

City of Cambridge

CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION COMMITTEE

Minutes

October 11, 2018

City Hall Annex, 2nd Floor Meeting Room

Attendees: Melissa Chan (chair), Olga Faktorovich (vice chair); Fred Hewett, Rachel Jacobson, John Ullman, Paula Phipps, Keren Schlomy, Jerrad Pierce, Lyn Huckabee, Trisha Montalbo, Michael Sojka, Lauren Miller; Keith Giamportone., Rosalie Anders, Ted Live; *staff:* Susanne Rasmussen, Brownyn Cooke, John Bolduc, Seth Federspiel

Guests: Torrey Spies

ETP Director's Report

- Scooters – Against law to be on street without turn signals, etc.; working with other cities on model regulations; there is a Council hearing about this issue online.
- Cambridge participating in collaboration on equitable electrification with other participants in Carbon Neutral Cities Network
- Working with stakeholders on continuous improvement recommendation for BEUDO buildings; aiming to have recommendation by next summer.
- Cambridge's community aggregation program is sunsetting in January; City is working on next phase and seeks to improve the green offering to make it more impactful.

Electrification Strategies

Seth Federspiel, Energy Planner in CDD presented on electrification strategies for Cambridge. Electrification is one of the 3 main legs of local carbon reduction efforts along with energy efficiency and renewable energy supply. Heat pumps will need to replace fossil fuel heating in order to achieve net zero goals. Heat pump hot water systems are also available.

The Low Carbon Energy Supply Study by the City looked at how to decarbonize the electricity supply. Electrification with heat pumps is targeted at low energy density areas. In high energy density, electrification will complement district energy systems.

The City is working with EnergySage, which is an online market platform for solar energy, to develop a similar marketplace for heat pumps. The state's HeatSmart program works like solarize programs to develop better pricing for heat pumps. Jerrad Pierce noted the program is focused on both heating and cooling, both modes for which heat pumps work. Seth responded to a question that hundreds of residential buildings fit the profile for HeatSmart.

Affordable housing developers and owners tend to lead on these types of issues. The Cambridge Housing Authority alerted the City to a challenge involving electricity rates and demand charges as an impediment for conversion to heat pumps. Utilizing battery storage could help with this. Other barriers include

electricity infrastructure costs, which are paid by property owners whereas with gas the utility pay. There is a regional initiative to work on the barriers.

Rachel Jacobson asked whether there is a relationship to energy resilience, which Seth responded the City plans to assess.

Contractors are an issue. Many installers of gas-based systems are asked to come in and recommend electric systems which is not in their interest. There also needs to be an effort to increase confidence in the technology among customers and installers. Keith Giamportone noted that electrification is working against the relative low price of gas and more incentives for gas. Incentives are expected to improve through a new utility energy efficiency plan and the availability of Alternative Portfolio Standard credits. Trisha Montalbo asked if existing building electrical systems are a barrier to conversion. Lyn Huckabee noted the state is looking at the issues of electrification but noted that Cambridge may have issues specific to its building stock and non-standard configurations. Rachel wondered whether cooling might be a better selling point since people tend to be satisfied with their heating but not cooling.

Debrief on Alewife Climate Preparedness Walking Tour

- Generally committee members thought the tour was interesting, especially HRI's Cambridge Highlands housing project.
- Members thought it was useful to see locations in person and consider the projected impacts. It can be abstract when reading about the impacts in a report.
- Having some time to converse as the group walked between tour points with fellow members was useful.
- The historic context of the area was useful.
- For future tours, the committee thought possible ideas could include the Kendall Square ecodistrict.

Member Reports

Rachel Jacobson – The American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) is holding a happy hour in downtown Boston. ASAP is also developing service projects for the area.

- EBC Quarterly Climate Adaptation Forums, next is November 30th

Paula Phipps

- Biodiversity for a Livable Climate is sponsoring an upcoming conference at the Geological lecture hall at Harvard, Nov. 17-18. The conference was working on credit program for high school and college students.

Notes by John Bolduc