

City of Cambridge  
CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION COMMITTEE

**Minutes**

Thursday, October 13, 2011  
City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway

*Attendees:* David Rabkin (chair), Quinton Zondervan (vice chair), Marguerite Reynolds (secretary), Milton Bevington, Betsy Boyle, Jackie Cefola, Peter Crawley, Janet Curtis, John Francis, Nathan Gauthier, Heather Henriksen, Sarah Hill, Barry Hilts, Lyn Huckabee, Johanna Jobin, Ted Live, Lauren Miller, Tom Page, Suzanne Shepard, Keren Schlomy, Torrey Wolff, Scott Wood; *staff:* Susanne Rasmussen, John Bolduc

*Guests:* Anne Sexton, Emily Mailloux, Joanna Hamilton, Nathan Robins, Laura Smead, Samuel Berk, Brenna Simonson, John MacDougall, John Pitkin

**6:03 pm:** Welcome by David Rabkin, CPAC Chair. Brief committee introductions before start of webinar.

**Presentation by Michael Armstrong, Senior Sustainability Manager, Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability.** Mr. Armstrong presented via Skype and slides on Portland's approaches to engage the public on climate change. The presentation was titled "City of Portland and Multnomah County Climate Action Plan."

- He showed several examples of freeways and parking lots transformed into parks, including the old Harbor Drive, which is now a waterfront park. Portland started building light rail instead of highways starting in the 70's, and recently completed a light rail/bicycle bridge that doesn't carry cars.
- Portland laid an urban growth boundary 30 years ago to set limits on development, which has made many of its initiatives possible.
- Climate Action Plan 2009 set sights on 2050 at 80% below 1990, then 2030 (40% below), with 2012 actions. Prioritize near term actions that begin to achieve 2050 target.
- Climate Plan is aligned with the Portland's Economic Development Strategy, Watershed plan, Bicycle master plan, social equity initiatives, and feeds into the Portland Plan.
- Set up a carbon budget, to be managed like other city budgets. 2030 and 2050 scenarios. Per person carbon use, miles traveled per person, electricity use per person. Then think about what actions have to occur to cut e.g., miles traveled in half.

Climate Action Plan has 8 areas of focus, and he covered the following six.

1. Buildings and Energy. Reduce energy use, more onsite renewables, building can adapt to climate change.
  - a. Clean energy works. Residential retrofits, low income households get low interest rate, loan repaid on utility bill, workforce agreement to create good jobs. Very successful, positive feedback. 6000 homes is targeted for weatherization. 1000 done. 20-25% is typical action rate after audit.

- b. Renewable energy. Goal 10 MW solar by 2012. 9.8MW installed by 2010, based largely on Solarize incentive program. Neighborhood activists created Solarize. Group purchasing of solar systems for economies. Competitive sourcing, bulk purchase, educational workshops, free site assessments, short-term enrollment period. ~\$6/W under Solarize, \$7/W market price. The program led to real market shifts, as suppliers reached out to those who didn't make it into the program and offered the same program price.
- 2. Urban Form and Mobility.
  - a. Transportation hierarchy formalized, putting pedestrians at top, then bikes, public transportation, commercial vehicles, high occupancy vehicles, and single occupancy vehicles. Also documented baseline mode of transportation split, and set 2030 goals that reduce single occupancy driving, increase biking, and transit.
  - b. More walkable neighborhoods. Strong public support. People object to discussion of density, but love walking places. So focus on walkability in communications.
  - c. % bike commuters up to 6% from 2% in last 10 years. Significant but still small compared to what's possible.
  - d. Bike lanes inside of parking. Bike "boxes" at intersections in front of cars. Spaces reserved for bikes in front of businesses. Can fit more customers in space than could if cars parked. Business supports.
  - e. Certain streets designated as bicycle boulevards—safer riding, cars tend to avoid.
  - f. Integrating stormwater management (green ways) with bike networks.
- 3. Consumption and Solid Waste.
  - a. Waste reduction/recycling. Very information dependent and challenging.
  - b. Starting (Oct 21, 2011) weekly curbside pick up of food scraps, compost, and recycling, and every other week garbage pickup.
- 4. Urban Forestry.
  - a. Positive public support.
- 5. Food and Agriculture
  - a. Carbon impact of food choice. Need to discuss meat consumption. 8x the carbon impact per calorie than grains. Very sensitive issue; can't tell people what to eat.
  - b. Challenging to engage community, need to educate on trade-offs relative to overall goals.
  - c. 16% of individual carbon impact is food-choice related.
- 6. Community Engagement
  - a. To motivate residents and businesses, attend their meetings, don't call them to yours.
  - b. [www.portlandonline.com/bps/rethink.com](http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/rethink.com)
  - c. Choosing local resources [www.portlandonline.com/bps/BeResourceful.com](http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/BeResourceful.com)
  - d. Focus on quality of life improvements that allow people to experience sense of community.

The Portland Plan --- framework and strategic action, is a comprehensive plan being released soon to public for comment. Doesn't call out carbon directly—embedded in actions that are focused on community.

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**7:11 Q&A**

*How do clouds affect output of PV installations in Portland?*

Doesn't have a quantitative answer, but Portland has the same basic climate as Germany and Japan, which have strong solar programs.

*Clean energy works loans—if homeowner sells, does it create lien?*

Still working on way to transfer loan to purchaser. Pilot required payout.

*Noticed deemphasized emissions. Have any good means of quantifying?*

No—Oregon has done work on this, but models are expensive and imprecise. If you can't measure it, its hard to measure progress, and that's especially true of material consumption. The emissions inventory undercounts it, but there is no good way on local level to determine whether progress is being made.

*How was community engaged?*

Have specialists that focus on this.

- City is adopting a social media policy, and each agency will have facebook and twitter accounts. His group has 9 accounts already.
- Key is to focus on public events going on (street fairs, Sunday open parkways—like Memorial Drive), set up at all.
- Also have training programs—offer 12 week training, once a week, for 75 people to teach them everything about waste management. Turn out highly educated people who then put in hours of public service. People gain knowledge, then serve as ambassadors.

*Utility loan program—how did they get utilities to put loan repayment on bills?*

All utilities are investor-owned, all joined on their own, and then state law required them to. The City worked with the utilities to figure out how to do it, and the utility is paid for their role in administering. It took a long time to sort out, but is working.

*Climate action plan has 20-30 objectives. We'd like to do same, but don't have data to establish baseline. How can we gather local data for buildings, community, etc?*

Many cities struggle with this. You can get coarse data from utilities. A commercial benchmarking program is proposed that would require tracking and reporting, but its not in place. Other cities further ahead. Look at NY, Seattle, San Francisco.

*Should we set goals for overall emissions reduction, and if so, how do we account for development?* Need to understand the relationship between the city's climate plan and development plan. Need to track several metrics. Should have overall reduction goal, because that's what programs work toward. Need metrics such as carbon emissions per job, per person by sector, commuting data.

### **7:30 Approval of minutes – September 8, 2011**

Tom Page missing from attendees. With that addition, minutes were approved.

### **7:31 Report of the E&TP Director**

Susanne Rasmussen provided the following update.

- Fiscal year 2012 purchase of RECs completed. Price 1/3 of what expected. Both national and New England RECs. These are used toward meeting the City Council goal that 20% of municipal electricity come from renewable sources.

- Climate change vulnerability assessment consultant services going out for bid in November. Interviews in January, consultant on board in February. Two phase process, vulnerability assessment first, then adaptation plan.
- Building energy rating—DOER just got US DOE grant for commercial building energy rating systems. DOER will conduct a pilot project to develop and refine the asset-based rating system. Cambridge and Boston will work with DOER to recruit commercial building participants; about 3 to 4 buildings in Cambridge would be involved. Since DOER's asset-based approach is likely to take a long time, the City will evaluate whether it makes sense to proceed with operational rating approach similar to what other cities have enacted through ordinance. Washington DC, Seattle, and New York City are being monitored to guide how Cambridge wants to proceed.
- City submitted its first required annual report under Green Communities Grant Program. Achieving city emissions target (2008-2013) was complicated by a changing database system and lack of weather normalization. While municipal energy use relative to the 2008 Green Communities baseline, energy use did increase in 2011 which appears to be significantly affected by there being more heating and cooling degree days. The City believes that it is still on track to meet the 20% energy use reduction goal by 2013 if weather normalization is taken into account.
- Hubway bike sharing – Cambridge won't get stations until spring due to the lack of time before the winter shutdown takes effect in December. Cambridge is expects to have funding for 22 stations; funders have been slow in releasing money that was committed. Have identified approximate locations. Some may take parking spots, similar to Portland Oregon bike corrals. Denver's program is now going from 500 to 800 bikes, and system is financially self-sustaining. Hubway has been very popular since its launch two months ago.

#### **7:42 CPAC Officer Elections**

Committee unanimously elected Quinton Zondervan for Chair, Jackie Cefola for Vice Chair, Marguerite Reynolds for Secretary to serve for one year.

#### **Cambridge Climate Protection Goals & Objectives**

John Bolduc said the revised document retains the aspirational language for the overall goal, and identifies objectives with quantitative metrics intended to move the city toward the overall goal.

- Issue raised of limited resources/staffing Cambridge has to develop and implement plans.
- Could the City require that annual GHG reporting be done by qualified, certified verification process to ensure greater reliability and confidence?
- Portland emphasized livability—plan is optimistic and aspirational, presents attractive future vision. Ambassadors to community are a concept we should consider. Committee members affirmed this approach.
- John emphasized differences between Portland and Cambridge, and why vision will have to be different. The commercial and institutional sectors are a bigger portion of Cambridge's emissions compared to Portland, for example.
- Should include items that are important means to an end, even if we can't measure them.

- Demographics and diversity are critical considerations in community engagement. We need to be smarter about it in the planning process. May be make it an integral component of a communications and engagement plan/strategy.
- Should we communicate urgency? 2020 goal is good, but it would be better if we could do this by 2015. Suggested reorganizing objectives into chronological order, with near term objectives first.

John asked that the Committee read through Portland plan, re-read documents from John, and make specific recommendations within one week.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for November 10.

*Notes by Sarah Hill*