

Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

CPAC BULLETIN

October 2013

MEETING: The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for October 10, 6:00 pm. Note the meeting this month will be held at MIT, Building E25, Room 401 ([click here for MIT map](#)). The meeting is open to the public. The [agenda](#) will be posted on the Community Development Department website. The featured topic this month is a presentation and discussion about community aggregation for electricity supply featuring Paul Gromer, Peregrine Energy Group.

EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **Transportation System Resilience** – The Volpe National Transportation Systems Center is presenting a series of lunch time lectures on “Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather, and Climate Change”. The lectures can be heard in person or by webinar. The first lecture is scheduled for October 8, 12 noon, Volpe Center, 55 Broadway with Steve Winkelman of the Center for Clean Air Policy. For the full schedule and information on the webinar option, [click here](#).
- **Recycling Advisory Committee** – October 9, 8:00 am, City Hall, Sullivan Chamber. [For the agenda, click here](#).
- **Nova’s Megastorm Aftermath** – [Megastorm Aftermath](#) will air on October 9, 9:00 pm on PBS. The episode of Nova will be a followup to the 2012 *Inside the Megastorm*” and examine whether Hurricane Sandy was a freak event, related to climate change, and what can be done to prepare for the next megastorm.
- **GreenPort Forum** - October 15 at 7:00 pm, Cambridgeport Baptist Church, 459 Putnam Ave (corner of Magazine and Putnam). *Beyond Recycling: Taking It to the Next Level*. Cambridge Recycling Director Randi Mail will lead a lively discussion of steps we can take that go beyond normal recycling practices. Topics will include the City’s pilot program for compost pickup from residents; zero waste solutions for individuals and the City; and benefits of reuse. The forum will look at personal choices and City initiatives that can significantly reduce our carbon footprint.
- **Cleantech Open Northeast** – October 17, 3:30 – 9:30 pm, Boston University School of Management, 595 Massachusetts Avenue, 9th floor, Boston. Come hear about the clean technology ideas that have been proposed by area entrepreneurs. It is the culmination of the annual accelerator program. This year there are 35+ semifinalists from all across the Northeast region with a variety of technologies and business models, and this event promises to showcase the cream of the crop as our top companies compete for the regional prizes. The event is an opportunity to network with clean tech entrepreneurs and investors. **See the attached flyer for more information.** To register, [click here](#).
- **Candidates Forum on Energy & Environment** – October 30, 7:00 to 9:30 pm, Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Avenue. Come hear the City Council candidates’ positions on climate change and its impacts in Cambridge, Mystic and Charles Rivers water quality, protection of the Alewife Brook reservation, sustainability and more. Green Cambridge is hosting the seventh biennial City Council Candidates’ Night on energy and environmental issues. The event is cosponsored by the Mystic River Watershed Association, GreenPort, the Charles River Conservancy, The Home Energy Efficiency Team and others.
- **Crowds & Climate Conference** – November 6-7, Kresge Auditorium, MIT. This conference will focus on bottom-up approaches to climate change using new information technologies such as crowdsourcing,

social media, and big data to develop innovative ideas and stimulate action. Sponsored by the MIT Climate CoLab. For more information, [click here](#). The conference is free if you attend, but costs if you register and don't attend.

- **Global Clean Tech Meet Up** – November 12-14, Boston & Cambridge. Seaport World Trade Center, Boston. For more information, including registration, [click here](#).
- **EcoDistricts Summit** – November 12-14, Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. For more information, including registration, [click here](#).
- **ArchitectureBoston Expo** – November 19-21, Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. Annual conference and tradeshow for the design and construction industry. Many sustainability topics on the agenda. [For more information, click here](#).
- **CERES Conference** – April 30 – May 1, 2014, Boston. Registration opens in December.
- **Friends of Alewife Reservation Walks** - Wildlife walks sponsored by [FAR](#) impart the history and background to the DCR's Alewife Reservation, a rare urban wild in Cambridge. The walks are led by a professional wildlife assessor, Dave Brown. Tours last 2 hours. To prepare for the tour, or to get a "Virtual Tour", [click here](#).
- **Green Streets** – This initiative encourages people throughout Cambridge (and Somerville and surrounding cities and towns) to use a green form of transportation (transit, bicycle, walk, skate) on a designated day of the month and to wear a green-colored item of attire. The goal is to make Cambridge and neighboring cities safer, quieter, and friendlier for pedestrians and cyclists, and to minimize the use and impact of cars. Generally, the designated day is the last Friday of the month. Check the [Cambridge Green Streets Initiative website](#) for more info and incentives.
- **350.Org** - 350 Massachusetts is a volunteer-led, campaign-focused initiative connecting and organizing a strong grassroots coalition to address climate change and build a just and secure future beyond fossil fuels. Meetings are held every two weeks. All meetings are held at First Church Cambridge, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA and begin at 6PM for potluck and networking, with the general meeting and working groups at 7PM. More info at www.350MA.org.
- **Green Cambridge** - Green Cambridge is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization and a founding chapter of the Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN). Green Cambridge works to create a more sustainable Cambridge, and to protect the environment for the health and safety of all. Green Cambridge meets monthly at the Eastern Bank community room in Harvard Square, usually on the first Thursday of every month at 6:30pm. All are welcome and invited to attend! For more information and a listing of community events, please visit: <http://www.greencambridge.org/>

NEWS

- **Candidates for CPAC & RAC Sought** – The City of Cambridge is seeking candidates to fill vacancies on the [Climate Protection Action Committee \(CPAC\)](#) and the [Recycling Advisory Committee \(RAC\)](#). There are three open seats on CPAC. The committees advise the City on policies and strategies related to addressing the causes and impacts of climate change and reducing our waste respectively. To apply for the RAC, [see the announcement here](#). To apply for CPAC, [see the announcement here](#).
- **IECC 2015 and Stretch Energy Code Update** – In Massachusetts, the base energy code for buildings is the International Energy Conservation Code 2012. The Commonwealth also allows municipalities to opt in to the "Stretch Energy Code" which is approximately 20% more efficient than the base code. Cambridge adopted the Stretch Energy Code in 2009. The International Code Council is meeting this week to consider updates to the IECC for 2015. The City of Cambridge is sending four members of the Inspectional Services Department, including Commissioner Ranjit Singanayagam, to vote in favor of

changes to strengthen the energy code. Communities are awaiting information on the Commonwealth's plans to upgrade the Stretch Energy Code to keep it in alignment with the base code.

- **Net Zero Zoning Petition** – The Connolly petition to amend the zoning ordinance to establish a net zero greenhouse gas emissions standard for new development was the subject of City Council and Planning Board meetings since being introduced this summer. The Planning Board held its initial public hearing on August 20th and continued the hearing on October 1st. The petitioners submitted proposed amendments to the petition to address some of the comments received to date. The City Council approved a **Council Order** on September 16 asking the City Manager to appoint a broad-based task force to examine the Connolly petition and report back to the Council on the organization of the task force. The Planning Board voted at its October 1 meeting to support the creation of the task force. Mayor Davis also sponsored a panel discussion on net zero energy that was held on October 2nd. The **City Council is scheduled to hold a roundtable/working meeting** on the Connolly petition on October 10, 3:00 pm at City Hall in the Sullivan Chamber.
- **Artist-Designed Kendall Square Bike Racks** – The City is seeking feedback on the artist-designed bike racks in Kendall Square. If you have used them, please respond to a short survey by **clicking here**.
- **New IPCC AR5 Working Group I Report Issued** – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued the first part of its fifth Assessment Report (AR5) on the physical science of climate change. The panel issues a report about every five years assessing the state of the science on climate change to inform governments. The Working Group I report states that “warming in the climate system is unequivocal” and that “it is extremely likely [greater than 95% confidence] that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.” The IPCC says that to limit warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) with a probability of at least 66%, further global greenhouse gas emissions must be kept between 370 and 540 gigatons of carbon. The 2 degrees Celsius increase is the threshold agreed to by governments as the red line beyond which dangerously disruptive impacts are expected. Humans are currently emitting about 9.5 gigatons per year. So the “carbon budget” is likely to be exceeded within 50 years or less. Emissions of greenhouse gases are currently above than the IPCC’s highest scenarios and are tracking to cause a 2 degree C temperature increase by mid-century and above 4 degrees C by 2100. The IPCC does discuss an emissions reduction scenario that could limit warming below 2 degrees C. The IPCC also reports that sea level is expected to rise much more rapidly than previously estimated. [**IPCC press release, 9/27/13**; **Union of Concerned Scientists, 9/27/13**; **RealClimate.org, 9/29/13**; **World Resources Institute, 9/27/13**]
- **ACEE City Energy Efficiency Scorecard, Boston #1** – The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy ranked Boston at the top of 34 of the most populous U.S. cities on their energy efficiency actions and policies. This was the first year of the **ACEE City Energy Efficiency Scorecard**.
- **Commercial PACE Legislation** – Senator Brian Joyce of Milton and other legislators are sponsoring **Senate Bill No. 177** to establish a commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program in Massachusetts. Massachusetts has an existing PACE law in effect, but the proposed bill would address issues that have kept PACE financing from taking off in the Commonwealth. PACE enables energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements to be made to commercial and other large properties by using the property tax system to administer loans. A key advantage of PACE programs is that the loan is attached to the property, not the owner. MassDevelopment, a quasi-state agency, would issue bonds to finance clean energy projects. Private financing would also be enabled. Residential properties with more than 5 or more units would be eligible. PACE for small residential properties has been stymied by warnings from Fannie Mae to financial institutions related to mortgage precedence. Municipalities would opt in to participation and would administer the loan transaction. See **PACENow** for more information about this clean energy financing mechanism. S.177 is based on the successful **C-PACE program in Connecticut** and the recommendations of a **report by Harcourt Brown & Carey** commissioned by the Commonwealth.

RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **Jobs** – NSTAR, CHP Program Manager, [click here for the announcement](#). Solar City, Solar Sales-Energy Advisor, [click here for the announcement](#).
- **Hawthorne Effect** – Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University tested to see if making people think they are being watched when making decisions about energy use, called the Hawthorne Effect, would alter their habits. The researchers sent postcards to a select set of utility customers to let them know their electricity use would be tracked for a month for an experiment. A 2.7% reduction in electricity consumption resulted. [[Grist, 9/4/13](#)]
- **NASA Climate Visualizations** – NASA has produced some [cool visualizations](#) of how increased temperatures and changed precipitation patterns would look in the future due to climate change. [Note the webpage is down during the federal shutdown.]
- **Floating Housing in Boston Harbor** – Perkins+Will Design has produced a concept for floating housing in Boston Harbor as a means to cope with climate change. [See the TEDx Boston video of Brian Healy here](#).
- **CHP Guide** – DOE and EPA have produced a [Guide to Using Combined Heat and Power for Enhancing Reliability and Resiliency in Buildings](#).
- **Cambridge Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment** – The City is working on preparing a vulnerability assessment that will serve as the foundation for a climate change preparedness plan that will follow. The [project webpage](#) provides background information and documents from meetings. Interested people can send an email to jbolduc@cambridgema.gov to be placed on the project email list.
- **Cambridge Solar Map** – The [Cambridge Solar Tool](#) provides a web-based interactive tool to find out the potential for installing solar photovoltaic systems on rooftops in the city. The tool also evaluates the financial feasibility of installations and makes comparisons to alternative investments. The tool is designed by Modern Development Studio and based on the research of the [MIT Sustainable Design Lab](#) led by Dr. Christoph Reinhart. The City's [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#) program can assist interested property owners with finding installers and understanding the financial aspects.
- **Opt Out of Unwanted Mail** - Do you get unwanted mail from retailers, credit card companies, or cable/phone companies? You can opt out of mailings from over 4000 companies with Catalog Choice and help reduce waste. For example, you can stop getting weekly circulars from Global Direct, they will honor opt-out requests, so add them to “your choices”. Just register for FREE at <https://cambridge.catalogchoice.org> to create an account to start cleaning out your mailbox. To date, over 3700 Cambridge residents have signed up and opted out of nearly 25,000 different unwanted mailings!
- **Check Out Watt Meters at the Library** – Cambridge residents can borrow a “kill-a-watt” meter from the Main Public Library to measure how much electricity their home appliances and devices use. The meters come with a guide on how to use them and information on how to save energy. The meter kits and guide were developed by the [Sprouts of Hope](#) group based at the King Open School.
- **MBTA Rider Tools** – The MBTA has a number of [rider tools](#) that help riders to anticipate arrival times of buses, subways, and commuter trains and to receive alerts of delays. These tools can be used on iPhones, Android phones, text messages, emails, and the Web. There is also a trip planning tool.
- **NSTAR Green** – Residential and small business electric customers of NSTAR can opt to purchase renewable electricity generated by wind energy farms. To sign up for the service, visit the [NSTAR website](#).
- **Cambridge Energy Alliance** – The [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#), a program of the City of Cambridge Community Development Department helps residents, businesses, and organizations to obtain energy

efficiency and renewable energy services. You can sign up for energy audits and ask questions through the energy advisor service.

- **Sustainable Business Leader Program** - SBLP is a comprehensive certification program that supports local businesses in improving their environmental business practices and reducing their carbon footprint. For more information please visit the [SBLP website](#) or email to katrina@sbnboston.org.
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About the CPAC Bulletin:

The Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC) is a City of Cambridge advisory body appointed by the City Manager to assist in the implementation of the Cambridge Climate Protection Plan. Please forward this bulletin to other interested people. Anyone who would like to be added to the email distribution list should contact John Bolduc at jbolduc@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4628. For more information about Cambridge climate protection activities, see <http://www.cambridgema.gov/climate>. Recent issues of the CPAC Bulletin are posted on the webpage.