

Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2010

Attendees: David Rabkin (Chair), Barry Hilts, Jan Dillon, Jon Abe, Kathy Araujo, Keren Schlomy, Lauren Miller, Marguerite Reynolds, Steve Lanou

Staff: Susanne Rasmussen, Rosalie Anders, John Bolduc, Iram Farooq

The meeting opened with a brief discussion of the May 13th meeting minutes. A sufficient number of committee members was not present in order to approve the May meeting minutes.

E&TP Director

Susanne Rasmussen reported:

- *Cambridge Green Community* – The state designated Cambridge and 34 other communities as “Green Communities,” as part the Green Communities Program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. In order to be designated, the City adopted five measures satisfying required criteria, such as development of an Energy Reduction Plan and adoption of the Stretch Energy Code. The program provides funding to support energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fossil fuel reduction measures. Cambridge will receive \$283,770, which the City proposed to apply toward a revolving, municipal green energy fund, which reverts savings to the fund.
- *Stretch Energy Code* – The Stretch Energy Code, an appendix to the state energy code allowing local authorities to apply higher energy efficiency standards to buildings relative to a base requirement, will take effect July 1, 2010 in Cambridge. Residential training was offered on May 18. A focus group to discuss implementation with architects, contractors, etc was also held on June 3. Conservation Services Group agreed to train residents and contractors.
- *Go Green Awards* - The GoGreen Business Award event was held on May 25.
- *2010 Climate Showcase Communities Grant* – The US EPA manages a competitive grant program to assist local/tribal governments to develop replicable efficiency and climate management initiatives that foster climate benefits along with job creation and measures to meet other, local priorities. Cambridge applied last year and scored close to the selected projects. This year’s deadline is July 26.
- *Community Development* – Beth Rubenstein, director of the city’s community development department, will resign next week to assume a new position. A new director is being sought.

- *MIT-NSTAR* – A new efficiency-focused partnership was launched by MIT and NSTAR recently. MIT Efficiency Forward, the most aggressive, single efficiency project in NSTAR history, is designed to reduce electricity use by 15% on the MIT campus over three years through programs, stakeholder engagement, and use of new technologies and approaches.
- *Harvard* – Harvard reported that it has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 7% in the period 2006-2009. This reduction is part of a larger initiative to reduce emissions to levels that are 30% below the 2006 total by 2016.

Green Building Zoning Amendments

Iram Farooq provided an overview of the Green Building/Zoning Task Force recommendations and proposed zoning amendments pending approval by the City Council. The fifteen member, Green Building/Zoning Task Force - comprised of members from energy companies, architects, environmental conservation non-profits, community, etc – put forward recommendations to develop green building standards and foster more energy efficient building practices. Recommendations were then translated into zoning amendments. One of two hearings has occurred with full discussion expected at the August 2 City Council meeting. The petition includes four sections, covering: Green Buildings Standards for Large Development/LEED; Green Roofs; Impediments to Building Green in the Zoning Ordinance; and Solar Energy Systems. Key elements are as follows:

- Green Buildings Standards for Large Development/LEED – Formal certification by the USGBC/GBCI will not be mandated for significant construction or rehabilitation of existing buildings that are currently bound by requirements related to a special permit or that require a development consultation. LEED green building criteria must be satisfied at a minimum per the following standards:
 - LEED Certified – 25,000-49,999 square feet
 - LEED Silver - 50,000 square feet and larger
- Green Roofs – To encourage development of green roofs, decks and patios which satisfy detailed conditions, allowances will be granted for exclusion of such modifications from gross floor area (GFA) calculations.
- Impediments to Building Green in the Zoning Ordinance – In addition to the above allowances, other energy reduction measures, such as types of insulation, shading apparatuses and exterior walls, will be excluded from GFA calculation within certain limits.
- Solar Energy Systems – “Installation of building-mounted, solar energy systems will require a building permit and list of solar energy system permits.” Such systems would be designated as mechanical equipment in the ordinance and not be subject to FAR and height restrictions.

Additional details may be found in the Memorandum from Beth Rubenstein to Robert Healy, dated March 25, 2010, and Task Force recommendations.

David Rabkin inquired if there are any 'sticking points'. Iram indicated there don't appear to be any. John Bolduc mentioned that the Planning Board recommended adoption. Steve Lanou asked if there was any push-back in terms of cost to builders. Iram indicated there hasn't been push-back, since the market is driving LEED requirements.

Discussion followed on how CPAC could put forward a letter of endorsement. A draft letter will be developed.

Climate Protection Action Update Mailing

David Rabkin opened general discussion on a CPAC mailing. Questions centered on the aim, content, frequency and target group of such a mailing. A range of suggestions were put forward, including a newsletter with tips and best practices of local celebrities as well as average citizens. Conservation was suggested as a specific item of note. General agreement appeared to focus on collaborating with the Cambridge Energy Alliance to develop illustrative cases. A subcommittee will air this further.

Climate Working Group

Susanne Rasmussen provided an update on the Climate Working Group, which was convened by the Mayor to follow up on the Climate Emergency Congress, that to date completed four of five meetings (final meeting June 21). The group included the representatives of the Congress, Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Community Development Department director, Public Works Commissioner, and City staff. Much discussion centered on how to effectively measure performance. No report has been released on emissions since 2006. John Bolduc indicated that issues exist over how to interpret the data. No process exists currently to resolve these questions. A CPAC subcommittee will be formed to examine this.

State Climate Protection Plan

The state legislature set a greenhouse gas emission reduction goal of 10-25% below the 1990 level by 2010. The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs is required to select a specific target in that range and develop a climate protection plan. A draft framework has been issued for public comment. Public meetings are being held on this. John invited people to assist with CPAC comments. Comments are due by July 15.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Notes prepared by Kathy Araujo