



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

September 5, 2025

Green Communities

See the "Buildings" section, below, for discussion of the Hardy and Hunnewell School solar projects.

Janet is collecting and processing data for the Fiscal Year 2025 Green Communities Annual Report due in early November.

Outreach

HomeWorks Energy

HomeWorks Energy visited all of Wellesley's single-family-home neighborhoods during their door-to-door canvassing campaign. We estimate approximately 5,898 single-family homes served by natural gas in Wellesley. Over the past year HomeWorks knocked on approximately 5,160 doors and scheduled 519 home energy assessments. HomeWorks' 10% sign-up rate as a percentage of doors knocked in is double their typical sign-up rate. HomeWorks also scheduled 153 home energy assessments while tabling at the Recycling and Disposal Facility. HomeWorks completed 454 assessments to date. They carried out 136 weatherization projects and 8 heat pump installations. HomeWorks is completing the remaining HEAs, tabling occasionally at the RDF, and working to add a new button to their website and send emails to past and current clients inviting clients to sign up for information from the Town about Energy Coaching and other Town Climate Action resources. Marybeth and HomeWorks are discussing a strategy to visit single-family-home gas customers who were not reached in the initial canvassing round.

Municipal Light Plant – Climate Action

Marybeth and Janet met with David Wood, Chris Chan, and Tess Ruderman of the Municipal Light Plant on July 15 and August 20. Topics discussed included: Hardy and Hunnewell Solar, the Energy Transition and Climate Resilience Working Group, Sustainability blog posts in the Swellesley Report, The Heat Pump Forum and Pizza Party, Wellesley Wonderful Weekend, Homeworks, and Large Building Energy Reporting.

Federal Clean Energy Tax Credits

In late July Marybeth prepared a [press release](#) and newsletter announcements explaining changes to federal clean energy tax credits associated with passage of the “One Big Beautiful Bill.” Marybeth updated Town’s clean energy incentive web pages to reflect the changes and worked with the Communications Officer to share this information through the “W,” Town newsletters, social media, and the Town website. Marybeth will continue to publicize the tax credit changes in September.

Flood Preparedness Event

A performance of [Flood Sensor Auntie](#) will take place at Wellesley College on Saturday, Sept. 27 at 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday, September 28 at 3:00 p.m. This play, which ran successfully in the five boroughs of New York City, is about the best ways to protect oneself and family from flooding, climate change, and despair. Marybeth met with writer, director, and Wellesley College grad, Sabina Unni, on August 28. They discussed potential tabling by the Climate Action Committee at the show and an opportunity for Marybeth to deliver a call-to-action at the end of the performance.

Sustainability Summit

Babson, Wellesley, and Olin Colleges plan a Sustainability Summit for Wednesday, October 8. Attendees will include faculty, staff, and students from the colleges and staff and board members from the Towns of Wellesley and Needham. The Summit will include a 2.5-hour workshop followed by a dinner and reception. Please find a Workshop Framework for the Summit in the Project Updates Supplement folder. Under the guidance of a Babson faculty facilitator, attendees will identify interconnections, build a shared one-year vision, and develop concrete implementation steps for realizing that vision. Ms. Olney and Ms. Gard plan to represent the Climate Action Committee as Chair and Vice Chair. Marybeth also plans to attend.

Heat Pump Forum and Pizza Party

The MLP plans a Heat Pump Forum and Pizza Party on October 16 at the Wellesley Free Library (see flyer in Supplement folder). Pizza and networking will occur from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. followed by a program from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Audience members will learn from heat pump experts, installers, Town staff, and neighbors about heat pump benefits, the contracting and installation process, and financial incentives. Climate Action is co-sponsoring this event.

Mobility

EV2X

Janet submitted an application for the MassCEC EV-to-Grid demonstration project in the spring. Wellesley’s application will be considered in their second round of applications

Intern Projects

Over the course of the summer, Janet worked with Wellesley College intern Moe Kaung on the following projects:

- Labeling electric vehicle (EV) chargers in Wellesley not previously identified on Google Maps
- Researching all-electric college buildings
- Analysis of Wellesley public EV charging station usage data
- Analysis of Wellesley building permit data to identify the most popular contractors for home weatherization and heat pump installation, as well as to estimate the number of heat pump installations in 2023 and 2024.
- Review of building permit data for new construction in 2024 to learn how builders/homeowners chose to comply with the Specialized energy code.

Buildings

Hardy and Hunnewell Solar

Marybeth and Janet continue to work toward maximizing outside funding for solar installations on the Hardy and Hunnewell Schools. Rooftop photovoltaic (PV) arrays were integral to these building projects from their inception.

Marybeth organized a meeting with Select Board, Wellesley Public Schools (WPS), Facilities Management Department (FMD), Municipal Light Plant (MLP), Department of Public Works (DPW), and Climate Action staff on August 11. The group discussed Climate Leader grant and federal clean energy Elective Pay funding opportunities, necessary board approvals, a timeline, and roles and responsibilities for implementing and operating PV arrays on these buildings. Chris Chan prepared a draft timeline after this meeting and Marybeth is now coordinating a meeting with Select Board, School Committee, and MLB Chairs and their department leadership for early September. The goals of this meeting include:

- Brief chairs of School Committee (SC), Municipal Light Board (MLB), and Select Board (SB) on solar project details and a proposed timeline
- Review SC, MLB, and SB approvals necessary to move these projects forward and submit a Climate Leader grant application
- Plan for board review and voting

Key funding information:

- A Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Climate leader grant application is due on February 6, 2026.
 - A Notice of Intent is due to DOER by November 6 if Wellesley plans to go forward with a Climate Leader grant application.
 - The Climate Leader program offers up to \$1 million total and requires the Town to contribute a minimum of 10%. MLB is expected to vote on providing the 10% match.
- A federal Elective Pay/tax credit is available for up to 30% of the total project cost. Because the expected start date of the projects falls after July 4, 2026, the projects must be complete by December 31, 2027, to be eligible for Elective Pay. The MLB is expected to vote on providing an advance on the expected Elective Pay credit.

Janet exchanged emails with Wellesley's Green Communities coordinator Dillan Patel on August 19 regarding grant eligibility requirements.

Wellesley Public Schools AC Supplemental Study

FMD is piloting window air conditioners and a ductless mini-split in select classrooms to analyze variables such as temperature and noise.

Babson Executive Lodge and Conference Center

On August 5 Janet attended a meeting at Babson about the planned Babson Executive Lodge and Conference Center (ELCC). Babson staff, ELCC project contractors, and Sustainable Wellesley representatives attended the meeting. On August 21, Lise Olney delivered testimony at the Zoning Board of Appeals ELCC public hearing. The ZBA testimony appears in Project Update Supplement folder.

Sustainable Development

Marybeth received feedback from Ms. Jop on a Draft Sustainable Development Guide. The Shared folder contains the (very preliminary) Draft Guide as reference. There will be a future opportunity for the CAC to provide feedback.

Waste Reduction

Skip the Stuff

Marybeth organized an August 12 meeting to discuss restaurant and community outreach for the Skip the Stuff Bylaw, which goes into effect on January 1, 2026. Lenny Izzo, Jhana Wallace, Stephanie Hawkinson, Jamie Manzolini, Lisa Gieger, Philippa Biggers, and Marybeth Martello attended. The Health Department will oversee outreach to restaurant managers, staff, and the community. Health developed a website and restaurant toolkit (letter, flyers, signs, posters, notes to place in take-out-orders, etc.). Health inspections for most affected restaurants take place three times per year. Health inspectors will provide a letter and toolkits while also verbally informing restaurant managers about STS during inspections. The Select Board office will also inform restaurants about STS through annual licensing communication. Ms. Hawkinson and Marybeth drafted an outreach calendar and will provide support for community outreach

3RWorking Group

Discussion of a plastic water bottle procurement policy for Town departments continues. Dave Cohen will send a memo about the proposed policy to Meghan Jop for review.

Waste Reduction Coordinators

The Waste Coordinators are part of a team working with school WPS administration, the Health Department, and Chartwells, the new WPS Food Service provider, to reduce cafeteria waste. Projects at various stages of development and implementation include pre-consumer food donation, post-consumer food donation, food waste diversion, plastic bag recycling, and condiment dispensers.

Gas Transition

From Lise Olney:

Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative

July 24, 2025, meeting - Recording [here](#).

The main focus for the July 24 meeting was the HEET Kickstart Studies program established 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.

The meeting included the following presentations:

- *Leah Robins, MAPC Director for Government Affairs*, summarized the status of our priority legislation.
- *Angie Alberto-Escobar, HEET Gas-to-Geo Transition Director*, gave an overview of HEET's Kickstart program, including goals, key take-aways, and next steps.
- *Rev. Nathan Ives of St. Peter's-San Pedro Episcopal* spoke about the Salem Kickstart team's targeted, trust-building outreach, including how building strong relationships with city departments early on shaped communication and implementation.

- *Larry Lessard, Achieve Renewable Energy Director*, provided a technical perspective from the Salem Kickstart team—addressing what kind of data early outreach can realistically yield, and what technical teams need from the engagement.

Gas Transitions Allies

Mary and I attended the Aug. 27 meeting of the GTA legislative working group. The focus for many at the state level is on promoting greater energy affordability. GTA is working to advance key elements of existing bills to be included in potential new legislation on energy affordability that may be coming from the House:

- Provisions in the Tactical Transitions bill
- MassSave reform
- Giving Municipalities more information and more notice from gas companies on gas pipe replacement, option to consider non-pipe alternatives
- Stopping pipeline expansion
- Prohibiting the cost of lobbying by gas utilities being passed on to ratepayers

Background resources:

["Massachusetts signals new gas customers may soon have to pay full hookup costs, DPU order is part of broader push to align utility operations with state climate mandates,"](#) by Bhaamati Borkhetaria, August 14, 2025

["Why is your energy bill so high? Blame natural gas volatility and utility profits. Don't buy the effort to pin costs on efficiency charges,"](#) CommonWealth Beacon, by Kyle Murray, May 12 2025.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Janet is nearing completion of the GHG inventory for 2024 and is working on revisions to the 2021-2023 inventories. Marybeth and Janet are also working on confirming the validity of the steep drop in commercial building natural gas usage reported by National Grid for 2023 and 2024.

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives

From Chris Chan:

- Drafted and shared a timeline for the Climate Leaders grant application and deployment of solar at the Hardy and Hunnewell schools. MLP initiating the requisite solar design and structural studies. Marybeth is scheduling department head and Board chair meeting(s).
- Preparing materials (flyers, posters, and presentation outlines) for the heat pump forum at the library, Oct 16