



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

April 1, 2022

Green Communities

Wellesley received a contract effective date of March 3, 2022 so project work may begin. DPW is putting together solicitations for the LED lighting and air source heat pump projects. The Police Department has ordered the hybrid electric cruisers.

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

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.*

Marybeth and Janet are talking with departments to identify projects for the next Green Communities grant application.

Buildings

From Fred Bunger (with input from Janet Mosley):

Buildings Working Group (BWG) of Climate Action Plan

BWG has not met since the holidays.

Buildings Energy Tracking and Reporting (BETR)

- Fred, Janet, and Marybeth met on March 24 to discuss updates, upcoming tasks, and a timeline related to the Building Energy Tracking and Reporting (BETR) program outline.
- Janet created a task timeline for BETR planning.

- Janet reached out to National Grid to assess how commercial building owners can get aggregated data for tenants paying the utility bills and auto-populate Energy Star Portfolio Manager (PM) with natural gas consumption data. National Grid has a program to provide data, but accessing data involves several administrative steps.
- Janet and Marybeth spoke with WMLP about how building owners can access aggregated data and the potential for automatic upload to PM. WMLP does not currently have the ability to create automated program so will respond to individual requests to customer service.
- Next steps:
 - Redrafting BETR program outline as a policy to be reviewed with Town Departments. Janet starting with developing reporting process and procedure.
 - With policy established and clear reporting procedures, the second letter to owners and managers will be drafted and sent.
 - Plan to contact 4 to 5 major building managers to present their 2021 emissions at the next roundtable.

Commercial Building Energy Roundtable

The goal for the next Roundtable is to have some results to share from the BETR program. Based on the timeline for BETR, that might be in late June.

Sustainability Articles for Town Meeting

Article #38 amendments to zoning bylaws reviewed by Planning Board after Advisory negative vote. Reworded Motion #1 clarifying sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Decided to pull Motion #2 for further analysis of emissions disclosure request on MSIA process in Project of Significant Impact. Motion #3 was left unchanged. Planning Board will ask Advisory for reconsideration and revote. Motion #4 Definitions and Yard Regulations to allow cold-climate heat pumps will proceed unchanged.

Fred, Laura Olton, and Marybeth Martello had several meetings with Planning to discuss Article 38 and Planning's Article 38 presentation to Annual Town Meeting.

Stretch Code Building Code - Department of Energy Resources (DOER)

Select Board and CAC signatures attained on both a Wellesley specific letter and letter drafted by Massachusetts Net Zero Buildings (MA NZB) Coalition. Contacted other Towns to urge them to comment on the “straw proposal” stretch code from DOER. The MA NZB letter was signed by officials in 62 municipalities representing 40% of the State population.

Dana Hall Sustainability Committee

Continuing discussion with the Dana Hall Sustainability Committee.

Regional Residential Climate Program

No progress in March.

3R Working/Waste Group

From Sue Morris:

We are continuing to promote Zero Waste Wellesley and Recyclable of the Month along with Sustainable Wellesley. The Wellesley High School food waste diversion program has encountered additional delays that we are working to resolve.

Gas Leaks

From Lise Olney:

Dept. of Public Utilities 20-80 Proceeding on the Future of Gas

As you know, at the request of the MA Attorney General, the DPU has been conducting an investigation into potential policies for the future of gas to enable the state to reach its goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. At the direction of the DPU, the investigation has been conducted by consultants hired by the local gas distribution companies to submit their own LDC-specific reports as well as an overall report. The final reports from those consultants were submitted on March 18, 2022; [click here](#) to review the final report on decarbonization pathways by the overall consultant. The report recommends the continuation of gas infrastructure “alongside and in support of electrification.” Significantly, the report does not address the Gas Safety Enhancement Plan. The DPU will hold two virtual hearings in May at which stakeholders and members of the public can offer 3-minute testimony; written comments are due May 6.

Alternative terms for “natural gas”

The Gas Leaks Allies have been discussing the need for more neutral terminology for “natural gas,” given the need to transition away from this fossil fuel. Last fall, researchers at Yale published the results of a study (“Different names for ‘natural gas’ influence public perception of it”) suggesting that the terms used for “natural gas” affect public perceptions, consumer choices, and support for related policies. The gas industry is also using the term “energy transition” to support continued reliance on gas and other fossil fuels. [The CAC may want to consider this messaging in our communications for the Climate Action Plan.](#)

Some recent articles about this topic:

- [“The end of natural gas has to start with its name,” Rebecca Leber, Vox, Feb. 10, 2022](#)
- [“There’s a messaging battle right now over America’s energy future,” David Gelles and Lisa Friedman, New York Times, March 19, 2022](#)

Recent events attended:

[Barriers to Regional Decarbonization, March 23, 2022](#), Melissa E. Birchard, Senior Regulatory Attorney for Power Grid Reform, Acadia Center hosted by the League of Women Voters of MA and Elders Climate Action of MA

LWVMA event summary: This webinar focused on obstacles to achieving critical clean energy goals within the regulatory agencies that control our energy system. While the presentation addressed this issue in detail for the ISO NE region (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT), it also points to the need to transform current systems, based on fossil fuel derived energy, to support widespread use and transmission of clean, renewable energy for a livable future. [Recording here.](#)

Carbon Countdown 2022: Speaking Beyond the Choir, March 26, 2022, with State Senator Mike Barrett, hosted by Sustainable Middlesex and many others. [Recording not yet available.](#)

- Senator Mike Barrett provided a summary of the status of the goals of the 2021 Next Generation Roadmap climate law, and current bills in the House and Senate regarding grid reform, off-shore wind, and work force development to support the transition to clean energy.
- Natasha Juliana of Cool Petaluma summarized an innovative public engagement project to create behavior change at the neighborhood level to achieve GHG emissions reductions. Ms.

Juliana also led a breakout session on this topic. *The CAC might be interested in elements of this program as a possible model for public engagement on CAP initiatives.*

Mobility

From Martha Collins:

EV Test Drive Event

Martha leading EV Test Drive event on Thursday May 12 from 4 to 7 p.m. See project brief in the meeting materials folder.

EV Charging

On Friday, March 13, Martha attended Charles River Chamber of Commerce (CRCC) meeting regarding EVs. A third-party vendor of EV chargers who appeared to be an affiliate reseller of Chargepoint or EVGo EV charging network presented at the meeting. Greg Reibman of CRCC and Martha Collins asked questions regarding pricing model, rate charged to the consumer, and maintenance costs.

Martha introduced Greg to Jesse Way of MAPC who leads regional EV strategy meetings to help facilitate Greg's goal to host a virtual event that would help commercial property owners and/or large employers understand the EV world, especially EV charging stations. Greg is interested in educating businesses on EV charging technology, finding the right vendor, and state/federal incentives. Martha suggested including municipal representatives who may be able to collaborate in this effort.

Mobility Committee

On Thursday, March 17, Marybeth Martello and Martha attended the Mobility Committee meeting. The final version of the Sustainable Mobility Plan is expected before the end of March.

Marybeth and Colette Aufranc have been presenting the Climate Action Plan and the Sustainable Mobility Plan to school audiences.

Marybeth and Colette met with the children's librarians to discuss collaborations with the Library re: climate and mobility education and outreach.

Public Transit Updates

MWRTA Catch Connect fare of \$2.00 will go into effect May 1, 2022.

MBTA fare changes:

- Reduced fare-eligible rail and ferry customers may now use monthly passes.
 - Eligible categories: seniors, people with disabilities, middle and high school students, certain low income riders aged 18-25. Discounts typically 50%
- 5-day Ticket FlexPass for rail pilot will be made permanent
 - Five 1-day passes valid for 24 hours, must be used within 30 days. Targeted at hybrid workers.
- 7-day subway and bus LinkPass for reduced fare-eligible passengers.
- Price of 1-day subway and bus LinkPass reduced to \$11.00 from \$12.75.
- Transfers between bus/bus, bus and subway simplified; express bus routes expanded and simplified.

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives

From MLP Staff:

Wellesley Electric Customers Accelerated Reduction of Emissions (WECARE):

Total Opt Outs: 685 (6.8%) Total Customers: 10,065; WECARE as of March 14: \$610,158 100%: \$116,367

Electric Vehicles Program:

The MLP was awarded an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) grant of \$100,000 to accelerate the electrification of the municipal fleet. The process for funds allocation is in the planning stage and will include money towards first cost premiums for EV purchases and installation of charging infrastructure. The MLP is submitting budget and scope of work for the project to finalize the funding.

ENE hosted an EV Action Committee meeting with the main topic is to plan a spring dedicated event in April or May. The BYOC program is now at 230 enrollments. There are now 520 Wellesley residents receiving the Wellesley Drives Electric e-newsletter. Possible Spring EV Showcase and/or Ride & Drive event is in the planning stages, finalizing the date and location.

Clean Comfort Air Source Heat Pump Program:

276 Resident Consultations

Budget:	Admin Costs:	Rebates paid:	Rebates in process	Balance	Installs in progress
\$125,000	\$27,650	\$39,183 (30)	\$19,317 (11)	\$38,850	11

The Air Source Heat Pump pilot program has been extended through June 2022, and the approved budget is up to \$125,000.

Mass Save ASHP new program: Gas customers in Wellesley are eligible for the rebates and heat loan programs, oil & propane are not eligible. WMLP is working on incorporating this into our current clean comfort program. Heat Pump rebates up to \$15,000; whole home \$10,000 per home; home energy assessment is required and verification form; partially supplementing or displacing old system integrated controls are required.

Appliance Rebate Program:

The MLP staff met with a consultant from the Center for EcoTechnology, Inc. to review their final report on the state of the WMLP Rebate Program. This project has been assigned to a management team to put together the findings of the report and make recommendations that will be presented to the MLB at the April MLB scheduled meeting.

The current Appliance Rebate Program has continued, and as of March 11, 2022, there have been 132 applications totaling \$11,475.

Large Scale Solar, Battery Storage & Other Projects:

Wellesley Library:

Following the successful talks with the Library Board of Trustees, the WMLP staff has been working on a document to request proposals for the installation of a solar array at the Wellesley Free Library. The document was shared with the Facilities Maintenance Department (FMD) to be reviewed by the Director and staff. Their recommendations will be incorporated, and a revised version will be provided to the Library trustees for final approval before making the document public.

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 but will need some structural upgrades to support solar equipment. Weston & Sampson was contacted to provide an estimate on the costs to do the structural upgrades. Weston & Sampson did a structural analysis of this roof in 2020.

Wellesley Sports Center:

After months of delays due to the pandemic, material shortages, and weather, the solar installation at 900 Worcester Street has finally been completed. The system is ready to go and only needs a witness test by the WMLP staff. The staff is waiting for testing results from the installer and does not anticipate any issues in providing a Permission to Interconnect letter to ConEd.

Municipal Way Battery Storage System:

Negotiations are in the final stage of the process, and the only hurdle to overcome is providing proof that the WMLP has ownership of the land where the battery system will be installed. The staff is working with Town Counsel to produce the required documentation and continues to work with the selected vendor on system interconnection requirements, equipment selection, and ISO-NE approvals. The system is expected to be online by spring or early summer of 2023 unless material shortages worsen.

Climate Action Plan Energy Group:

The Town's Climate Action Plan (CAP) has been completed as a product of the work of many individuals, organizations, departments, the Climate Action Committee, and especially the efforts of the Town's Sustainability Director. The MLB voted to adopt the Energy Pathway portion of the CAP as the WMLP's Climate Action Plan. This will allow efforts made by the WMLP to have a direct impact on the Town's CAP.