

City of Cambridge
CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes
September 8, 2016

Attendees: Lauren Miller (chair), Olga Faktorovich Allen, Rosalie Anders, Betsy Boyle, Melissa Chan, Tom Chase, Amber Clifton, Keith Giamportone, Brian Goldberg, Ted Live, Kris Locke, Christopher Nielson, David Rabkin, Marguerite Reynolds, Keren Schlomy, Quinton Zondervan; *staff*: Susanne Rasmussen, Bronwyn Cooke, John Bolduc

Guests: John Ullman, Elizabeth Marsh, Andrew Vitvitsky

Director's Report:

- NetZero – City has secured a consultant to assess the 2030 and 2040 energy supply
- Solar-ready zoning proposal in process (but some buildings – both old and new - can't support the weight)
- Working on LEED and stretch code
- Starting to talk with Harvard about net-zero labs
- Working to identify city buildings that are suitable for solar
- “Sunny Cambridge” is generating signups for residential solar installations (in collaboration with EnergySage, a platform that provides competitive bids from vetted installers)
- The City is offering 1-year free Wegowise accounts, to enable owners of multi-family buildings to track their energy use – so far, 18 buildings are participating (Wegowise also helps identify potential energy efficiencies)
- The 2016 Climate Congress is coming up; still looking for nominations
- Working on trying to move buses faster, while also assisting bikes and pedestrians
- Preparedness plan – integrating with the Envision process, starting with a task force on Alewife flood risk (hope for end of year) - involves staff and consultants
- Lots of bike and solar-energy projects have been submitted in the City's Participatory Budgeting Process

Commercial PACE (Property-Assessed Clean Energy)

John DiModica, of Sustainable Real Estate Solutions and administer of the Rhode Island C-PACE program

Massachusetts is considering developing a C-PACE program; legislation has been enacted and a program is being developed to hopefully start in 2017. Such a program will need municipal opt-ins (since it involves tax bills); this is a new application of special assessments. It is based on providing a public benefit – specifically, energy efficiency and use of renewables.

PACE eliminates the need for proving credit quality, and provides upfront capital. Features: 100% financing, long-term, lower energy costs, cashflow-positive projects, can combine with utility and tax incentives, no personal guarantees needed, and the payment obligation transfers automatically upon sale.

Participation would be voluntary; covered costs could include engineering studies, energy audits, feasibility studies, and extended warranties.

Currently, PACE programs are operating at ~6% interest rates. As contrasted with self-funded projects, where the focus is on short-term payback, PACE is focused on cash flow, with 3rd-party, long-term financing. The program can even work for (non-municipal) properties that aren't normally assessed property tax; in these cases, tax bills would be generated for this purpose. However, it's not easy for municipal projects to participate. There's a YouTube clip showing an example of a non-profit customer at https://youtu.be/Dm_mOW3XwLA

Meeting with City Manager

The annual meeting of CPAC with the City Manager and department heads, tentatively scheduled for October, may be pushed later, depending on speed of the appointment process; if it looks as if it will be later than November, CPAC might try to meet just with department heads.

Possible topics that were suggested for the meeting with the new City Manager included:

having a master class on environmental issues in Cambridge; using the CPAC goals as springboard for future activities; presenting ourselves to the City Manager (our range of constituencies, and concern about the issues); and asking how CPAC could add value to his/her goals?

Announcements

Climate Congress – an exercise in climate citizenship/aiming to incorporate climate action into our lives. There will be sessions over 6 weeks to develop concepts and understanding; the closing session is scheduled for November 12. The Congress is still seeking delegates, both organizational and individual.

The 2017 Greenbuild Conference (with 25,000 participants) will be in held at the Boston Convention Center from November 8-10; it will include tours of local green buildings. They're still looking for conference volunteers

On October 5 at the Cambridge Friends' Meetinghouse, there will be a talk on green economy.

Notes by Ted Live