

City of Cambridge

CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION COMMITTEE

Minutes

November 12, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Attendees: Melissa Chan (Chair), Steven Nutter (Vice Chair), Tom Chase (Secretary), Rosalie Anders, Peter Crawley, Nicole Morell, Fred Hewett, Lyn Huckabee, Ted Live, Trisha Montalbo, Jerrad Pierce, David Rabkin, Keren Schlomy; *staff:* Susanne Rasmussen, Bronwyn Cooke, John Bolduc, Seth Federspiel

Guests: Pat Haswell, Helen Weeks

Approval of Minutes

With a minor correction (regarding insulation in the Article 22 zoning amendment), the October minutes were approved.

ETP Director's Report

Suzanne Rasmussen provided the ETP Director's Report.

- A cross-department team is working with consultants on 100% renewable energy. The work is progressing well, and a report should be available in a few months.
- The state Property Assessed Clean Energy regulation was finalized, and a number of communities are in adoption phase. John and others looking at how that will work in Cambridge.
- The City Council passed an amendment to the Cycling Safety Ordinance, which will require the City to build out over 20 miles of protected bike lanes by 2026. The Council showed strong support (7-1) for the amendment, although it will entail a reduction in on-street parking.
- Councilor Carlone has offered an amendment to the Article 22 zoning law which would require developers to show comparisons between the costs of projects with and without fossil-free heating and cooling systems. Adoption is anticipated.
- CDD is currently studying proposed cuts at the MBTA, including cuts to bus routes in Cambridge. The department is collaborating with other mayors to look for alternatives and assurances that service levels will be reinstated once the pandemic crisis eases.
- The MBTA is planning to operate, sometime in 2021, a pilot program for battery-electric buses out of the Trolley Square Garage in North Cambridge.
- The City received a Municipal Vulnerability Planning grant from the state (OEEA), and will be working with MAPC to prepare an extreme heat response plan.

Net Zero Action Plan Progress Report

Peter Crawley, Keren Schlomy, and Seth Federspiel (CDD) presented a draft of a letter to the City Manager from CPAC regarding the FY20 progress report on the Net-Zero Action Plan.

- In light of the increased focus on the NZAP five-year progress update, the annual report is abbreviated.
- In general, the City has encountered intransigent challenges on the path to net-zero, and we are behind schedule. GHG data for the period 2013-2018 show increases in emissions from commercial and residential buildings alike. With new buildings going up regularly, we are unlikely to see reductions in GHG emissions.
- CPAC's letter will focus on the highest impact items. The BEUDO amendment to introduce performance requirements is the most high impact initiative, but it has been stalled for two years. (BEUDO buildings account for a large part of the city's emissions.)
- Seth noted that changes at this time to the GHG reductions schedule could result in a delay of the NZAP amendment.
- Recognizing the need to act on the letter prior to the next meeting of the five-year review task force, CPAC voted unanimously to conduct the final vote to approve the letter by email after Peter has made the edits discussed in committee.

Passive House Experience

- Tom Chase gave a presentation on Passive House projects, notably Finch Cambridge, a multi-family affordable housing project near Fresh Pond. This development features exceptional performance on all key metrics (heat demand, cooling demand, heating load, cooling load, source energy requirements), and includes a 105.6 kW rooftop solar array.

Member Updates

- Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources is in the process of planning for energy efficiency programs in the 2022-2024 timeframe. Three more public input sessions are planned.
- Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities approved Eversource to pilot a geothermal district heating project.

Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

Notes by Fred Hewett