

CPAC meeting

February 13, 2020, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

City Hall Annex, 4th Floor Meeting Room

Attending: Melissa Chan (Chair), Steven Nutter (Vice Chair), Fred Hewett, Ted Live, Trisha Montalbo, Keren Schlomy, Jerrad Pierce, Peter Crawley, Julie Wormser (note taking); **Staff:** Bronwyn Cooke, Meghan Shaw; **Guest:** Jim Butler.

ETP Director's Report (Bronwyn)

- Resilient Mystic Collaborative received a \$390k grant with Somerville, Everett, Chelsea, Boston, Winthrop, Revere, Medford to do regional infrastructure resiliency assessment with facility managers.
- Capital funds to DPW to plant 1,000 trees in FY21, support soil analysis and community engagement. Extended moratorium on removing 8"+ trees until end of the year or when street tree ordinance has passed
- DPW received MassDEP matching funds to buy three electric trash packers
- Net Zero Action Plan recommendations are under final review
- Proposed amendment to safe cycling ordinance—recommends that separated bike lanes will be built out within a certain time frame
- Net Zero Action Plan 2019 report will be submitted to city council Feb 24

Community Electricity Program (Municipal Aggregation)—Meghan Shaw

- Program helps Cambridge move toward zero GHG emission electricity
- BEUDO (Building Energy Disclosure Ordinance)—includes large users (including Cambridge); they typically competitively bid their energy
 - Large buildings: 846 buildings: 6% of buildings, 55% of area, 60% of total energy use, 71% of GHG emissions
 - 94% of buildings = 29% of emissions
- Most participants in Community Electricity Program are small commercial and residential users
- Community choice electricity aggregation
 - Form of group purchase; city or town selects an electricity supplier on behalf of residents/businesses to bring prices down, green its supply
 - 95 communities in Mass do this
- Everyone in Cambridge gets an Eversource bill, regardless of electricity supplier
 - Every Eversource Basic Service customer is automatically enrolled; can opt out anytime with no penalty
 - Affects supply charges, not delivery charges
- Goals for program
 - Increase amount/quality of renewable energy (above RPS)
 - Leverage community electricity purchase to support additional local renewable energy
 - Provide additional choice of product and cost by offering “standard” (16% renewable, i.e., statewide renewable portfolio standard) and “premium” (100% renewable, slightly more expensive—actual renewables plus renewable energy credits--RECs) green options

- City Manager committed to having community cost be no more than Eversource Basic Supply rate
- Primary way communities have greened their electricity supply is via RECs
 - Cambridge is going to collect an “operational adder” to actually build a local solar project (and retiring its RECs) instead of just buying RECs for projects elsewhere
 - “standard” (opt-out) and “premium” (opt-in)

Future options to increase project impact

- Link aggregation to the municipal renewable energy supply strategy
 - Hoping to find an opportunity to lock in municipal contract that also covers community aggregation program. Hard to do b/c they’re longer-term contracts. Increased demand aggregation could lead to larger additionality.
- Use the operational adder funds for solar on non-municipal sites
 - Add equity component, pay low-moderate income or non-profit property owners to install solar to roofs; pay owner lease payment or net metering credits,
- Additional ideas from discussion
 - Could help pay for new roof under solar panels (e.g., on cash-strapped churches).
 - Mount solar on EV charging stations
 - Parking canopy ground mounts (also lose heat islands)—but can be much higher b/c have to build structure and can’t get economy of scale
 - Program to lease roof space from commercial, other buildings not developing own solar
 - Need to look at large installations outside Cambridge

BEUDO buildings—will have option of either retrofitting their buildings or paying into a local carbon fund to decrease emissions elsewhere (e.g., solar elsewhere, heat pumps on residential buildings)

Innovative model:

1. Aggregation participant pays \$0.0002 adder on each kWh into City Energy Fund
2. Accumulates \$1.3m/2 years
3. City finances solar project, which generates RECs (retired), plus net metering credits (to be sold)
4. Revenues from net metering will go back into expanding Revolving Loan Fund
5. Results: Aggregation participants get GHG reduction credits, future projects are funded by adder revenues, and GHG reduction projects generate additional revenues.
6. Possible site: roofs of Cambridge municipal buildings (e.g., Graham and Parks School)

Planning for City Manager Meeting

Proposed for May; John is working to schedule

Priority issues:

- Our fall letter requesting the City to provide the same resources for a net-zero transportation plan as it did for buildings
- Status of Urban Forestry Plan
- Natural Gas Ban (like Brookline)
- Shadow pricing for carbon (triple bottom line)

- Status of Envision Cambridge, Flood Resilient Zoning processes—how they relate to climate goals, any new regulations
- Encourage him/City to take bolder actions (examples—encourage him to push for increased % of green energy, even if it's a little more expensive; people voted for climate projects in participatory budgeting)—there's an appetite for it far beyond CPAC. Cambridge should be setting a bold example for elsewhere.
- We need to incorporate appropriate metrics from Envision Cambridge into our city budget so that it's not just focused on pure cost, but cost-effectiveness of meeting stated goals. What does he need to see in order to make these blended (financial and climate goals) decisions?
- Bronwyn and Melissa will work to frame these ideas so they're more cohesive
- Maybe we could have a meaningful dialogue on a few deep issues that we need to work on to make progress? What does he need to see from proposals for him to be bolder/faster on these issues? Help us understand his world/constraints so we can understand what's a success for him. Could we more proactively be thought leaders for others?
- How do we fit all these future-looking progressive plans (like Envision Cambridge) into current staffing structure?

Committee Officers

Current officers:

Chair: Melissa Chan

Vice Chair: Steven Nutter

Secretary: Tom Chase

Vote: Delayed to next meeting

Member Reports

None

Public Comment

None

Adjourned 8:00 pm