



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL • 525 WASHINGTON STREET • WELLESLEY, MA 02482-5992

Sustainability Director: Marybeth Martello

ClimateAction@wellesleyma.gov

Sustainability Analyst: Janet Mosley

jmosley@wellesleyma.gov

Susan Morris, Chair

Ellen Korpi, Vice Chair

Sharon Clarke

Martha Collins

Mary Gard

Lise Olney

Madison Riley

Climate Action Committee Project Updates

November 1, 2024

Green Communities

Special Town Meeting approved funding for the Warren Building renovation. Marybeth and Janet are working to finalize the grant contract documents with DOER. for \$500,000.

Janet has been working on the Green Communities Annual Report which is nearing completion and will be submitted before the November 15 deadline.

Outreach

- The canvassing program with HomeWorks Energy is off to a great start. HomeWorks Energy has knocked on upwards of 400 doors (targeting National Grid gas customers) with roughly 10% of residents approached signing up for home energy assessments. HomeWorks continues to schedule a steady stream of home energy assessments through tabling at the Recycling and Disposal Facility. Marybeth meets weekly with HomeWorks Energy to track progress on canvassing and plan tabling and communication to support this effort. Marybeth also fields calls from residents about the canvassing program. Plans are underway to follow up with HEA residents to inform them of energy coaching and other resources.
- Marybeth created CAC webpages for the canvassing program, including a map page showing the current canvassing locations.
- Marybeth and Janet completed and submitted the CAC's Annual Report
- Marybeth presented to an engaged Rotary Club audience on October 8. Ellen Korpi, Fred Bunker, and Phyllis Theermann attended.
- On October 16, Marybeth served on a panel at Emmanuel College about "Keeping Our Futures Bright" for the Colleges of the Fenway's Environmental Forum.
- Marybeth spoke with a Village Church member and provided the Village Church with a list of possible funding and loan sources that could help defray the cost of a geothermal system planned for the church campus.
- Marybeth worked with the Finance Department to create a questionnaire to accompany departmental budget requests and support ZEV Policy implementation.

- Marybeth met with David Wood and Chris Chan of the Municipal Light Plant to discuss collaboration and topics of mutual interest.
- Marybeth met with Stephanie Hawkinson and Andrea Arango to discuss how to strengthen the CAC's social media presence.
- Marybeth and Sue attended the Chamber of Commerce's Environmental Working Group meeting on October 17.
- Marybeth shared an Olin College project opportunity with department heads. Marybeth and Dave Cohen met with Olin College to discuss specific project ideas. A follow-up meeting is planned for November 1.

Mobility

Mobility Committee

Mobility Committee did not meet in October, but a public meeting was held on October 30 on Wellesley's Safe Routes Plan. The Mobility Committee hired consultants Kittleson & Associates to identify low-stress routes and exploring opportunities to enhance the Town's walking and biking infrastructure. This project will develop a network of safe, low-stress walking and biking routes, address gaps, and highlight easy opportunities for improvement.

Marybeth met with Energy New England (ENE) to discuss an EV Alley ENE is planning for the January MMA conference. The objective of EV Alley is to encourage other municipalities to transition their fleets to electric vehicles. Marybeth put ENE in touch with DPW and Police. DPW indicated interest in showcasing DPW vehicles at this event.

Gas Transition (from Lise Olney)

Legislative update: On Thursday, October 24, the Senate passed S. 2967, *An Act promoting a clean energy grid, advancing equity and protecting ratepayers*: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/S2967> Sierra Club State Political Director Jess Nahigian provided this [very helpful analysis](#) of what was included in the final bill and what was struck. The House is expected to vote this week.

Networked Geothermal explainer: Eversource has created this [explainer for the Framingham networked geothermal pilot project](#), which is almost complete and is already in operation.

Upcoming event: "Powering Newton's Future: Community Networked Geothermal"
Wednesday, November 13, 20 from 7-8:30pm. Countryside Elementary School (191 Dedham Street, Newton Highlands). [Register here](#)

As part of Massachusetts Clean Energy Week, in partnership with State Renewable Energy, Green Newton presents a comprehensive look at community networked geothermal energy systems. This innovative technology has the potential to revolutionize how we heat and cool our homes while significantly reducing our carbon footprint.

What You'll Learn

- The basics of community networked geothermal systems
- Green Newton's proposed implementation plan for Newton
- Technical insights from industry experts
- Policy support and available incentives
- Real-world experiences from communities already benefiting from geothermal energy

Event Schedule

1. Introduction to Green Newton and community geothermal

2. Expert panel introductions
3. Green Newton's geothermal plan for Newton
4. Panelist perspectives
5. Audience Q&A
6. Closing remarks and next steps
7. Networking post-event

Waste

Skip the Stuff Initiative

- Skip the Stuff Working Group continues to meet weekly
- Lisa and Philippa prepared a presentation to the CAC, Board of Health, Board of Public Works, and Natural Resources Commission
- Proposed warrant article and motion language is under review
- Ellen Korpi, Marybeth, and Dave Cohen are working closely with Lisa and Philippa to move this article through Town processes.

Waste Reduction in Schools

Amber Keller and Amanda Crowley are working with Wellesley Public School administration to review and strategize school recycling and composting.

Buildings

Building Working Group

The Building Working Group (BWG) meetings have focused on ways to incorporate sustainability goals into the zoning and permitting process, updates to the Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines, and potential advocacy in the areas of load management devices to avoid electrical service upgrades, pathways to improving data on residential and commercial heating sources, and energy use disclosure at time of sale.

Launch of Strategic Housing Plan Survey and Community Forums

The Town of Wellesley is working to develop a [Housing Strategic Plan](#). As part of this initiative, a [town-wide housing survey](#) has been launched to gather valuable input from residents and community members. The survey will help Town Staff and consultants better understand current housing needs, what's working well, and where improvements can be made. The Town is also hosting two forums to gather feedback for the Strategic Housing Plan: November 14 in person, and November 17 via Zoom. The content and format is the same for both forums and includes small group discussions led by volunteer facilitators from the [Wellesley Civil Discourse Initiative](#). Prior registration is required: [Registration Form for Nov. 14 and Nov. 17 Community Forums for Wellesley's Strategic Housing Plan](#)

Building Electrification Accelerator – Retrofits Working Group

Abode staff presented on upcoming building electrification initiatives, including:

- Highlights of the Mass Save Three-year Plan update
- Energy Saver Home Loan Program
- Decarbonization Pathways Pilot programs
- The Heat Pump Accelerator (a \$450 Million EPA grant won by a coalition of 4 New England states to accelerate heat pump adoption)

Embodied Carbon Cohort

The next MA Municipal Cohort on Embodied Carbon organized by Rocky Mountain Institute will be November 6

MA/RI Building Performance Standards Cohort

Janet attended the October 28 meeting which focused on staff requirements for establishing and carrying out a local large building energy reporting requirement.

From Mary Gard:

Energy Coach Program:

- 5 Coaches, 109 Clients
- Assistant Director of MLP, Chris Chan, is filling in as Program Manager while we wait for a new hire
- New Outreach through HomeWorks Energy
- Transitioning to Microsoft Teams/Outlook platform

EEAC's Proposed Changes to Mass Save Rebates for 2025 to 2027

Note that changes still must be approved by DPU. Listed below are the market-rate incentives:

Air-Source Heat Pump, Partial-Home Rebate:

- Tier 1—Replacing central AC: Changing from \$1,250/ton to \$250/ton
- Tier 1—Replacing heat pump or previously unconditioned space: Changing from \$0 to \$250/ton
- Tier 2—Other: Remains at \$1,250/ton, but with a \$500 bonus for weatherization and a \$500 bonus if the heat pump is sized to meet the full home heating load (does not require disconnecting existing heating system)
- Tier 3—Air-Source Heat Pump, Whole-Home Rebate changing from \$10,000/home to:
 - 2025: \$3,000/ton, capped at \$10,000
 - 2026: \$2,700/ton, capped at \$9,000
 - 2027: \$2,500/ton, capped at \$8,000

Ground-Source Heat Pump, Whole-Home Rebate changing from \$15,000/home to:

- 2025: \$15,000/home (no change)
- 2026: \$13,500/home
- 2027: \$12,000/home

HEAT Loan (0% interest):

- Cap reduced from \$50,000 (if heat pumps are installed) to \$25,000
- Term changing from 7 years to 3 - 7 years (depending on income)

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives

- Chris Chan will be handling responsibilities of the Sustainability Program Coordinator until the position is filled.
- WMLP-Citizens Energy battery storage system ribbon cutting is scheduled for Thursday, November 7 at 11am. CAC members are welcome to attend.