



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Susan Morris, Chair

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

March 7, 2025

Green Communities

On February 19, Marybeth attended a gathering of northeast Green Communities in Cambridge to learn about upcoming state and federal funding opportunities.

Outreach

- HomeWorks Energy (HWE) continues to schedule a steady stream of home energy assessments through door-to-door canvassing and tabling at the Recycling and Disposal Facility.
 - Roughly 8.5% of residents contacted via door-to-door canvassing sign up for home energy assessments. Over 200 home energy audits have been performed – about half scheduled through canvassing and half scheduled via the RDF tabling.
 - A HomeWorks/Town of Wellesley Climate Action postcard will soon go to all residents.
- After an extensive publicity campaign, the “**What YOU can do to Save Money and the Climate**” program on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at the Wellesley Free Library attracted 100 registrations and at least 75 attendees.
 - Panelists: Chris Chan, Tess Ruderman, Jamie Manzolini, Brandon Schmitt, Sheila Page
 - Publicity: Susan Zelenko
 - Planning and Execution: Lisa Gieger, Martha Collins, Phyllis Theermann, Janet Mosley, Chris Chan, Sue Morris, Mary Gard, Fred Bunger
 - 100 registrations
 - At least 75 participants (may have missed a few additional latecomers) with lots of energy, interest, and community spirit – even with competing events around town
 - Lots of new faces!
 - 10 home energy assessment sign-ups with HomeWorks Energy. HomeWorks usually averages 1 sign-up per hour at events like this
 - Tabling by Complete Streets, CAC, NRC, Sustainable Wellesley, and Wellesley Green Schools (loved seeing the interest in WGS during Q&A)
 - Tabling by <https://www.yesplasticfree.com/> - a new link to the Wellesley-resident owners

- A lead to what will likely be the CAC's first neighborhood pilot – Denton Road (Herb Nolan already followed up)
- Visit from new climate action board member from Dover
- Michael Tauer and Kenny Largess made the effort to attend after their Republican meet-the-candidates night
- Lots of wonderful conversations and new connections
- Marybeth met with David Wood, Chris Chan, and Tess Ruderman of the Municipal Light Plant on February 18 to discuss collaboration and topics of mutual interest.
- Marybeth met on Feb. 20 with Herb Nolan and on March 3 with Herb and Brandon Schmitt to discuss developing the Denton Road neighborhood pilot for climate action outreach. We are discussing an April block party with tree planting as a first step to making connections and building community.
- Marybeth delivered a presentation and served on a panel in a Wellesley College class on February 25.
- On February 26 Marybeth and Janet met with DPW staff to provide outreach ideas for a DPW water conservation project.
- On March 4 Marybeth and Janet meet with Babson College's Sustainability Director.

Mobility

With the support of DPW, MLP, and Finance departments, Janet submitted the pre-registration application to receive IRS Direct Pay benefits for seven municipal fleet vehicles.

Marybeth and Janet explored applying for a Department of Energy Resources grant for on-street EV charging. In consulting with Town staff, Marybeth, and Janet determined the grant opportunity was not the right fit for Wellesley.

Sheila Page circulated a Complete Streets flyer inviting residents to participate in a survey and provide input on priorities. A public forum is scheduled for March 24, 2025, 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall. (See flyer in meeting materials folder).

From Martha Collins:

- Attended Regional EV Strategy meeting.
 - Forwarded information on MassDEP funding opportunity to David Cohen and Cindy Mahr "for private, public, and non-profit entities to replace eligible diesel vehicles with zero emission technologies through the federal Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) program. Deadline April 1, 2025.
- Met with Cindy Mahr, Sharon Gray, Sharon Clarke, Sheila Page, Sue Morris, Stephanie Hawkinson, and Marybeth Martello on February 4 with objective of increasing school transportation.
 - Sent a working draft of promotional content and a revision of the school transportation letter to Sharon Gray and Cindy Mahr on February 24.
- Identified EV chargers that were listed in PlugShare but not GoogleMaps for Wellesley.
 - Shared list of these EV chargers and process for adding to GoogleMaps
 - Requested that the CAC "Get Around Sustainably" website page link to PlugShare map, Google Maps in long term (the "Find EV chargers here" link currently goes to Wellesley Drives Electric link which does not include a map of available EV chargers)

- Forwarded Statewide E-Bike Participant Engagement and Support RFP Release to Sheila Page with idea we might apply for discounted e-bike purchase program for Barton Road residents
 - Sheila stated she will investigate

Buildings

On January 23 the Board of Public Works sent a memo to the Permanent Building Committee requesting the PBC explore the possibility of adding solar to the roof of the planned RDF building. Marybeth organized a meeting to discuss solar on the new RDF building. That meeting took place on January 31 and included Joe McDonough, Steve Gagosian, David Wood, Chris Chan, Dave Cohen, Jamie Manzolini, and Marybeth.

Click this [link](#) to view Chris Chan's presentation to the Municipal Light Board on lessons learned re: rooftop solar.

Wellesley Public Schools AC Supplemental Study

Marybeth and Sue had several conversations with stakeholders associated with Annual Town Meeting Article 18. Marybeth drafted a memo on WPS air conditioning and received helpful feedback from CAC members.

From Mary Gard:

Buildings Working Group - Project Updates 2/7/25

Massachusetts Large Building Energy Reporting (LBER) Program

Janet sent an email to large building owners/managers about resources available to comply with the new [Large Building Energy Reporting \(LBER\) program](#).

The MA/RI Building Performance Standards Cohort

Janet attended the cohort meeting on February 27. The meeting focused on how the cohort's work integrates with the new state Large Building Energy Reporting law. Over the next few months the organizer will work on drafting Building Performance Standard policy language that would use the data collected from the state program.

Waste Reduction

Skip the Stuff

Marybeth and Gail Sullivan, with key support from Lisa Gieger, Philippa Biggers, and Town Counsel finalized the Skip-the-Stuff (STS) bylaw and Advisory report language.

The STS Working Group met two or three times to discuss STS Phase II.

Olin College Project

Dave Cohen, Jamie Manzolini, Marybeth, and Janet continued a project with an Olin College class. The goal of this project is to recommend an optimal system for collecting and managing waste for the Town of Wellesley based on an evaluation of the town's current methods for waste management with consideration of alternative models and potential improvements.

From Amber Keller, Waste Reduction Coordinator:

Food Service Management Company RFP

- Wellesley's contract with Whitsons Culinary Group is up at the end of this school year. Cindy Mahr, Wellesley's Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations prepared the RFP to go out to bid for a Food Service Management Company, and Amber Keller and Amanda Crowley, Town Waste Reduction Coordinators, met with Cindy Mahr to collaborate on a sustainability commitment in the RFP. Cindy added all of the discussed sustainability commitments to the RFP, and the RFP was recently approved by DESE.
- The RFP is currently out for bid and can be accessed [here](#). Sustainability commitments can be found on pages 22, 23, and 51.
- Amber will be serving on the RFP Review Committee. Proposals are due March 13, 2025 and the School Committee will approve the award of the RFP April 3, 2025.

Visit to Needham School District to explore their use of stainless steel trays and Re:Dish

- All Needham school cafeterias recently made the switch from compostable trays to stainless steel trays using Re:Dish as a third-party washing service. Amber, Amanda, and Cindy Mahr visited Needham High School and Eliot Elementary School in the Needham School District Feb. 14 to explore their use of the trays and gain a better understanding of the process using a third-party washing service.
- Needham food service staff report that using stainless steel trays has resulted in a reduction in cafeteria trash from 24 barrels/day to 3 full barrels/day. In addition to using reusable trays, all Needham schools collect food waste for anaerobic digestion, and the upper grades also have recycling in the cafeteria.
- Amber, Amanda, and Cindy Mahr will be attending a virtual information session April 1, 2025 for the MassDEP Reduce, Reuse, Repair Microgrant that could fund up to \$10,000 of reusable trays for the district.

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives

From Chris Chan:

- MLP Director David Wood appointed the following Town departmental staff (or their designees) to the Energy Transition and Climate Resilience working group:
 - Chris Chan, MLP
 - David Cohen, DPW
 - Meghan Jop, Select Board Office
 - Marybeth Martello, Climate Action
- At its discretion, the working group can appoint other Town staff.
- New 440-kW commercial solar project at Park 9 (Wellesley Gateway South-SunLife) commenced operation on February 5. Under a PPA with Sunwealth, the WMLP is purchasing the solar power, which is expected to be approximately 700,000 kWh in the first year of operation.