

City of Cambridge  
CLIMATE COMMITTEE

**Minutes**

November 9, 2023

Hybrid: In-person and Virtual Meeting  
Register in advance for this meeting:  
[Zoom Link](#)

- 6:00 pm 1. Welcome and approval of minutes (David Rabkin)
- 6:05 2. Public Comment (Public) – [Public attendance but no comments](#)
- 6:10 3. Group Agreements (All)

*Objective: Create agreements about what we need from ourselves and others to make this committee space safe and productive.*

The committee began this work last month and mostly completed this month, with finalization of the last two sections rolled over to next month (10 minutes). Suzanne captured updates in the group agreements document [HERE](#). Notes on discussion below:

- Participation: Clarified step up / step back describes noticing how much you are speaking and ensuring everyone has an opportunity to speak.
- Facilitation: The group discussed what facilitation processes were used in preparing for this month and agreed to move those forward.
  - **The group decided to create a list of rotating note takers via sign-up sheet**
- Decision Making: The group discussed multiple options for decision making and chose to rely on majority voting. The group also discussed when votes should be formal (i.e., officially counted and documented) versus informal.
  - **The group needs to know the number for quorum**
- Communication: The group identified the importance of most of the previous bullet points but chose to remove the bullet on privacy of individual perspectives since the meetings are public

- 6:40 4. Group Actions around type (resilience, equity & justice, mitigation, and adaptation) and existing City plans (All)

*Objective: Reveal areas where there are not currently plans in place, or areas that need more robust actions/activity/planning.*

This discussion is a continuation from last meeting. Last meeting, we brainstormed actions taken by the city council (19), businesses (21), and residents (30) around climate change. Meghan then grouped these actions into categories of resilience (5), equity & justice (12), mitigation (47), and adaptation (2). The goal of the discussion was to leverage this documentation of the committee's current understanding of actions to define future meeting agendas. Notes on the discussion below:

- Category definitions:
  - Resilience
  - Equity & Justice:
  - Mitigation:

- **Adaptation:**
- Future meeting topics:
  - Buildings & BEUDO
  - Urban tree canopy
  - Food waste
  - **Rachel will create a form to collect meeting topics from the committee**
- Proposed agenda approach:
  - The committee will develop a standard agenda that mixes education with discussion and gap identification
  - The topic will change month to month (or as needed) and cover focus areas of the climate and resilience plans or other topics identified by the committee
  - The agenda will also consider the three priorities laid out below
  - Members of the committee will read preparatory materials as needed in order to arrive to the meeting with needed background information
  - For all topics, we should think about resilience, mitigation, and equity
  - For all topics, we should think about systemic and individual actions
  - Request for information from city staff on what the city is doing for each agenda topic
  - **The next facilitation and planning group will design a draft agenda based on this discussion which the committee will test at the next meeting**
- Discussion Points:
  - Gaps in knowledge of resilience & adaptation: The group discussed the general turn of the climate movement to resilience & adaptation upon realizing that mitigation is not enough. The group also identified that mitigation actions feel like they happen more on an individual level whereas resilience actions feel bigger and city-driven.
  - Suzanne's identification of current city priorities & the needs of the staff
    - Buildings is very important now, then transportation, and lowest waste
    - The staff is also working on executing the resiliency plan
    - What would be helpful for staff from a community input perspective:
      1. How do we create an informed community? Informed on climate change in general, what Cambridge is doing, and what actions we need from them.
      2. How can the city support the community in taking key actions (e.g., home electrification)?
      3. How can the city create a just transition?

7:40

#### 5. Director's update (Susanne Rasmussen)

- **Net Zero Action Plan Report Comment Letter:** The committee is required to review the annual status report and provide comments via letter to the city manager and then the city council. Suzanne can provide last year's letter as a sample. The net zero action plan and the 2022 annual report can be accessed [HERE](#).
  - Timeline: Suzanne is developing the report now, the identified sub-committee will review it prior to the next meeting, the committee will discuss at the next meeting, final letter will be completed by February
  - **Sign up: a sign-up sheet was completed in the meeting. Anyone wishing to be added should email Meghan.**
- **Committee Officer Elections:** A sub-committee to design the nomination and election process was identified. Elections will be completed in January
  - **Sign up: a sign-up sheet was completed in the meeting. Anyone wishing to be added should email Meghan.**
- **City Manager & Department Head Meeting Attendance:** The city manager and a selection of department heads will attend our February meeting. The city manager will give remarks and answer questions. A sub-committee was created to develop questions

- **Sign up: a sign-up sheet was completed in the meeting. Anyone wishing to be added should email Meghan.**
- **State Climate Office Report:** The new state climate office issued a status report (available [HERE](#)) for state climate initiatives. Steven proposed we create a sub-committee to review the report and identify how it might influence our actions at a municipal level.
  - **Sign up: a sign-up sheet was completed in the meeting. Anyone wishing to be added should email Meghan.**
- **Upcoming Events:**
  - **Final BEUDO amendment vote:** 11/28
  - **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update:** Current assignment for the department, covering climate change based hazards and others. Due to FEMA by the end of. This year. A hearing will be upcoming, TBA.

7:55

10. Adjournment