had near 380 participants, and as of May 28, 2021, we are close to 480. We will continue to notify our customers about the program to help Wellesley reduce its energy demand during system-wide peak times.

Large Scale Solar and Battery Storage Projects

Wellesley Sports Center - On March 12th, the Director of the MLP and the President and CEO of Consolidated Edison Development signed the Purchase Power Agreement and the Interconnection Agreement for the installation of a solar array on the roof of Wellesley Sports Center located at 900 Worcester Street. The heads of these organizations and the owner of Wellesley Sports Center executed the Assignment and Assumption of Sublease agreement. The engineering plans are in the design stage, and construction is expected to start in July. The original commercial operation date (COD) was October; however, due to delays from the manufacturer of the solar panels, the new expected COD will be most likely in December.

Municipal Way Battery Storage System - RFP responses for the installation of a battery storage system next to Station 41 (Building next to the MLP Office) were opened on November 17th, 2020. At the March Board meeting, during the executive session, the staff discussed the latest analysis of the top four proposals and recommended starting negotiations with the respondent with the most advantageous proposal. The MLP staff notified the other three companies of their standing in the process and informed the top respondent of what to expect moving forward. The first draft of the Purchase Power Agreement was completed and after being reviewed by the MLP, a few changes took place. A revised draft has been completed, and once it is reviewed internally, it will be shared with the top respondent. Since the project site is part of an Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) area, the staff have been meeting with a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) to determine what will be needed if the project was to move forward.

Other Locations - There have not been additional meetings since February 26th, when the MLP's Director and Assistant Director met with a representative from the Board of Selectmen, the Town's Executive Director, and the Facilities Director. During that meeting, the Facilities Director reviewed a draft plan containing the criteria identified to consider a municipal building installation of solar panels. Some additional details are necessary for this draft document before discussing it with other key department heads and committees.

Concerning other local sites where a large amount of solar can be installed, the MLP participated in multiple meetings discussing the possibility of solar canopies at the Wellesley High School parking lot. The first meeting was organized by the Wellesley High School Climate Action Club ("Club"), and there were multiple department heads and members of local groups. The MLP Assistant Director was invited, by the Club, to a second meeting, where Ameresco made a financial analysis presentation about the project. After this meeting, the Assistant Director and Supervisory Electrical Engineer held a meeting with the Club and the head of Sustainable Wellesley. During this meeting, we gave them an overview of what the MLP considers when exploring similar projects. We also shared information about the difference in cost of local green generation and out-of-town generation.

Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) and the MLP's existing policy on retiring the RECs of existing non-emitting power contracts were explained.

Additional meetings have not been held; however, the Assistant Director reached out to Consolidated Edison Development to ask their opinion of the High School parking lot. He also requested a budgetary ballpark number for the installation of solar at that location. We are still waiting for a response from them.

Webinars

From Fred:

RMI held a roundtable discussion on May 6 with representatives from VW, Dow, AT&T, ABB, and First Solar on the RMI report: Harnessing Technology and History to Avoid Global warming. Key points:

- Most global corporations are on board with the Paris agreement and have set targets even more aggressive than the US. Many of their customers are pushing them on decarbonization.
- Solar has achieved parity with fossil fuel for electricity generation.
- Battery and/or hydrogen storage is needed to resolve midday energy generation peaks.
- VW is going beyond a commitment to 100% electric to be responsible for product life cycle from raw material to end of life recycling.
- Dow recognizes the high energy required to break elemental bonds is a tough issue but has plans to decarbonize 50-year assets and use compensation to achieve net zero.
- ABB notes that 45% of electricity is used in motors and that there is at least a 10% current improvement opportunity. They also see the opportunity of wind and solar excess generation to make hydrogen.
- A clear and consistent message from political leaders is needed to break down barriers. (Biden's speech on climate change was earlier that day.)
- Connectivity, particularly with the electrical grid will be key to make things work as they are designed and supposed to.