



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

April 1, 2025

Green Communities

Janet Mosley worked with Wellesley's Design and Construction Manager Stephen Gagosian to complete a quarterly update on the Warren Building Decarbonization Project to share with Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources.

Outreach

- HomeWorks Energy (HWE) continues to schedule a steady stream of home energy assessments through door-to-door canvassing. HomeWorks temporarily paused home energy assessment sign-ups at the Recycling and Disposal Facility because the last several tabling sessions yielded just one or zero scheduled assessments. HomeWorks will resume RDF tabling when the weather improves. Residents should receive HomeWorks postcards any day. Below are recent stats:
 - Approximately 9.1% of residents contacted via door-to-door canvassing sign up for home energy assessments. This is almost twice the conversion rate that HomeWorks sees in other communities.
 - 460 home energy assessments have been scheduled to date (340 through canvassing and 120 at the RDF).
- Marybeth met with David Wood, Chris Chan, and Tess Ruderman of the Municipal Light Plant on March 18 to discuss collaboration and topics of mutual interest.
- March 25 Marybeth was part of a panel at Emmanuel College – associated with the Colleges of the Fenway's Environmental Forum.
- Marybeth met on separate occasions with a Wellesley College student, an Wellesley High School (WHS) Evolutions group interested in plastics reduction, and a WHS Evolutions group interested in electric scooters.
- March 27 – About 305 people registered for the Plastic People movie screening – an event led by Sustainable Wellesley and Green Newton – CAC co-sponsored.
 - Excellent crowd
 - Expert speakers
 - Lively tabling session before and after the movie

- Marybeth heard feedback on how well this event was publicized
- March 27 - Marybeth presented on "Skip the Stuff" 2025 Annual Town Meeting Article 35 at the League of Women Voters Town Meeting Night.

Mobility

From Martha Collins:

- Sent Statewide E-Bike Participant Support RFP extension to Sheila Page
- Met with Marybeth Martello and Sue Morris regarding possible actions to reduce GHG emissions from transportation, prioritization within CAC
- Requested follow-up with Sharon Gray regarding communications on school transportation to parents. Received email on communications plans
- Shared information across to city of Salem sustainability director on hosting an EV event
- Participated in a zoom with WHS Evolutions students and followed up with email information on electric vehicles, total cost of ownership savings, past EV events in Wellesley
- Forwarded Grade 8 Civics project participant info on mobility to Sheila Page, Colette Aufranc

Second Assessment of the State's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council

The [Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council \(EVICC\)](#), which is charged with coordinating the Commonwealth's EV charging deployment strategy, is currently developing its Second Assessment to the Legislature. The Second Assessment will provide an evaluation of the Commonwealth's EV charging network and EV charging deployment strategies, as well as a comprehensive roadmap for how Massachusetts plans to support the deployment of the necessary EV chargers to meet its emissions reduction requirements and transportation goals.

To inform its development of its Second Assessment, EVICC will hold four public hearings across the Commonwealth, two of which will be held in a hybrid format:

- March 27, 2025 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm - New Bedford Free Public Library, 613 Pleasant St, New Bedford, MA 02740
- March 31, 2025 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm - Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center, 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester, MA 01607
- April 3, 2025 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm - Holyoke Community College, Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development, Rooms KC301 and KC 303, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040, or [virtual option](#)
- April 8, 2025 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm - Massachusetts Department of Transportation, 10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor, MassDOT Board Room, Boston, MA 02116, or [virtual option](#)

Information will be presented on (a) existing state programs and other state efforts related to EVs and EV charging, (b) the initial results of the Commonwealth's EV charging needs in 2030 and 2035, and (c) the sections and topics planned to be included in the Second EVICC Assessment. There will be opportunities for both guided discussion and general public input.

From Marybeth

Marybeth met with Kara Holbrook of Mobility House to discuss a MassCEC EV-to-Grid demonstration project. Marybeth shared info from this meeting with DPW, MLP, and Sheila Page and organized a meeting for April 7 so that Town departments can further explore this opportunity.

Marybeth welcomed intern and Wellesley College student, Moe Kaung, to the Climate Action Department. Moe's first project is updating Google Maps to accurately reflect the public chargers available in Wellesley.

Buildings

Energy Code Appeals to the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (This info also appears as a separate file in the Shared Folder.)

At its April 1st meeting, the CAC will discuss the possibility of signing in support of a letter proposing improvements to state building energy code implementation. This letter is addressed from the Massachusetts Federation of Building Officials (MFBO) to:

- Commissioner Mahony of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
- Commissioner Wilkinson of the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Licensure

The letter, found here: <https://form.jotform.com/250633678168163> asks the Commissioners to:

- Re-establish the Board of Building Regulations and Standards Energy Advisory Committee
- Provide Targeted Training for Building Officials

The above sign-on form will likely be made public. By filling out the form, the CAC acknowledges that its input and support may be shared with the public, including Commissioners Mahony, Wilkinson, and potentially State Representatives.

Michael Grant, Wellesley's Building Inspector, is a member of MFBO. Michael let us know about the following incident regarding energy code implementation.

A builder is building three new homes on one street in Wellesley. The builder/homeowner wanted to follow the all-electric pathway but wanted a gas fireplace. As Building Commissioner, Michael told the builder that he could not follow the all-electric pathway if the home includes a gas fireplace. The builder chose to appeal the decision and asked for a variance for that new house. Over the course of the hearing, the Building Code Appeals Board learned that the builder wanted to put gas fireplaces in the other two new homes as well. The Appeals Board granted the builder a variance to follow the all-electric pathway while including the gas fireplace without asking the builder to demonstrate a need for the variance from some hardship. The Appeals Board also voted to give the builder a variance for all three homes he was building in Wellesley without the builder asking for that or knowing the addresses for the other two buildings.

This example is discouraging for both the advocates (like Wellesley Climate Action) who worked to get the Specialized Code passed in their communities as well as for the building inspectors whose work is undermined if BBRs and its Appeals Board can simply grant variances to the code without justification.

Building Working Group

The Building Working Group (BWG) discussed areas such as commercial buildings and affordable housing where the committee could increase its engagement. In particular, the group looked at the potential for a funding opportunity for decarbonization of Wellesley Housing Authority (WHA) properties. BWG hopes to engage with WHA sometime next month. The group also discussed near- and medium-term efforts to engage residents in building energy efficiency and electrification.

Wellesley Public Schools AC Supplemental Study

Janet worked on a basic analysis of how adding a whole-school VRF air conditioning system for each of the four schools would impact municipal and town-wide greenhouse gas emissions. With whole building VRF AC in 2030 – total municipal electricity use (assuming no other changes) increases an estimated 3.9%. This counters our Green Communities commitment to decrease energy use by 20% below 2015 levels. This project would also affect progress regarding GHG goals, the Climate Action Plan, and the Decarbonization Roadmap.

Estimates for Whole School VRF (AC only)	Bates Elem.	Fiske Elem.	Schofield Elem.	Middle School
	52,750 SF	67,864 SF	38,225 SF	228,700 SF
Annual Electricity Usage (kWh)	59,735	76,851	43,287	258,950

- The difference between projected CO2e emissions from individual schools with no AC in 2030 versus a whole building VRF AC System in 2030 ranges from 12% to 29%, depending on the school.
- The difference between projected CO2e emissions from total municipal electricity use with no AC in 2030 versus a whole building VRF AC System in 2030 is ~0.2%.
- The difference between projected CO2e emissions from total energy use with no AC in 2030 versus a whole building VRF AC System in 2030 is ~0.01%.

Massachusetts Large Building Energy Reporting (LBER) Program

Janet attended another webinar for large building owners/managers about resources available to comply with the new [Large Building Energy Reporting \(LBER\) program](#). Janet fielded several emails from building managers in Wellesley to help them with program compliance.

Waste Reduction

Skip the Stuff

Marybeth attended the Moderator's meeting on March 20 and presented the STS article at the League of Women Voters Town Meeting night on March 27.

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. This project will launch a survey on residential waste management on March 31.

Wellesley Green Schools (*from Sue Morris*)

At the March Wellesley Green Schools meeting we discussed the following:

- Plastic Water Bottle Elimination
- All WPS PTOs have pledged to eliminate single-use plastic water bottles at events. Need to contact sports teams next.

- [Plastic People Invite](#) Thursday, March 27, 2025 Newman Elementary School Auditorium 1155 Central Avenue in Needham
- Postcards to [Healey/Peisch](#) asking them to pass bills to limit plastics

Transportation

- [Complete Streets](#) survey due 3/28, Public input 3/24 7pm @ Great Hall

-Rules of the Ride event will be held on June 8th 10:00am-12:00pm

[*Air Conditioning SC Update 3/11:*](#)

- Going to Town Meeting in April
- Sustainability will be considered & plan to have language incorporated
- Using same company (BLW) to do supplemental study as the one from 2020
- WMS Community Service Day - we are looking for ideas for community service projects for WHS students.
- Waste Reduction Coordinator [slides from meeting](#): Amber & Amanda updated everyone about the food service RFP which includes sustainability as well as other things.
- SMART Event Guide - new and improved version is available on SW website.
- WMS House Unplugged Recap - very successful WMS event once again.

WGS Green Tip of the Month:

This month there was a town-wide meeting offering residents ways to save money and the climate! Included were tips on weatherization, heat pump and solar installation, landscaping, sustainable transportation and waste reduction. Did you know that many of the tips are the same ones that WMS 8th Graders are incorporating into their House Un-Plugged science projects! If you know an 8th grader; ask them what they have learned!! If you weren't able to make the meeting and are curious about ways you can save money and the climate, click [here!](#)

-WHS Seminar Day recap: Phyllis Theermann and Mary Gard led a seminar that detailed 4 climate bills and had students write postcards to house/senate. The students wrote 90 postcards to house & senate.

- 36- Climate Change Superfund (Make Polluters Pay) SD.1674 HD.3369
- 43- Stop Gas System Expansion SD.2088 HD.342
- 36- Reduce Styrofoam and Other Trash SD.2373 HD. 2792 (Styrofoam)
- 4 - HD 1924 - air pollution

-Elementary Schools Watershed/[Leak Detection](#) presentation by Lisa Moore - contact Lisa for more information.

-WWW Parade - WGS/SW is looking for volunteers to walk in the parade and oversee waste stations. Carl Nelson is coordinating the events again this year.

-[Skip the Stuff](#) - Article 18 will be going to town meeting in April to be voted on. We encourage everyone reach out to your Town Meeting rep in support of STS.

Gas Transition

From Lise Olney:

Recording of the February 5th Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/ZGe1Mqa0A3UO9ZajuLz3zwz0I6mFrcUgmRFA66GXaSHeKk1lbBJSlaaCrgPfL2.8PdZV7ktsfskAuRU>

- At about 13 minutes: Garrett Casey gave an overview of the key gas-related bills that Sen. Creem is sponsoring

- [SD1924/HD3405](#): An Act relative to a Tactical Transition to Affordable, Clean Thermal Energy
 - [SD1476](#): An Act relative to municipal voices in gas utility work
- At 30 minutes: Leah Robins of MAPC talks about what municipalities can do to advocate for these bills NOW
- At about 32 minutes: Peter Barrer described the work they've been doing in Newton, submitting letters to the DPU, working with City Councilors to get permission from the DPU to electrify instead of approving a pipe replacement in a neighborhood, and organizing neighbors.

Re. ensuring accurate understanding of recent gas price spikes which are being blamed on Mass Save (and have resulted in the DPU cutting \$500M from the Mass Save budget):

- Attached is the sign-on letter that Gas Transition Allies and some of its coalition members sent to the Governor regarding gas price spikes
- Link to a Channel 25 News report on the letter:
<https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/mass-environmental-group-seek-swifter-action-high-energy-bills/GT7F35JKOZDZ7EMIZRAXWBXRAA/>
- Link to Herald report on the letter (behind pay wall):
<https://www.bostonherald.com/2025/03/19/massachusetts-environmentalists-look-for-gas-pipeline-reform-to-confront-high-utility-rates/>

Globe coverage of Mayor Wu's state of the state address in which she unveiled a 'Boston Energy Saver Program' to install 5k heat pumps and weatherize 10k homes in neighborhoods around the city that often get overlooked by Mass Save. The Mayor is framing electrification and energy efficiency as a way to help residents save money while federal incentives are being withdrawn.

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives

From Chris Chan:

- Will partner with Climate Action for tabling at the MLP during WWW, Sat May 17
- Energy Transition and Climate Resilience working group is drafting its mission statement and goals