



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

December 2, 2022

Climate Action Plan (CAP) General Communication and Outreach

- Sent Green Collaborative announcements through numerous communication channels.
- Met with Green Collaborative speakers to review and revise presentations.
- Sent follow-up materials to Green Collaborative participants.
- The Nov. 16 Green Collaborative attracted 147 registrations and 88 attendees, a Green Collaborative record. Participants heard from Marybeth Martello (Climate Action Plan overview) Lisa Wolf (decarbonization and local/state incentives), Mary Gard (federal incentives), Ray Stetkiewicz (electric vehicle incentives), Colette Aufranc (getting around Wellesley without a car), and Brandon Schmitt (trees and sustainable landscaping).
- Attended Climate Summit in Needham.
- Met with Phyllis, Lisa Geiger, and Lisa Moore to brainstorm ideas for town-wide sustainability event.
- Met with Brian DuPont, Stephanie Hawkinson, and Janet Mosley to discuss a climate action “how-to” web platform.
- Researched climate coaching programs in other communities.

Green Communities

Wellesley received a grant for \$200,000 for municipal energy efficiency projects from the Department of Energy Resources. The projects and amounts covered by this grant are listed below.

- \$60,000 – Air source heat pumps at Wellesley Ave. water treatment plant (WTP)
- \$60,000 – Air source heat pumps at Morses WTP
- \$60,000 – Air source heat pumps at Longfellow WTP
- \$10,000 – LED lighting in the Department of Public Works’ Water and Sewer garage
- \$10,000 – Two hybrid electric police cruisers

The two hybrid electric police cruisers were recently received by the police department. DPW's engineering consultant Wright-Pierce provided a cost estimate and energy savings estimate for the WTP heat pumps and ventilation improvements.

Governance

Marybeth Martello and Ellen Korpi attended Hazard Mitigation Plan public forum on November 16.

Marybeth prepared a draft CAC FY24 budget.

Buildings

From Fred Bunger:

Buildings Working Group (BWG) of CAP

Update of BWG activity using CAP action items as a guide:

B1 Regulatory:

- On November 22, Select Board voted unanimously to co-sponsor a warrant article with Climate Action Committee to adopt Opt-In Specialized energy code at Annual Town Meeting 2023. Warrant article to be prepared by December 22. Prior to this meeting,
- So far, Planning Board has not proposed additional sustainability amendments for Annual Town Meeting 2023.

B2 Promote net zero

- Continuing work on Building Department database to identify example installations for future outreach communication. Working on survey for contacting contractors.

B3 Municipal Action

- Police Station audit: Chief Pilecki is on board with the audit moving forward. Janet and Marybeth will consult with FMD on how best to carry out the audit.

B4 Residential conversion

- Green Collaborative presentations on buildings: Lisa Wolf (decarbonization and local/state incentives), Mary Gard (federal incentives).

B5 Commercial/Institutional

- On November 18, Robert Dolan from Mass Development presented information on the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program for commercial properties to the Assessor, Executive Director of General Government Services, Marybeth, Janet, Fred Bunger, and Ellen Korpi.

Electrifying Schools

MCAN held webinar 11/16 on electrifying schools with presentations from Undaunted K12 a non-profit working extensively on school renovation/electrification, Quincy upper school a new urban 8-12 school in Boston and Arlington's program to upgrade their 6 worst energy-using schools.

BEA Retrofits Group

Worcester presented on their pilot to identify best methods to upgrade and electrify 6 triple-deckers. Framingham geothermal pilot by Eversource and Retrofit Without Displacement for multi-family apartments were also discussed.

Mobility

From Martha Collins:

Ray Stetkiewicz of Wellesley Drives Electric presented at the Green Collaborative on local, state, and federal EV incentives ([Wellesley Drives Electric slides](#)), and Select Board member Colette Aufranc presented on mobility options around Wellesley ([Moving Around Wellesley Without a Car slides](#)).

On December 2, Marybeth Martello, Lisa Wolf, and Martha Collins will meet with Leslie Zebrowitz, Philip Vergragt, and Liora Silkes of Newton to provide information on the EV events that have taken place in Wellesley because Newton is hoping to do the same.

Gas Transition

From Lise Olney:

Eversource has broken ground in Framingham on the first networked geothermal system run by a gas utility. [Read more here from HEET.](#)

Report on Environmental Defense Fund Hydrogen Briefing, November 9, 2022

Steve Hamburg, Senior VP, Chief Scientist, EDF

Jolette Westbrook, Director & Senior Attorney, Equitable Regulatory Solutions, EDF

Tianui Sun, Climate Scientist, EDF

[Recording here](#)

This briefing explored the unresolved technical, scientific, and policy questions regarding the use of hydrogen as an alternative fuel source for heating and cooling buildings. Some takeaways:

- A year ago, there was an assumption that hydrogen was a neutral carrier and the only question was how to produce enough. New research from EDF scientists highlighting hydrogen's leakage problem and role as an indirect greenhouse gas shows that we need much more data before we make huge investments in hydrogen.
- There was an assumption that hydrogen would leak at the same rate as methane from the distribution system but data shows that hydrogen and blended hydrogen can leak much faster than methane, three times the rate of methane. (We don't even have accurate measurements of methane leakage.)
- Leakage associated with hydrogen *production* also counteracts potential benefit.
- It takes a lot more energy to produce hydrogen than to just use that electron directly.
- We aren't producing clean hydrogen anywhere in the world at scale right now. Need to use what we are producing where we need it most, like industrial settings - and learn from those experiences where NOT to use it. Need to try it on a very limited scale in multiple environments to establish parameters.
- It does not make sense to consider using hydrogen to replace natural gas. But we could run pilots and understand how best to use hydrogen in appropriate settings.
- Very hard to envision wide-spread use of hydrogen in homes. We know nothing about leakage when used in homes and there are concerns about potential combustion.
- Concerning whether it is appropriate for the gas companies to be pursuing hydrogen when so much is unknown, we need to look at cost benefit ratio. What is the best way to decarbonize? If we have to change the infrastructure to carry hydrogen, what will that cost and how will that affect ratepayers? Pilots on a small scale might make sense but you can take those same electrons available in this region right now and have a much bigger impact.
- Some additional resources from EDF:

- [Climate consequences of hydrogen emissions](#) (Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics)
- [Hydrogen Pipe Dreams: why burning hydrogen in buildings is bad for climate and health](#) (Physicians for Social Responsibility)
- [One of the US' first green hydrogen blending projects launches on Long Island](#) (National Grid)
- [Unmask temporal trade-offs in climate policy debates](#) (Science)
- [CPUC Issues Independent Study on Injecting Hydrogen into Natural Gas Systems](#) (CA Public Utility Commission)

Globe article uncovered funding for UMass Lowell study on hydrogen came from gas industry and was edited by industry lobbyist.

“Study touting hydrogen — a technology favored by gas firms — was funded by gas interests, e-mails show,” Boston Globe, Nov. 17, 2022. Links to the Boston Globe [Article](#) and [Letters to the Editor](#) in response.

3R Working/Waste Group

From Sue Morris:

We have been working closely with the Wellesley High School Climate Action Club on a few initiatives. We are planning to start a pilot program aimed at promoting better recycling practices at Wellesley High School. There are a number of recycling containers at WHS but there is a lot of contamination causing the recycling to be thrown away. The new pilot program will involve some new clear recycling containers for disposable plastic water bottles with clear labels on them. The WHS Climate Action Club will also put out posters promoting the containers and will do announcements along with a campaign to promote the pilot program. This is a follow-on project to the letters outside Wellesley High School in which disposable plastic waste such as water bottles and Dunkin Donuts plastic cups are being put into the chicken wire letters to show the amount of disposable plastic waste that is generated at Wellesley High School. We are also discussing doing a variation to the food waste diversion pilot program we did last Spring and encouraging Whitsons, the food service provider for Wellesley Public Schools, to compost kitchen scraps as well as find more environmentally friendly solutions for some things like disposable cutlery, cookie bags, condiments, etc.

We are still working with Dave Cohen and the DPW on the pilot program for better trash and recycling systems at the Hunnewell Fields, although it not going as fast as we had hoped. The WHS Climate Action Club, 3R Working Group, and some other student groups put together and provided Dave Cohen a detailed report with suggestions on ways to promote more effective disposal of trash and recycling. So far, the DPW put sandwich boards at the WHS Track & Field promoting recycling, but they have not implemented any other aspects of the report. We hope the DPW will make some of the suggested changes to improve the trash and recycling at the Hunnewell Fields soon.

Wellesley MLP Sustainability Initiatives

Heat Pump Promotions

In collaboration with Abode, Sustainable Wellesley and Green Energy Consumers, a webinar about **Heat Pumps: What's New** is planned for January 16, 2023. Topics will include current technology and summary of utility, State and IRA benefits.

Green Collaborative

November 16, 2022: With 145 registrants and >90 people in attendance, this was a great opportunity to explain WMLP initiatives and incentives that forward Wellesley climate action goals. Emphasis on individual households taking action toward electrification and peak management, and related economic and carbon reduction benefits.

EV Demand Management

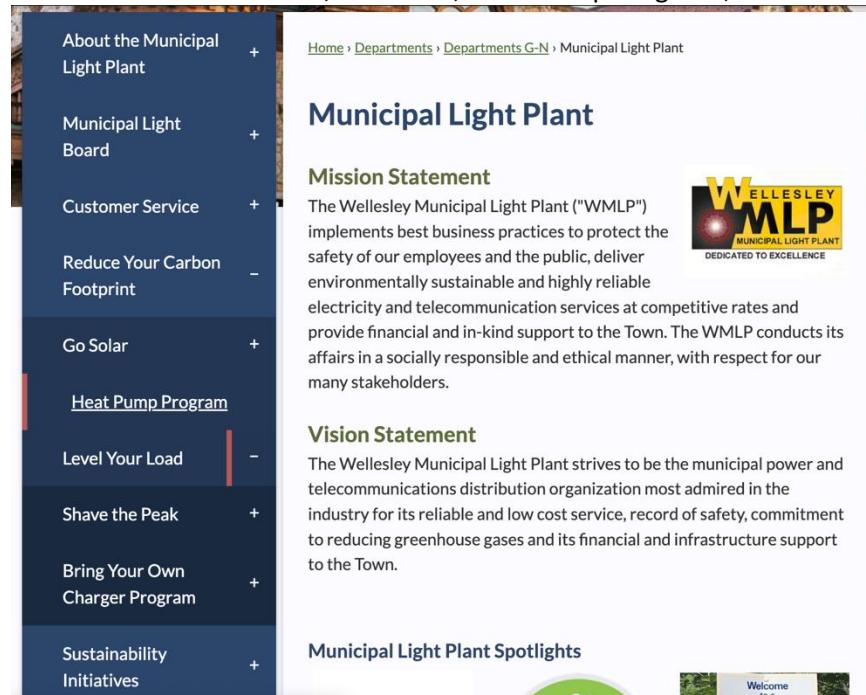
WMLP can now identify addresses of over 750 EV owners who are not participating in the SageWell, bring your own charger program. A campaign targeted at enrolling these EV owners is underway.

For customers who are already enrolled, SageWell now has the capacity to use charger telematics to monitor or control OEM-equipped devices. Enrolling customers in any such control program must be voluntary, and would entail a targeted campaign to all existing customers. SageWell experience has shown very high voluntary cooperation with self-managed off-peak charging; so telematics data may be more instructive than fiscal.

Starting in 2023, enrollment in BYOC will be added to the requirement to get the MLP charger rebate (50% up to \$350). Meanwhile new charger registrants will be alerted to BYOC and emailed information about enrolling with a link to sign up.

Website Re-organization

WMLP website was restructured so that the Homepage menu items were reduced from 11 to 5, simplifying and streamlining the search for information. A new 'Reduce Your Carbon Footprint' main menu item with sub-items, 'Go Solar', 'Heat Pump Program', and 'Level Your Load' was added.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (WMLP) website. On the left, a sidebar menu lists several items with a '+' sign, indicating they are expandable. The items are: 'About the Municipal Light Plant', 'Municipal Light Board', 'Customer Service', 'Reduce Your Carbon Footprint', 'Go Solar', 'Heat Pump Program' (which is currently selected, as indicated by a red background), 'Level Your Load', 'Shave the Peak', 'Bring Your Own Charger Program', and 'Sustainability Initiatives'. To the right of the sidebar, the main content area has a breadcrumb navigation: 'Home > Departments > Departments G-N > Municipal Light Plant'. The main title 'Municipal Light Plant' is displayed in a large, bold font. Below it is a 'Mission Statement' section, which includes a logo for 'WELLESLEY MLP MUNICIPAL LIGHT PLANT DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE'. The 'Mission Statement' text describes the plant's commitment to safety, reliability, and environmental sustainability. Further down, there is a 'Vision Statement' section, which outlines the plant's goal to be the most admired municipal power and telecommunications organization in the industry. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a section titled 'Municipal Light Plant Spotlights'.

Director's Holiday Message

Planning is underway to record a message from the Director to customers addressing growing concerns about rising energy prices, planning to electrify everything, decarbonizing the power portfolio, peak management, and transmission capacity.

Energy Coach Program Development

Coordinating with the Climate Action department to develop an energy coach program. This will comprise recruiting and training a core group of volunteers to help residents learn about lowering the carbon impacts of their homes and activities, and answer questions about electrification and other energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. An Energy Coach website will be developed to answer FAQs, and allow residents to schedule a consultation with volunteer experts on a range of topics.