



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

December 5, 2025

Budget

Marybeth submitted the CAC's Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budget Request. The request is within guideline with a \$300 increase in dues to ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the organization that provides the Climate Action Committee's (CAC's) greenhouse gas emissions inventory software. ICLEI upgraded their software tools and originally requested a \$600 increase to cover this software enhancement. In response to a request from Marybeth, ICLEI agreed to incrementally raise the Town's dues with an increase of \$300 in FY27 and an increase of \$300 in FY28.

Green Communities

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

Janet Mosley submitted the Fiscal Year 2025 Green Communities Annual Report on November 5.

Marybeth Martello and Janet attended the state-wide Green Communities Summit on November 18 in Worcester. Key topics included building decarbonization strategies, electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, medium and heavy duty EVs available for fleet transition, and the new Renewable Energy Siting and Permitting Regulations. The presentation on electric yard equipment by Wellesley Park and Tree Superintendent Cricket Vlass, Foreman Tim Bania, and Groundskeeping Foreman Dan Smith was well received. View Summit presentations [here](#).

Outreach

Climate Action Posts in the Swellesley Report

Four Climate Action posts have appeared in the Swellesley Report since mid-September. Links to the posts appear below.

Following discussion at the Nov. 7 CAC meeting, Marybeth asked the Swellesley Report how the click statistics compare to statistics for similar posts. Swellesley is working to provide an answer to this question.

Date	Post	Sponsor
Sept. 15 - 21	Weatherize	HomeWorks
Sept. 29 - Oct. 5	Heat Pumps	MLP
Oct. 20 – 26	Go Solar	MLP
Oct. 26 – Nov. 1	Get Around Sustainably	CAC
Nov. 14 – Nov. 21	Reduce Waste	CAC

Chamber Meeting

The Chamber cancelled its November Environmental Committee meeting.

Village Church

On Sunday, November 16, Marybeth spoke at two Wellesley Village Church services re: the Church's impressive geothermal project. Marybeth's remarks appear in the shared folder. After the services Marybeth spoke with several congregants, including Pastor Butter, geothermal project leaders Mark Lenci and Kathy Schyleyer, and CEO of GreenerU Rob Curing. The Church is highly motivated to share their geothermal story. Mark, Kathy, and Marybeth discussed potential collaborations, including a possible geothermal forum. Marybeth is following up.

HomeWorks Energy

Marybeth drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with HomeWorks Energy (HWE) for the Climate Action Committee (CAC) to review at its November 7 meeting. Marybeth revised the MoU (see shared folder) based on preliminary HWE input. We are awaiting legal counsel review from HWE and the Town.

HWE tabled at the Wellesley Marketplace on Saturday, November 22 and scheduled six home energy assessments, which is an excellent result.

Case Study for CELT Program

The [Clean Energy and Environment Legacy Transition \(CELT\) Initiative](#) recently invited Wellesley to be one of the first 25 communities featured in their MA Energy Explorer tool. This tool will showcase clean energy projects and data sharing to inspire and support clean energy projects across the Commonwealth. On December 2 Marybeth and Janet met with Natalia Escobar-Pemberthy and Talia Feldscher of the CELT program at Boston University. They discussed a case study of Wellesley's Town Hall renovation and potential case studies re: the DPW's electric lawncare equipment and CatchConnect. Pending approval from Meghan and FMD, Marybeth and Janet plan to share info on the Town Hall renovation and energy/GHG improvements with CELT. CELT will put together a case study and visuals for CAC staff review.

Municipal Light Plant – Climate Action

Marybeth and Janet met with Chris Chan, and Tess Ruderman of the Municipal Light Plant on November 24. Topics discussed included: Hardy and Hunnewell Solar, Energy Coaching and Tess' shifting priorities, future residential outreach and engagement events such as an event focused on ground-source heat pumps, new state regulations for renewable energy siting and permitting, and the status of Wellesley Housing Authority electricity metering at Barton Road.

2026 Annual Town Meeting (ATM)

2026 ATM Warrant

The Warrant for the 2026 ATM is open, and is set to close on Wednesday, December 23, 2025, 4:00 pm.

The Select Board also set the following dates:

- Motions due to the Select Board Office – Friday, February 6, 2026, by 4:00 pm
- Start of Annual Town Meeting – Monday, March 30, 2026, 7:00 pm, at Wellesley High School Auditorium
- Date for the 2026 Annual Town Election – Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Warrant Article for Off-Street Parking Zoning Amendments

Meghan Jop suggested the Climate Action Committee could sponsor a 2026 ATM warrant article on off-street parking zoning amendments. Meghan and Sheila Page will attend the CAC's December 5th meeting to discuss.

Buildings and Development

Hardy and Hunnewell Solar

Tom Ulfelder Summary of Hardy and Hunnewell Solar Projects – Presented at November 18 Select Board Meeting

The solar panels for both Hardy and Hunnewell were included in the original design and 1M was included in the original Project Funding Agreement. The project team for Hardy included the PV option in the submission to the MSBA and the submissions to the permitting boards in Town. So, the intent was that the school would have solar in the near future. The MSBA encourages sustainable design but did not require solar for the project to be complete. The Town noted in its communications with the MSBA that it was the Town's intent to add solar after the building was opened.

Hunnewell is not an MSBA project, but the intent to add solar was evident and drawings exist for the PV array. In addition, both schools installed roof safety railings for people working on the PV panels, the roof was designed and installed so that the warranty remains in effect with PV's installed and the conduits were built into the building.

As the projects progressed, PBC became concerned about unprecedented market condition escalation and the adequacy of the project reserves. While additional funding could have been requested at TM, the MLP proposed that they take on responsibility for both solar projects. The approach the MLP pursued was not successful and the installation of the PV's stalled.

About nine months ago, I called the Chair of the MLP Board and requested that they renew their consideration of both solar installations. The Chair did so and an effort to identify an approach began. There have been meetings involving the MLP, Select Board, FMD, and the Sustainability Director to try and reach an agreement as to how the Town could proceed but no agreement was reached. In the meantime, Marybeth Martello identified a 1M grant that would be applicable to these projects and separately federal tax credits that could result in a 770K payment to the Town. Marybeth began the work necessary to move forward with both the grant and filing for the credits. There are complex considerations regarding timing and sourcing under federal restrictions on foreign entities of concern which in this case is China. Both the grant and tax credits require significant work.

The MLP Board and staff continued to consider their options for the projects. Recently without input from Town staff, the MLP staff drafted an MOU which proposed to contribute 2.5M of We Care funds conditioned upon a successful grant application and tax credits. This was captured in a motion voted by the MLP Board that would provide 2.5M with a contingency that they received the grant money, the tax credits and the REC's and committed Town staff without consultation. This would result in an actual net contribution of only 750K and commit Town staff to take on responsibilities they had not agreed to. The Town Bylaw for the PBC does not allow funding to be conditional and requires that funding be in hand. Therefore, the motion approved by the MLP Board would not work.

Recently the PBC included the HHU solar projects on its agenda and members of the PBC felt that they should be responsible for the projects. FMD expressed concern regarding their capacity to take on the projects, but PBC felt strongly that the projects should move forward under their oversight. After the PBC meeting, Steve Gagosian explored ways FMD could take on the project. Where both school building projects remain open, he called the construction companies and proposed that they each take on the solar projects as a change order using the existing electrical subcontractor. Steve agreed to become the Owners Project Manager. This significantly simplifies the projects and the process to complete the work.

Last Thursday, a meeting was scheduled that included Colette, me, Meghan, Corey and Marybeth, Steve Gagosian, Joe McDonough, Ned Hall, Chris Chan, the MLP attorney, and Tom Harrington. The purpose was to reach an agreement regarding funding and responsibility for the work. We did not reach an agreement regarding funding. The MLP does not want to contribute 2.5M without recovering the grant money, tax credits and REC's. This most likely would require PBC to spend some of the remaining school construction funds. The Chair expressed concern that he could not justify the expenditure of 2.5M in We Care funds as a business decision. He stated that he could provide green power at a lower cost than the power produced by the solar arrays. He is willing to continue discussions within his board and would report on the meeting and any funding formula we request. One alternative would be an unconditional contribution of 750K from the MLP, and the Town keep the grant money, the tax credits, and the MLP gets the RECs which the Town can't use. Any additional cost would require use of remaining project funding.

Marjorie and I met with the Chair and VC of the SC this morning and brought them up to date. We discussed their role as the proponent for both projects and ultimately that the decision whether or not to proceed with solar is a decision for the SC. Toward this end, they intend to ask Steve Gagosian and Marybeth to go to their next SC meeting to discuss the projects and the funding.

External Funding for Hardy and Hunnewell Solar

Marybeth and Janet continue to work toward maximizing outside funding for solar installations on the Hardy and Hunnewell Schools. They reach out to Green Communities when questions arise about Climate Leaders grant requirements and are researching answers to preliminary Elective Pay questions while also developing a Request for Proposals for a tax professional who can assist the Town in obtaining an Elective Pay tax credit.

Key funding information:

- A Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Climate leader grant application is due on February 6, 2026.
 - The Climate Leader program offers up to \$1 million total and requires the Town to contribute a minimum of 10%.
- 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.

Recent events:

- November 5: Marybeth submitted a Climate Leader Accelerator Grant application Notice of Intent to the Department of Energy Resources.
- Nov. 13: Staff and board members from SB, MLP, FMD, PBC met to discuss HH solar funding.
- Nov. 18: Tom Ulfelder summarized project history at SB meeting (see narrative above)
- Nov. 19: MLB discussed HH solar project.
- Nov 1-19: Janet and/or Marybeth communicated multiple times with two tax consultant firms regarding new solar tax credit regulations and potential avenues for the Town to qualify for Elective Pay for solar installed on Hunnewell and Hardy schools.

Sustainable Development

Marybeth and Janet are working to establish Town guidelines and processes to encourage sustainable private development. Primary goals for early in the development process, include:

- Distribute educational Sustainable Development Guide (see shared folder) to developers.
- Elicit sustainability-related information (see questionnaire in shared folder) from developers.
- Provide feedback to developers. Establish regular Department Review Team meetings to allow relevant Town staff to meet with developers, ask questions, and relay Town values/expectations.

Janet conducted research and completed a table summarizing the processes and documents used by Lexington, Salem, Needham, Belmont, Brookline, Arlington, Winchester, Concord, Acton, and Ashland for engaging with private developers on sustainability.

Marybeth and Lise met with Meghan Jop to discuss Marybeth's memo (see shared folder) and the above three goals. Meghan sees opportunities to address these goals through bylaws, prospectuses, and processes related to PSI and Site Plan Review. Marybeth is meeting with land use staff and Meghan to further develop and implement these ideas.

MassBay Site Visioning – Wellesley Staff Interview

The Town has hired Berkeley Group, a consulting firm, to carry out a site visioning process that would develop the town's preferred concept for a housing development on the 45-acre piece of land MassBay Community College plans to sell. The proposal is coming forward under the Massachusetts Affordable Homes Act, which allows the Commonwealth to dispose of state-owned land to build housing at a minimum density of four units per acre. Janet participated in the Wellesley Staff Interview meeting on December 21 in which multiple department heads shared their goals, concerns, opportunities, and questions regarding the MasBay development project. Janet shared what the CAC would like to see for this project based on comments Lise delivered at the October 8 MassBay community meeting.

Significant concerns raised at the meeting included:

- Desire to conserve the forest and wetland areas
- Increased traffic on already congested Oakland
- Safety concerns at the nearby Oakland and Route 9 intersection
- A tall building in that location could block the police radio transmission signal from some parts of town.
- Strain on the Police, Health, and School departments due to probable increase in social service needs from lower income residents.

Waste Reduction

Skip the Stuff

Outreach continues in preparation for the Skip the Stuff (STS) bylaw's effective date of January 1. Outreach materials reflect branding used in Newton, MA for regional consistency and are included in the following:

- [Website](#)
- STS information with acknowledgement check box on online permit applications
- Informational letter emailed to food establishments
- Packets with the following mailed to food establishments:
 - Letter
 - Flyers, table-top signs, window clings
 - Signs with employee instructions
- Hard copy letter included with mailing of Common Virtual licenses to food establishments
- Notices in monthly Town newsletters ("W," Natural Resources Commission, PTO, etc.) and via Sustainable Wellesley
- Bi-monthly social media reminders
- Early January:
 - Sandwich boards in restaurant areas
 - Press release
 - Publicity via the Chamber (if they agree to Wellesley's request)

3R Working Group

- Waste Reduction Coordinators shared updates and potential next steps for waste reduction efforts, especially at the Middle School.
- Dave described a promising new outlet for food waste – an anaerobic digester made by [Ecotone Renewables](#) that generates liquid fertilizer
- Dave said the proposed policy to prohibit plastic water bottle procurement by Town departments is moving forward. The group discussed how to reduce the need for plastic water bottles at school events such as the homecoming dance. Identified the need to do research into potential solutions already being used at other schools. Amanda Crowley noted that there is a group from the recent Sustainability Summit hosted by Babson that is working to build a network where this type of question can be asked.

Waste Reduction Coordinators

The Waste Reduction Coordinators have identified one college student they are working with Human Resources to hire as an intern to assist students with waste sorting during the Middle School lunch periods. Two promising candidates could not move forward in the hiring process as they are international students. The Coordinators continue to troubleshoot issues that arise with waste sorting at the Middle School such as non-compostable labels on compostable containers, how to implement a liquid pour-off station, and dealing with toters rejected by Black Earth due to contamination.

Gas Transition

From Janet Mosley

Staff Meeting with National Grid Community Engagement Manager

On November 21, National Grid's Community Engagement Manager organized a meeting with leadership from the Select Board office, Police, Fire, DPW, and CAC, as well as other National Grid representatives, to discuss coordination on projects in 2026. Janet expressed CAC interest in networked geothermal, neighborhood electrification, and the ongoing effort to confirm the total annual town-wide natural gas consumption data provided for 2023 and 2024. Community Engagement Manager Boubacar Dieme said he would connect Janet and Marybeth with his colleagues in National Grid who are working with communities on networked geothermal and neighborhood electrification.

MAPC Technical Assistance Program Opportunity for Networked Geothermal

Jeremy Koo, Assistant Director of Clean Energy at the Metropolitan Planning Council (MAPC) reached out to Marybeth and Lise about a project to explore networked geothermal ownership opportunities for municipal light plants (MLPs). MAPC recently received funding for a project with Concord and Marblehead MLPs through DOER's Regional Energy Planning Assistance. Jeremy now plans to submit an application through MAPC's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to augment the DOER grant and expand the MLP communities involved. Jeremy invited Wellesley's MLP to submit a letter of support for the TAP application by December 8, the application deadline.

Lise discussed this opportunity and its relevance to the Energy Transition and Climate Resilience Working Group with Ned Hall. Ned is conferring with MLP staff.

Renewable Energy

Renewable Energy Siting and Permitting Regulations

At the Green Communities Summit, Marybeth and Janet attended a presentation by DOER Siting and Permitting Division Director Rick Collins outlining the implications, timeline, and options for municipalities to comply with new state regulations requiring a streamlined local permitting process for renewable energy projects. Slides [here](#).

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives

From Chris Chan:

- MLP will issue a newsletter with its November bill announcing its plans to adjust weatherization, heat pump, and EV charging rebates for CY 2026.
- The MLP newsletter will also include information from Climate Action about the Skip the Stuff bylaw and waste reduction.