



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

May 27, 2022

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

DPW requested three quotes from vendors for the LED lighting project. Dave Cohen and Meghan Condon from DPW will meet with Janet, Marybeth, and Green Communities representatives to determine how to move forward with the WTP heat pump projects given that a commercial heat pump system may be necessary for the conditions at the WTPs. The Police Department has ordered the hybrid electric cruisers and is waiting for a build date from the manufacturer.

Please note the Director of the Green Communities Division requests that the Town *hold off on publicly announcing the award until after the official announcement by Green Communities later this winter.*

Buildings

From Fred Bunger:

Buildings Working Group (BWG) of Climate Action Plan

BWG met May 18 to discuss BETR status, MLP incentives, Sustainable Zoning approval and next steps in residential buildings including taking advantage of heat pump zoning change. Mary Gard reported Sustainable Wellesley had discussed home energy disclosure with two realtors and was discussing a

STEM project with the Wellesley schools to measure home energy ratings. Isobel Wohlin joined the BWG.

Met with Al Scaramelli, Managing Director of Sustainability for Hanover Capital Partners and Jessica Viens General Manager for Wellesley Gateway. Hanover is owner of Wellesley Gateway and is in process of purchasing Park 9. Toured both properties which comprise about 20% of the total commercial square feet in Wellesley. They promised strong support of the BETR program and CAP.

Buildings Energy Tracking and Reporting (BETR)

- BETR Program Description approved by CAC and reviewed by Town staff and Town counsel.
- Second letter to owners and managers drafted and sent to 41 building owners & managers to announce BETR program and to put June 23rd Building Energy Roundtable on their agendas.
 - Requested owners submit 3 years of Portfolio Manager data for all buildings larger than 25,000 sq. ft. by August 11th.
 - Plan for Roundtable to include 3 years EUI data for selected buildings. Expect reports from municipal buildings, Wellesley Gateway, Wellesley Office Park, and others.

Sustainability Articles for Town Meeting

Wellesley expects to receive Attorney General (AG) approval of recent bylaw changes by the end of July. However, Meghan will request priority treatment for the bylaw change allowing heat pumps in setback areas.

Center for Eco-technology

Marybeth Martello spoke with Ashley Muspratt, President of the Center for Eco-technology, about the technical support for decarbonizing 156 Weston Road, a town-owned property. Marybeth and Ashley also discussed comprehensive decarbonization technical and financial support for community members. The Center's programs could be hugely helpful to Climate Action Plan implementation. Marybeth would like to explore these programs more fully with the MLP.

3R Working/Waste Group

A group of Wellesley High School seniors did a litter and debris clean-up at the RDF on Wednesday, May 25 as part of senior service day. The RDF staff was pleased with the results. The RDF is in the midst of some renovations as one of the large metal signs on the recycling wall fell down a few months ago. But the volume of food waste has been steady and a number of additional RDF permits were issued.

We started the Wellesley High School food waste diversion pilot program last week. It has gone fairly well despite a number of issues. The biggest issue is a lack of volunteers to monitor and instruct the students as they dispose of food, trash, and recycling. The original plan was that National Honor Society and Key Club students would get one service hour for 1/2 hour of food waste diversion monitoring. We have 3 toters in the cafeteria and 3 lunches and unfortunately have only had a total of 3 student volunteers each helping during one lunch period. We sent a sign-up genius through the WHS PTSO, Wellesley Green Schools & Sustainable Wellesley for adult volunteers and so far have had two volunteers sign-up for two days. Given we have to pay a contamination fee to CERO in addition to the monthly \$105 fee to take the food waste/compost we will need to figure out a solution to the lack of volunteers which are key to making this program work.

Mobility

EV Test Drive Event

The EV Test Drive event on Thursday May 12 organized by Martha Collins and others was a big success. See the update from MLP staff below for details.

Mobility Committee

The May 19 meeting of the Mobility Committee covered the following topics:

- Safe Routes to School –Master Plan Funding
- SMP Implementation: May is Mobility Month Update
- EV Charging Update
- MBTA - Update
- Micro-transit/MWRTA - Update
- Grants- Bike Repair Station
- Complete Street Projects/Mobility Expansion in Wellesley
- Walnut Street Updates – Funds approved at ATM
- Local/Regional Projects – Transportation Bond Bill projects, Trails, Mass Pike, etc.
- Potential partnerships – with Schools, COA, Colleges, Businesses, etc.
- Upcoming summer meeting dates

From Lise Olney

Meeting with Rep. Peisch and Chief of Staff Corey Testa

Dr. Regina LaRocque invited me to join her and Andee Krasner of Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility (GBPSR) at a May 16 meeting with Rep. Alice Peisch to discuss priorities for the climate bill currently in conference committee at the State House. GBPSR is a member of the coalition working on the Burning Question campaign to promote [these legislative priorities](#), which align with the Buildings pathway in the Town's Climate Action Plan.

We reviewed the following:

- The status of the DPU 20-80 process and the recent comments submitted by Attorney General Maura Healey rejecting the decarbonization proposals from the gas companies, which include using hydrogen and renewable natural gas in the existing gas network. I highlighted these concerns from the municipal perspective:
 - Hydrogen and RNG are experimental technologies
 - No current public safety training in how to deal with blended hydrogen and gas
 - Pipes in the gas network would still have to be replaced
 - Little or no testing of appliances for safe use with blended hydrogen and gas.
- The legislative priorities supported by the Gas Leaks Allies (GLA) ([see this link](#)) overlap with the Burning Question priorities. I highlighted that the CAC and Select Board had previously supported the principles of the FUTURE Act, a key provision of which would have allowed gas companies to distribute renewable thermal energy instead of combustible fossil fuel.

We discussed Rep. Peisch's questions about the efficacy of electric air-source heat pumps in extremely cold weather and the additional efficiency and effectiveness of networked geothermal systems for

heating and cooling. Rep. Peisch stated her optimism about the eventual outcome of the conference committee.

Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative Tuesday, May 24 Meeting with National Grid representatives

Meeting background: In March, the gas utilities submitted their plans to the Department of Public Utilities as part of the [DPU 20-80 proceeding on the Future of Gas](#). The plans include continuation of the use of fossil fuels for customers' heating and cooling systems, and a request for rate increases to cover research and development which would include "blending renewable natural gas and hydrogen into existing networks" and "examining options for delivery and utilization of 100% hydrogen gas" (see National Grid plan [here](#)). These plans would require continued investment in pipe replacement at an estimated total cost of \$40 billion. Last week, Attorney General Maura Healey's office called for the Department of Public Utilities to [reject the gas utilities' plans](#).

Meeting Topics:

- National Grid Plans for Hydrogen and Renewable Natural Gas
- Update on gas-related legislation

Meeting Speakers:

- **National Grid's Vice President Head of US Strategy Judith Judson** spoke about the company's plans to use hydrogen and renewable natural gas (RNG) in the existing gas distribution system.
- **Michael Walsh, independent net zero emissions researcher and consultant**, offered his perspective and commentary on the gas companies' proposals to the DPU, and his alternative suggestions for decarbonization.
- **Anne Wright of Mothers Out Front and Mark Dyen of 350 Mass** provided a legislative update and summarized the gas-related priorities of the [Burning Question campaign](#). They encouraged participants to meet with legislators to advocate for these priorities.

As a reminder, the last meeting on February 1, 2022, included an introduction to hydrogen and RNG by Sarah Griffith and Cathy Kristofferson from the [Hydrogen & RNG Working Group of the Gas Leaks Allies](#). Recording [here](#), starting 18 minutes in.

Wellesley Wonderful Weekend

Marybeth Martello and Colette Aufranc staffed a table at the Municipal Light Plant to provide information related to the Climate Action Plan and Sustainable Mobility Plan.

Wellesley MLP Sustainability Initiatives

From MLP Staff:

Wellesley Electric Customers Accelerated Reduction of Emissions (WECARE):

Total Opt Outs: 696(6.9%) Total Customers: 10,065, WECARE as of May 15: \$755,926, 100%: \$145,326
May 2022 RECs purchased 4,000 @ \$37.00 = \$148,000 WECARE Spent: \$64,530, 100%: \$83,470

Electric Vehicles Program:

The EV Ride & Drive event sponsored by the MLP, Sustainable Wellesley, and the Climate Action Committee was held on Thursday, May 12. The event was a tremendous success. There were approximately 116 EV test drives within 3 hours. The Mass Bay Community College site was perfect as

well as the timing of the event. There were 10 EVs or PHEVs provided by dealerships to drive, and 10 resident owned cars to view and talk with owners. Many participants indicated they would be buying an electric car in the near future. They also inquired when/if the town would offer another EV test drive event. We had 15 town volunteers and 3 ENE employees offering their expertise. Automobile manufacturers included BMW, Tesla, Audi, Toyota, Hyundai, Kia, Nissan, Ford and Volkswagen.

Clean Comfort Air Source Heat Pump Program:

313 Resident Consultations

<u>Budget:</u>	<u>Admin Costs:</u>	<u>Rebates paid:</u>	<u>Rebates in process</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Installs in progress</u>
\$125,000	\$27,650	\$53,650 (38)	\$14,375 (8)	\$29,817	19

Currently the WMLP rebate for ASHPs is \$500/ton up to \$2,000, in June the rebates increase to \$1,000/ton up to \$5,000. During the month of June 2022, the MLP will honor rebate applications for natural gas customers who choose not to adhere to the Mass Save requirements. We will not allow residents to “double dip” on the rebates. As of July 1, 2022 all natural gas customers will have to apply for rebates through Mass Save.

Rebate Program:

The Incentive Redesign rebates take effect June 1, 2022.

The current Appliance Rebate Program as of May 15, 2022: 151 applications, totaling \$13,124.

Large Scale Solar, Battery Storage & Other Projects:

Wellesley Library:

Following the successful talks with the Library Board of Trustees, the WMLP staff completed a document to request proposals for the installation of a solar array at the Wellesley Free Library. The document had input and comments from the Facilities Maintenance Department (FMD). However, per direction of the MLB, the staff will include additional requirements in the document for proposals to include battery storage and other necessary micro grid elements. Presently, the MLP staff is doing engineering analysis, which includes plans to interconnect the Library, Police Station, Hunnewell School, and Town Hall to the system, and the sizing of the battery system, based on load and space available. We expect to complete the preliminary analysis by the end of the month, allowing the staff to put out an RFP later in June.

DPW & MLP Site Solar:

After discussions with the DPW Director and FMD, the WMLP staff will revise the document to request proposals for multiple solar installations at the DPW & MLP complex. The Water & Sewer building has the largest roof in the complex (175,000 sq. ft.) but will need some structural upgrades to support solar equipment. According to an estimate received from Weston & Sampson on May 19, the roof would need a construction budget of roughly \$315,000. In light of this estimate, the MLP will be scheduling a meeting with DPW and FMD to discuss how to move forward. Doug Steward from Engineering is also looking into records that can determine the structural suitability of other roofs at the DPW complex.

Municipal Way Battery Storage System:

The latest updates for this project include:

- The Town of Wellesley Special Town Meeting voted to transfer care, custody, management, and control, of the property where the system will be installed to the Wellesley Municipal Light Board on April 11, 2022.
- A System Impact Study was completed and presented to the MLP team on April 20, 2022. Based on this analysis, there are periods during the year when the discharging the batteries could result in energy flowing back to Eversource. The MLP staff has reached out to Eversource and is reviewing the interconnection agreement with Eversource to determine if energy from the battery storage system can be exported to the Eversource system without any violation of the contract. This alternative will allow the battery system to discharge without concerns any time of the year. Other options to mitigate the back-feeding situation exist, but a contractual modification of the Eversource-MLP agreement at this point seems to make the most sense.