

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE CLIMATE COMMITTEE

JULY 18, 2024 | 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. CITYWIDE SENIOR CENTER & VIRTUAL (ZOOM LINK)

MEETING MINUTES

6:14 PM Welcome & Approval of Minutes (Mallorie Barber)

- Michelle Holmes made a statement about leaving the Committee as a member of the Committee and as the Chair.
- Minutes will be approved at a later date due late distribution of the document.

6:05 PM Director's Update (Susanne Rasmussen)

- Climate chief hiring process is ongoing, all interviews will be complete around this week
- Bus service - Easy Ride shuttle which has been running since 2002 (has been paid for by businesses that are participating by mandate or choice), was made fare free during COVID, decision made to continue this model and \$1M in litigation funds (should cover 2 years of service) will be directed toward Easy Ride to make it all day and weekends
 - No MBTA service in that corridor
 - Runs every 8 minutes, better than any other MBTA service
 - Starting Sept 30th running all day and weekends
- Working on a shade study
 - Will include shade from trees and buildings over time in the summer
 - Focused on sidewalks and paths
 - It will be available online
 - Will be used for planning services including tree planting and others, esp. With increasing heat concerns
- Climate Bill
 - In the final stretch in the state house
 - We will continue advocating hard to retain provision that prevents commercial electricity suppliers from marketing directly to rate payers (rate payers amendments)
 - Fell out in the House version but we are hoping to make it stick
 - Aggregation is losing low income rate payers b/c of this and they are losing money, low income people are being targeted
- Launched ARPA funded small business efficiency program
 - Show COVID impact
 - \$1M program to cover costs not covered by other incentives for equipment (not installation)
 - 2 years to spend the money
 - Marketing it heavily now
 - Nonprofits are included

6:15 PM CRLS Student Report Out (Amaya Giannini (guest) & Hajer Hyte (member))

- Leadership transition in youth organizations is difficult, given graduations, etc; but, the CRLS students have a good plan for keeping the organization running after they leave.
- Amaya Giannini - We created a climate coalition at CRLS to listen more to frontline communities and hear more diverse voices in the climate crisis.
 - Worked with a number of clubs at the school and tried to address climate education in Massachusetts.
 - Held a climate week with the goal of integrating climate education into CRLS, recognizing that teachers have the ability to enhance the curriculum with more climate information.
 - Both students and teachers had positive feedback from the event.
- *Did specific teachers help with the planning process?*
 - Yes, a marine biology teacher played an important advisory role.
- *Committee expressed a willingness to help find speakers for next years' Climate Week assembly.*
- *Could you share a few of your ideas for next year? What are your thoughts on state-level climate education?*
 - Their focus was on state-level policy changes to expand climate education both from a scientific and non-scientific lens.
 - Massachusetts has a youth-written bill that aims to expand interdisciplinary climate education in the state.
 - Next year, they hope that there will be an assembly at the end of the program as well as art installations.

6:25 PM Buildings Background Discussion (Nikhil)

[Content Link](#)

- Net Zero Action Plan overview - NZAP deals with energy efficiency in existing buildings, net zero new construction, low carbon energy supply, and financing/capacity building.
- Requirements/Incentives/Actions are categorized according to whether they apply to existing buildings, new buildings, or the energy supply.
- Residential decarbonization resources:
 - Electrify Cambridge - Decarbonization advising program
 - Cambridge Community Electricity
 - Renter and owner support for no-cost home energy assessments
 - Rooftop solar support
 - BlocPower program for multifamily electrification financing
- Electrify Cambridge:
 - Began in July 2023 and combined two programs: "Cambridge Clean Heat" (heat pump program) and "Multifamily Retrofit Advisor"
 - Bridge the gap between what MassSave offered for small residential and needs for medium and large buildings

- Free electrification and decarbonization technical assistance and long-term planning for any residential building for heat pumps, solar panels, water heaters, induction stoves, etc.
- *Is Energy Sage part of this or can people use either?*
 - The City has a partnership with Energy Sage.
- Progress updates after one year:
 - Achieved SMART goal to engage with 750 units per year. This year, they engaged with 859 units and had 291 consultations, ultimately yielding 115 long-term decarbonization plans.
- Larger residential (10+ units) are larger in scope but have a larger impact on decarbonization.
- *There's the 2050 target and there's lifetime equipment. Maybe the goal should be closer to 2,000 units per year in order to reach the 2050 targets.*
- Electrify Cambridge aims to provide longer-term plans in order to help them schedule equipment changes over time.
- The goal is to increase the number of units served over time.
- Ongoing challenges include project costs (even with incentives), consensus building within condo associations, inability to use operating funds to improve private property projects, challenges of data tracking and getting the follow-up surveys back from program participants.
- *Are you finding that people are doing one thing at a time to decarbonize? Is one of the deterrents that people would have to upgrade an electrical service?*
 - Unsure about whether they're doing one at a time.
 - Electrical capacity - people may be trying to avoid panel upgrades. For multi-family buildings, it requires a service upgrade which can be a long and complicated process with Eversource.
- Policy background on Building Performance Standards for Residential and Small Commercial Buildings
 - The city is exploring the best mechanism to path to next zero emissions. The regulation would be based on GHG emissions but the process of choosing the transaction points is difficult and administratively burdensome.
 - Alternatively, the city could explore issues around replacement of fossil fuel-based equipment. This would involve prohibiting the installation of new fossil-fuel equipment at the time of replacing the old equipment. This is a less disruptive option.
 - Another option is to prohibit the installation of new fossil fuel equipment but all equipment must be transitioned over by 2050.
 - There's legal authority to set a greenhouse gas threshold and base the policy on concern about emissions NOT about equipment.
- *Have you considered phasing in a certain equipment based on affordability, decarbonization potential, etc.?*
 - Not currently. Some technologies are easier to replace now and some will be easier to replace in a few years.
- Policy development plan:

- The City is currently working on a regulatory review by conducting a working group of City Departments as well as an internal working group to understand the practicalities of implementing the building performance standards as well as technical pathways.
- The City is also working to implement a community stakeholder education and engagement working group.
- These processes are going to continue during the next fiscal year.
- *Are we setting goals based on the final outcome or on the engagement?*
- Next Steps:
 - We're not meeting in August, but we will return to the building issue in October.
 - *Request to send around the presentation before the discussion so people can review it.*
 - The Committee will engage in community outreach on the issue in order to get a sense of what people know about residential programs, whether they've used them, whether they would consider using them, etc. It may also be useful to consider asking for opinions about what people would think about with regards to an eventual ban on installation of fossil fuel equipment.

7:25 PM Leadership Updates (Mallorie Barber)

- Plan: Re-do the elections so everyone has the opportunity to be considered.
- Voting will occur online in order to expedite the process. The election sub-committee will put forward nominations and members will have the chance to self-nominate. A form will be sent to committee members as well as a description of positions.
- Committee membership has diminished over the course of the year, so we will be opening applications for membership to refill seats.

7:50 PM Public Comment and Member Updates

- No public comments.
- Member Updates
 - Pasang: Moving to Houston, TX so will not be a Cambridge resident.
 - Hajer: Going to college and will be leaving Cambridge as well.
 - 16-18 year old job opportunity in Cambridge launching again in the fall - Green Cambridge Canopy Crew

7:59 PM Adjournment