



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

September 6, 2024

Green Communities

On August 29, Green Communities notified the Town of Wellesley it will receive a \$500,000 Building Decarbonization grant for the electrification of the Warren Building. CAC will work with Stephanie Hawkinson to publicize this grant after the Department of Energy Resources issues their press release.

Climate Leader Communities Application

Marybeth and Janet submitted the Green Communities Climate Leader Communities application on August 10.

Outreach

Marybeth, Mary Gard, Phyllis Theermann, and Quentin Prideaux met with Professor Jay Turner and Kayli Hattley of Wellesley College to discuss potential collaborations. Sustainable Wellesley is following up with regard to student internship opportunities.

Marybeth attended a Wellesley Rotary Club meeting on August 20 to hear Dr. Andrew Wellinger, a Rotary Club officer from Newton, present on the Rotary Club's national message on climate change and its charge to local chapters. Dr. Wellinger praised Wellesley's Climate Action Committee for its work. The Rotary Club invited Marybeth to present to the Wellesley chapter on Tuesday, October 8.

Fred Bunger and Mary Gard will deliver an interactive Home Energy/Heat Pump presentation to COA scheduled on Thursday, September 5, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. at the Tolles Parsons Center.

Marybeth, with excellent support from the Outreach Working Group and Stephanie, is collaborating with HomeWorks Energy on a door-to-door canvassing effort to launch in mid-September.

- Week of Sept. 9: residents receive a letter introducing the program. Program announcements appear via town newsletters, social media, websites, etc.
- Week of Sept. 16: Canvassing pilot begins.
- Mid-Sept. through Mid-Oct.: Outreach WG and HWE evaluate pilot
- Starting in late Oct.: implement improvements for canvassing town-wide

Marybeth was invited to be a panelist at the Environmental Forum hosted by the Colleges of the Fenway Center for Sustainability and the Environment.

Marybeth was invited to be part of a panel proposal to the Southern New England American Planning Association Conference scheduled for November 7-8.

Phyllis Theermann arranged for a sustainability/climate action presentation to the Wellesley Mother's Forum in December.

Mobility

Marybeth and Martha met with Alison Felix and Allie Shephard of MAPC regarding school bus electrification. MAPC is working on a research report outlining the steps to school transportation fleet electrification. Research is primarily focused on municipally-owned fleets.

Marybeth and Martha Collins will meet with David Lussier, Cynthia Mahr, Nikki Ofenloch on September 24 to discuss electric buses and third-party vendors as well as ongoing efforts to encourage sustainable mobility to school: walking, biking, carpooling and increasing bus ridership.

Select Board Update (from Lise Olney)

Here are a couple of items from recent Select Board meetings that might be of interest:

August 20, 2024, Assessors Discussion at Select Board meeting

Chief Assessor Ellen Muller and Board of Assessors Chair Stephen Mahoney joined the Select Board to discuss an article on the Special Town Meeting warrant regarding the adoption of the personal property tax exemption. I mentioned to them that for some time the CAC has been discussing partnering with the Assessors on data sharing to track progress on our climate goals. Staff are following up to see what might be possible.

August 27, 2024, 156 Weston Road/North 40 Discussion at Select Board meeting

See recording of the August 27 Select Board meeting for the full discussion [here](#).

The Select Board discussed a proposal by the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation (WHDC) to create one or two separate parcels for affordable housing at 156 Weston Road (in the east corner of the North 40, directly adjacent to the Bristol at 148 Weston Road). The WHDC is also suggesting that the General Residence zoning on the adjacent parcels be extended to the proposed new parcels. General Residence zoning would allow for the creation of three units on one 15,000 square foot parcel or four units on two 10,000 square foot parcels (two units on each parcel). The WHDC envisions retaining and renovating the current structure at 156 Weston.

Principal reasons for this proposal include:

- To create affordable housing on the property at 156 Weston.
- To make it possible to use CPC funds to create affordable housing at 156 Weston. (There must be a restriction on such units in order to apply CPC funds and a restriction cannot be placed without a separate parcel.)
- To make it possible to negotiate potential partnerships with developers to renovate/build affordable units at 156 Weston. (Developers may be interested in such a partnership as a means of meeting the Town's inclusionary zoning requirement.)

The majority of the Select Board supported having staff move forward with Engineering to create proposed lots and working with Planning to consider a zoning proposal for 2025 Annual Town Meeting.

Reminder that in June, the Select Board approved a plan for the conversion of the antique (1775) single family home at 140 Weston Road to be converted to two, fully electric, affordable units. The project is part of the development agreement for the construction of the Bristol. At the June meeting, the developer (NewMeadow) expressed willingness to consider partnering with the CAC to use the project to demonstrate energy efficiency retrofit and electrification, as well as the conversion of a single-family home into two units.

Gas Transition (from Lise Olney)

August 13, 2024, Lawsuit against National Grid for failure to fix gas leaks

The Conservation Law Foundation has notified National Grid of its intention to file a lawsuit regarding the company's failure to fix gas leaks in Boston and Chelsea that contribute to explosions and fires, as well as to damage and death of public shade trees. CLF is joined in the intended suit by GreenRoots, Boston Parks Advocates, Mothers Out Front, and affected residents. The Notice Letter to National Grid and a report on the suit from *CommonWealth Beacon* are in the Meeting Materials folder for Project Updates.

Legislative update

As members of the CAC are aware, the major climate bill (S.2838/H.4884) did not get out of the House and Senate conference committee for a final vote in time for the end of the formal session on July 31. This was a disappointing result for the many organizations and advocates who were hoping for significant progress on climate in this session and it is still possible that some action may be taken this fall. (Reminder that the House and Senate passed two very different climate bills, with the Senate bill calling for shrinking the gas system and lowering costs to ratepayers, and a House bill focusing on siting and permitting reform also supported by the Healey Administration.)

This week, MAPC provided a helpful webinar on some of the results of the legislative session. Here are some climate-related highlights:

August 27, 2024 MAPC webinar: "Formal Session Wrap Up: Priorities Passed and Next Steps"

Recording [here](#).

The Legislature passed the Affordable Housing Bond Bill which featured a \$2 billion bond authorization for improvements to state affordable housing, including \$150M for decarbonization improvements in public housing, and \$275 million for sustainable and green housing initiatives. Funding for incentives under Chapter 40R was doubled. (These incentives are intended to promote dense housing near public transportation.)

Question from attendee: What can be done to urge the conference committee to come to a conclusion on the climate bill?

Answer from Lizzi Weyant (MAPC Deputy Executive Director of Public Affairs & Advocacy, who served on the Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting appointed by the Governor): The commission's final recommendations supported many of the provisions in the legislation. A lot of agreement on these provisions and the Legislature appears close to getting across the finish line on siting and streamlining the municipal approval process for siting clean energy infrastructure. Encouraged municipalities to express support.

Norman Abbott: Now is the time to make municipal voices heard on the importance of this bill in order to meet our 2030 and 2050 climate goals.

Question on the provisions relating to the future of gas.

Answer from Leah Robins, MAPC Government Affairs Director: MAPC is watching these provisions closely, noting that MAPC co-coordinates the Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative. Since the gas-related provisions passed in one of the branches [the Senate], they are still in the mix. But it will take conversations with legislators in order for them to move forward.

Lizzi Weyant noted that MAPC policies and legislative priorities are developed by the MAPC Legislative Committee and MAPC Executive Committees, based in part on input and feedback from member municipalities and they invite members to contact them.

Waste

Waste Coordinator Position

Amber Keller, Wellesley's new Waste Coordinator started work last week. Marybeth and Janet met with Amber and Dave Cohen to provide background on waste reduction efforts and help develop a work plan for Amber.

Amanda Crowley has also been hired for the Waste Coordinator position. She will start next week and will collaborate with Amber Keller.

From Sue Morris:

Wellesley Green Schools is having kick off meeting on September 19th. The other WGS meetings will be Nov 14th, Jan 16th, March 13th and May 15th. Currently there are reps at Wellesley Public Schools and also at Dana Hall. The Wellesley Public Schools/Whitsons food service director who was new last year, Katrina Bressari, left her job at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. We are in the process of scheduling a meeting with her replacement at Whitson, Joe Grillo. Matt Delaney, the former WPS/Whitsons food service director was promoted to Sustainability Director at Whitsons which is a very positive development. We hope to restart the Rescuing Leftover Cuisine program with Whitsons that was happening last year at several schools. We are also planning to have a 3R Working Group meeting in the next month.

Black Earth Curbside Compost Pilot

80-90 residences have signed up to participate in the Black Earth Curbside Compost Pilot.

Buildings

Building Working Group

Over the last two months, the Building Working Group (BWG) discussed priorities for the new fiscal year. High on the list is moving forward with efforts to add sustainability goals into the zoning and permitting process and updates to the Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines. Janet and Marybeth identified areas in the Zoning Board of Appeals Site Plan Review application where information could be gathered on the applicant's intentions to implement green building practices. The BWG reviewed these suggestions at its September 3 meeting. The next step is to see if and how peer communities like Lexington and Concord have incorporated sustainability goals into their zoning and permitting processes.

Building Energy Improvement Houses of Worship and Non-profits.

The Village Church seems to be moving forward with a plan to replace their fossil fuel heating system with a ground source heat pump system.

Janet researched potential federal and other incentives for air source heat pumps for Ed Jarros of Temple Beth Elohim.

Energy Coach Presentation to Council on Aging

See above under outreach.

Department of Energy Resources Large Building Energy Reporting

DOER released draft regulations for the statewide Large Building Energy Reporting program. This program will collect energy use data on structures totaling over 20,000 square feet on a parcel. DOER seeks public comment on the draft regulation between the August 26 and September 25 2024. DOER will host a [virtual public hearing on September 25, 2024, from 1pm to 3pm](#) for those who would like to verbally share their input on the draft. Written comments should be submitted as attached pdf files to DOER.BER@mass.gov, with the words *BER Public Comment* in the subject line.

Embodied Carbon Cohort

Janet and Mary Gard attended the August 21 MA Municipal Cohort on Embodied Carbon organized by Rocky Mountain Institute. This cohort is a regional effort to coordinate on work to include embodied carbon in local and state policy. The cohort should be helpful as we work to update the Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines to consider embodied carbon in buildings.

MA/RI Building Performance Standards Cohort

Janet and Mary Gard attended the August 22 MA/RI Municipal Cohort on Building Performance Standards organized by NEEP. This cohort is a regional effort to help municipalities consider and adopt building performance standards and will continue to meet monthly over the coming year.

Energy Coach Program:

The Energy Coach program continues to receive 2-3 new residential clients per week. Intakes to date are listed below with about 10% completed.

- 97 for weatherization and/or heat pumps
- 14 for electric vehicles
- 24 for solar PV

From Mary Gard:

- On July 31, Mary joined Marybeth and Phyllis Theermann (Sustainable Wellesley) to meet with Professor Turner of Wellesley College about the potential to develop a collaboration with a Wellesley student organization. Details TBD.
- On August 8 and September 5, Mary attended the Gas Transition Allies meetings to reassess and formulate a plan to address the fact that the previous state legislative session did not pass a climate bill. MAPC had a similar but less climate focused session on August 27.
- On August 21, Mary attended an Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee hearing.

Wellesley MLP Sustainability Initiatives

From the Directors Update (full document in the Meeting Materials folder):

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:

The two FLO Level III EV DC fast charging stations at 4 Municipal Way have continued to be a popular addition in the community. As of August 22, there have been 225 charging sessions for the month. That is a 50% increase over the month of July. There were 121 off peak charging sessions, 77 mid-peak charging sessions and 27 on-peak charging sessions. Since the two stations were brought online in June, the total usage has been 15,529.419 kWh with a total revenue of \$6,052.95.