



## CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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

Sustainability Director: Marybeth Martello

[ClimateAction@wellesleyma.gov](mailto:ClimateAction@wellesleyma.gov)

Sustainability Analyst: Janet Mosley

[jmosley@wellesleyma.gov](mailto:jmosley@wellesleyma.gov)

Susan Morris, Chair

Scott Bender

Sharon Clarke

Martha Collins

Mary Gard

Kenneth C. Largess III

Lise Olney

### Climate Action Committee Project Updates

July 17, 2025

#### Green Communities

Through conversations with Municipal Light Plant and Select Board staff, Marybeth Martello and Janet Mosley continue to work toward a Climate Leader Community grant for solar installations on the Hardy and Hunnewell Schools. Janet met with Wellesley's Green Communities coordinator Dillan Patel on June 5 to discuss application requirements.

#### Outreach

- HomeWorks Energy (HWE) continues to schedule home energy assessments through door-to-door canvassing and tabling at the Recycling and Disposal Facility (RDF). HomeWorks will add a button to their Wellesley webpage inviting residents to opt into receiving Town information re: home electrification, incentives, and Town resources, such as Energy Coaching to support residents with home decarbonization. HomeWorks will also send emails to current and future home energy assessment clients inviting them to opt into receiving Town communications re: home decarbonization. Marybeth will meet with HomeWorks on July 14 to discuss details.
- Marybeth, Mary Gard, and Madison Riley tabled at the Municipal Light Plant's (MLP's) Wellesley Wonderful Weekend event.
- Marybeth organized a Climate Café on June 12 in the Library. The event included tabling by CAC, MLP, Mobility Manager, Natural Resources Commission (NRC), Department of Public Works (DPW), and RDF. Town staff were present to answer residents' questions about the Be Part of It! Climate Action Campaign, energy coaching, heat pumps, weatherization, mobility, water conservation, sustainable landscaping, and waste diversion. Wellesley Volkswagen (VW) showcased the VW Buzz and ID4 in the library parking lot and were delighted with the turnout. Le Petit Four donated delicious pastries and quiche. The event attracted roughly 100 attendees, including sustainability staff from peer communities. Many volunteers and staff helped to make this event possible, including: Susan Zelenko, Michelle Foster, Mary Gard, Fred Bunger, Martha Collins, Phyllis Theermann, Janet Mosley, Tess Ruderman, and Sheila Page. Wellesley Media created a video of the event. The CAC is grateful to the abovementioned partners, as well as Sustainable Wellesley and the Library.
- The Energy Transition and Climate Resilience (ETCR) Working group met on June 3 to discuss the group's goals and scope of work.

- Marybeth and Janet met with David Wood, Chris Chan, and Tess Ruderman of the MLP on May 20, and Janet met with Chris Chan and Tess Ruderman on June 17. Topics discussed included: Climate Café, Hardy and Hunnewell Solar, the Energy Transition and Climate Resilience Working Group, Sustainability blog posts in the Swellesley Report, fall heat pump event, Wellesley Wonderful Weekend, HomeWorks, and Large Building Energy Reporting.
- Marybeth participated in a panel during the New England American Public Works Association Conference on June 16-17. She spoke about building strong climate action relationships with our MLP and DPW. Marybeth also benefitted from conversations with other municipalities and consultant companies on topics re: public communication, climate action dashboards, and various projects related to Wellesley's CAP.
- On June 26 Marybeth and Janet met with Chris Chan and Tess Ruderman to discuss plans for a heat pump evening at the Wellesley Free Library on October 16.
- Marybeth received calls from residents interested in home energy assessments and heat pumps. Marybeth connected these residents with the Energy Coaching Program.

## **Mobility**

### **EV2X**

Janet submitted an application for the MassCEC EV-to-Grid demonstration project to receive one to two EV fast chargers in the DPW garage with a potential second location in the MLP garage. The grant, if received, would fund equipment and installation. Thank you to DPW and MLP for their time and support for this program application.

### **EV Charging Stations**

In May, CAC intern Moe Kaung worked to make sure EV chargers that weren't previously found on Google Maps are now properly labeled.

Moe is analyzing Wellesley public EV charging station usage data.

### **Rules of Ride**

Marybeth participated at Rules of the Ride event on June 8. Approximately 18 middle schoolers participated in this event with educational activities, Landry's bike repair, a Safe Routes to School representative, and a bike ride with police escorts.

### **Mode Shift Challenge**

Ended June 30. More details here: <https://wellesleyma.gov/2463/Mode-Shift-Challenge>

### **Town EV Charging Infrastructure Policy**

Marybeth discussed the attached draft public-facing electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) policy document with MLP. MLP agrees that CAC will take the lead on the policy-related elements of this document.

*From Martha:*

- Contacted Jens Albrecht at Wellesley Volkswagen to coordinate the showcase of two EV models at the June 12 Climate Café.
- Met with Quentin Prideaux of Sustainable Wellesley. They are interested in continuing EV showcase and test drive events.

- Drafted blog posts on sustainability for six pathways which were reviewed by Marybeth, Chris Chan, Sheila Page, Brandon Schmitt, and Dave Cohen. Changes incorporated. With green light will pitch to Swellesley Report.
- Senator Creem is sponsoring [S.2241](#), [S.2242](#), and [S.2246](#) – A suite of climate bills promoting zero-emission vehicles - including school buses - and ensuring that Massachusetts transportation plans align with our climate obligations by increasing access to all-clean transportation options.

## **Buildings**

### **Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines (MSBG)**

Marybeth and Janet met with Hunnewell and Hardy architect Martine Dion of SMMA to determine what embodied carbon and material selection considerations were included in those buildings. They discussed simple ways to add embodied carbon and healthy material recommendations into the MSBG with an eye to design flexibility and project cost.

### **Hardy and Hunnewell Solar/Climate Leaders**

Marybeth and Janet had several conversations with Town staff, MLP staff, and DOER to discuss potential solar configurations for Hardy and Hunnewell and potential Climate Leader funding for these projects. On July 1 Marybeth and Janet met with Chris Chan and Solar Design Associates to discuss preparations for a Climate Leader Accelerator Grant due on Feb. 6, 2026.

### **Wellesley Public Schools AC Supplemental Study**

Marybeth and Janet attended a meeting hosted by Facilities Management Director Joe McDonough to review the Supplemental Study scope and schedule. Joe pointed out key challenges:

- Ensuring sufficient electrical service to support new AC equipment
- Code-mandated accessibility upgrades triggered by a project budget over 30% of the assessed building value
- Coordination of new and existing HVAC equipment and controls
- Roofing impacts
  - Reroofing projects at all four schools could occur during or immediately after the AC projects
  - If a VRF system is chosen, the equipment would need to be removed if installed before the reroofing project
  - VRF equipment on the roof would reduce the size of a rooftop solar PV array
- Construction phasing to minimize impact on students – limits construction to summers and nights, which increases costs
- Window unit option is less costly, but drawbacks include higher noise levels, aesthetic impacts, and potential for uneven cooling in the classroom

Niki Ofenloch provided an update on the WPS AC Supplemental Study at the June 18 School Committee meeting.

- The same firm used in the 2020 study will carry out the Supplemental Study
- Field investigations in the schools will start in July
- Niki will provide another update at the first School Committee meeting in the fall
- Interim solutions are being discussed
- AC window units in Upham for Recreation Department programs are possible because only part of the building is in use.

- Updates will be provided at the School Committee meetings and on the School Committee website.

#### **Babson Executive Lodge and Conference Center**

Martha, Sue, and Marybeth revised the CAC's letter to President Spinelli re: the Babson Executive Lodge and Conference Center. Marybeth sent the letter to Meghan Jop on June 30 (copy to CAC) and will follow up with Meghan next week.

#### **Massachusetts Large Building Energy Reporting (LBER) Program**

Janet attended DOER webinars on May 20 and June 17 re: new information about what public entities should do to comply with the new [Large Building Energy Reporting \(LBER\) program](#). Janet collected and input all necessary energy use data into the portal and is working with the program administrators to finalize the submission.

*From Mary Gard:*

#### **June 17: Networked Geothermal Cohort sponsored CLF and HEET**

Launching Community of Practice for Networked Geothermal.

Eric Bosworth of Framingham geothermal project and [Katherine.Fisher@HEET.org](mailto:Katherine.Fisher@HEET.org) spoke at this meeting titled "Bonds, Boreholes and Buildings." Looking to add language to the Environmental Bond Bill to add \$15 million for borrowing by munis to drill boreholes on municipally owned land (e.g., parking lots) and to retrofit nearby buildings. The geothermal energy is then sold to utilities for distribution to these buildings. There is an advantage to this approach (over utility owned boreholes) given lower interest rates for munis and possible grants for retrofits. The cost of a networked geothermal system is roughly evenly split between boreholes, home retrofits, and pumping/piping infrastructure.

This focus is based on the premise that networked geothermal will have less impact on the grid than massive residential conversions to air source heat pumps. There is also the question of operating costs of air-source heat pumps during the coldest weather.

See HEET's Toolkit [here](#).

#### **June 16 NEEP Community based Heating Electrification Cohort**

This is basically an attempt to introduce climate coaching to all MA communities, in the belief that local coaching programs are proving to be the most effective model for residential conversion to air-source heat pumps. This group will meet regularly to develop best practices and templates for other communities to adopt.

#### **June 13: HeatSmart Alliance**

Bob Wirtshafter, a PhD consultant to local utility companies, raises the question of whether or not air-source heat pumps are a viable solution, given their higher failure rate, shorter lives, and inability to keep older homes warm despite standard weatherization. View webinar [here](#).

#### **June 6: HeatSmart Alliance Meeting**

Abode now has a statewide program for already trained Energy Coaches, with real time peer-to-peer and trainer-to-peer communication, as well as periodic webinars to keep coaches up-to-date on the latest electrification developments. To enroll, contact [Frances.Duncan@abodeenergy.com](mailto:Frances.Duncan@abodeenergy.com)

#### **June 4: MCAN Meeting**

Looking at the recently released [State decarbonization metrics](#), most of the data (e.g., number of energy audits, insulation, heat pump installs, solar installs, energy audits) comes from MassSave. This leaves out the efficiency improvements made by ratepayers in MLP towns who don't heat their buildings with gas. When broken down by community, [as recently done by a professor at Bentley University](#), the progress of MLP communities is incompletely reported. Can Wellesley CAC advocate for more data transparency from the MLPs?

#### **Waste Reduction**

##### **Skip the Stuff**

Marybeth will prompt a Skip the Stuff team meeting to coordinate the preparation of an outreach program as we await a decision from the Massachusetts Attorney General. In the meantime, the Health Department is developing a website, letter, and other communication materials to support a Skip the Stuff education campaign.

##### **Wellesley Public Schools**

Waste Reduction Coordinators Amber Keller and Amanda Crowley continue to work with Wellesley Public Schools to reduce food waste. They started a pilot program at Bates Elementary School collecting unopened packages of food for donation. Amber and Amanda are working to transition a similar parent-led program at Sprague Elementary.

Amber and Amanda have meetings scheduled with Cindy Mahr and the High School principal to discuss the possibility of adding a food waste composting program at the High School next school year.

##### **Olin College Project**

Olin students presented their findings from their analysis of Wellesley's commercial, residential, school waste management practices in a written report. Marybeth and Janet are following up with Dave Cohen and Sue Morris on report details.

##### **Wellesley Wonderful Weekend Picnic Waste Diversion**

On Sunday, May 18, Amanda Crowley led a group of volunteers who helped picnic-goers sort waste at four waste diversion stations. Most of the food service containers and utensils used by Captain Marden's were compostable. In addition to aluminum cans and plastic bottles, six 64-gallon barrels of food waste and compostable food service items were diverted from the trash. Janet, Amber, and Amanda met on May 29 to discuss lessons learned and next steps to improve implementation for next year.

#### **Gas Transition**

*From Senator Creem's newsletter:*

Earlier this month, I chaired the Senate Committee on Climate Change and Global Warming's second public hearing of the session. We reviewed the gas companies' Climate Compliance Plans and recent reforms to the Gas System Enhancement Plan program. We also heard testimony from the Department of Public Utilities, Attorney General's Office, utility providers, environmental advocates, and local leaders. Watch the full hearing [here](#).

The hearing highlighted the need for greater clarity about what the gas companies' goals are — in terms of gas usage reduction and the number of customers transitioned to clean heat — and about

milestones, timelines, and budgets for achieving those goals. It also revealed the importance of continued reforms to the Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP), even as we celebrate the impact that the most recent climate law is already having in reducing the program's costs.

That recent law made substantial changes to GSEP, more tightly aligning the program with our climate mandates and promoting energy affordability by ensuring that ratepayers aren't left on the hook for wasteful spending on gas pipes. The DPU's recent orders implementing the law will decrease the GSEP charge on customers' bills by a projected 17 percent.

*From Lise Olney:*

### **Legislative update**

Three bills I am following (see fact sheets in Meeting Materials folder):

Two bills are iterations of past bills supported by the Climate Action Committee:

- **Tactical Transition bill** ([S.2249/H.3539](#), Senator Cynthia Creem, Rep. Steve Owens, and Rep. Jennifer Amini). Three main objectives:
  - To require gas and electric companies to plan a coordinated, strategic transition to clean energy, including creation of a Thermal Transition Advisory Council.
  - To invest in clean energy alternatives to gas pipelines instead of replacing them with new pipelines.
  - To provide an equitable transition for gas workers, allowing them to transition to clean energy projects with same benefits and wages.
- **Municipal Voices bill** ([S.2248/H.3446](#), Senator Cynthia Creem and Rep. Jennifer Armini). Key Provisions:
  - Requires gas companies to provide more complete information to municipalities for pipe replacement and repairs.
  - Gives municipalities the right to recover damages for public shade trees killed or damaged by migrating gas from gas leaks.
  - Gives municipalities the authority to contest pipe replacement plans.
  - Prohibits reimbursement to gas companies for non-emergency projects not provided in advance to municipalities for review.

One new bill, **Infrastructure Replacements Projects bill** ([H.3564](#) Rep. Amy Mah Sangiolo and Rep. Greg Schwartz), covers some of the same ground as the Municipal Voices bill by providing municipalities with greater access to basic information about the gas system. The bill adds provisions that give municipalities more authority to require information from the gas companies and gives the authority to the DPU to deny GSEP funds to utilities if they don't provide information to municipalities.

### **State House events:**

- On June 4, 2025, I attended a briefing organized by Senator Cynthia Creem's office for fellow legislators and staff at the State House featuring the **Tactical Transition bill** ([S.2249/H.3539](#)) and **Municipal Voices bill** ([S.2248/H.3446](#)).
- Also on June 4, 2025, I testified in support of the Municipal Voices bill at the hearing of the Telecommunications, Utilities, & Energy Committee. See attached testimony.

### **Recommended resources:**

- Webinar: **"The Costly Gas Trap: A Burden to Consumers, an Obstacle to Our Clean Energy Transition."** [Event recording here](#). Economist Dr. Dorie Seavey explains the economic imperative for transitioning off gas. Gas use is declining across the country as the number of

heating degree days declines and many gas customers are switching to other fuel sources. However, capital spending on gas infrastructure replacement has tripled in the last decade, and ratepayers are paying for it through monthly “delivery charges.” Dr. Seavey uses data from the City of Cambridge to show what this looks like in one local community. Sponsored by Mothers Out Front, Gas Transition Allies, HEET, and more.

- **Webinar introduction to the Tactical Transitions Bill.** [Recording here](#). Speakers: Amanda Sachs of Rewiring America, Audrey Schulman of HEETlabs, and Carrie Catan of Green Energy Consumers Alliance.

### **Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative**

Register [here](#) for the July 24 meeting

The main focus for the July 24 meeting will be the **HEET Kickstart Studies program** with guest speakers will include Angie Alberto-Escobar, Gas-to-Geo Transition Director for HEET, and representatives from Salem who are leading the effort to bring networked geothermal to their community. HEET established Kickstart Studies with funding from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. Program objectives included developing a pipeline of geothermal network sites and fostering community engagement and education on the benefits of networked geothermal. The studies wrapped up this spring and we’ll hear about the results, plans for next steps, and how other communities can get involved.

The May 20 meeting focused on Energy Transition and Neighborhood Electrification and was co-hosted by the Building Electrification Accelerator. Other topics were: the recent GSEP order; status of our priority legislation; an update on advocacy for neighborhood electrification in Newton; and a summary of the Mothers Out Front campaign to educate municipal officials and others on neighborhood electrification.

- May 20 recording [here](#)
- Slides and chat transcript are attached.
- HEET survey announced by Angie Escobar-Alberto on Community Pathways for Networked Geothermal [here](#)

### June events:

Senator Cynthia Creem’s office hosted a legislative briefing at the State House on June 4, featuring two of our priority bills: **Tactical Transition bill** ([S.2249/H.3539](#)) and **Municipal Voices bill** ([S.2248/H.3446](#)). Some great tools for your reference:

- **Webinar** on Tactical Transition bill (hosted by HEETlabs, Green Energy Consumers Alliance, & Rewiring America) recording [here](#)
- **Fact sheets** on Tactical Transition and Municipal Voices bills attached

June 11 Webinar: “The Costly Gas Trap: A Burden to Consumers, an Obstacle to Our Clean Energy Transition.” Sponsored by Mothers Out Front, Gas Transition Allies, HEET, and more. [Event recording here](#).

Register [here](#) for the July 24 Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative Meeting

The main focus for our July meeting will be the HEET Kickstart Mass program which provided guidance and funding for feasibility studies for communities interested in implementing geothermal networks.

**Grid Modernization Meeting**

Grid Modernization Advisory Council will hold a meeting on July 17 for municipal stakeholders and community leaders who are interested in decarbonization and electrification in their city or town.

<https://www.mma.org/electric-grid-council-to-hold-in-person-event-this-summer/>

**GHG Inventory**

At the beginning of July, Janet finished sending out data requests to complete the 2024 GHG inventory. Much of the requested data has already been received, and Janet began organizing the data and carrying out calculations needed to complete the inventory.

**Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives**

*From Chris Chan:*

- Energy Transition and Climate Resilience working group meeting on June 3
- Tess Ruderman participated in the Climate Café on June 12 on behalf of the MLP, promoting the Energy Coaching program.
- MLP extended the end date of the whole-home heat pump rebate of \$10K or \$8K from June 30 to Dec 31
- We plan to refine and reinstitute our Shave the Peak program this summer.