

Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

CPAC BULLETIN

February 2015

In Memorium: Brian P. Murphy

As many people in Cambridge know by now, we lost Brian Murphy, our Assistant City Manager for Community Development, suddenly last week. He suffered a heart attack in New York City while on business on behalf of our City. Brian was the head of the Community Development Department and oversaw all of our programs and initiatives, including those involving climate change. He was a strong supporter and advocate of moving Cambridge toward sustainability. During his tenure, the City undertook the climate change vulnerability assessment, integrated the Cambridge Energy Alliance into the department, enacted the Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance, formed the Community Compact for a Sustainable Future, launched Hubway, and established the Getting to Net Zero Task Force, among other actions. He will be missed. To learn more about Brian's life and impact, please see the [City Manager's statement](#) and the [Community Development Department webpage](#) where articles about him are being archived.

MEETING: The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for March 12, 6:00 pm, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, 2nd floor meeting room. There will not be a CPAC meeting in February.

EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **Vulnerability Assessment Public Meeting** – Please note the public meeting, that as scheduled for February 12, about the Cambridge Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment has been postponed due to the impacts of the recent snow storms and other factors. The meeting will be rescheduled. If you received this bulletin, you will be notified of the rescheduled date. If you would like to be added to the project email list, please send an email to jboulduc@cambridgema.gov.
- **MIT Energy Conference** – February 27-28, Boston. This will be the 10th anniversary of the conference. [For more information, click here.](#)
- **BuildingEnergy 15** – March 3 – 5, 2015, Seaport World Trade Center, Boston. This is the biggest regional green building conference in the New England; sponsored by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA). To see the program and to register, [click here.](#)
- **CAI Condo Energy Reporting Workshop** – March 5, 1:00 to 3:00 pm, 131 Clarendon Street, Boston. The workshop will provide information to owners, trustees, and managers about complying with the Boston and Cambridge building energy reporting ordinances. [To register, click here.](#) Registration fees apply. Sponsored by the New England Chapter of the Community Associations Institute (CAI).
- **Clean Energy Standard Hearings** – March 10, 1:00 pm, DEP offices, One Winter Street, Boston. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is proposing a new clean energy standard to increase the amount of non-fossil fuel generated electricity for consumers. The standard is part of the Commonwealth's efforts to achieve an 80 percent reduction in GHG emissions statewide by 2050. [For more information, click here.](#)
- **Climate Change & Plant Life** – March 26, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, Microsoft New England R&D Center, Cambridge. An all day symposium sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society. The symposium

will address how plants will respond to the predicted changes in temperature and precipitation from a warming climate. Five noted botanists and ecologists will present the state of New England's plants; the historical patterns and current evidence of climate-induced adaptation, migration, and loss; and strategies for conserving and managing plant species and natural communities in the face of climate change. To register, [click here](#).

- **National Adaptation Forum** – May 12-14, 2015, St. Louis. This is the second national meeting on climate change adaptation organized by a group of public and private sector professionals. [For more information, click here](#).
- **Climate Ride Northeast** – September 17-21. This event raises funds for climate action organizations, raises awareness of climate change, and promotes sustainable lifestyles. The Northeast bicycle ride follows a 320 mile route from Bar Harbor, Maine to Boston. Riders can choose from among more than 100 beneficiaries to support. [For more information, click here](#).
- **Friends of Alewife Reservation Walks** - Friends of Alewife Reservation is a stewarding and educational non-profit for the Alewife Reservation in northwest Cambridge and for the surrounding city natural resources of marshes and wetlands abutting Belmont and Arlington. Free wildlife and history educational tours, clean ups and conservation initiatives for the silver maple forest. "Virtual" Tour of the Reservation: [click here](#).
- **Walk/Ride Day Corporate Challenge** – Annual workplace competition in which organizations throughout Cambridge and surrounding cities and towns compete one day each month from April through October to have staff check in their commute online and consider healthier and more environmentally friendly choices (transit, bicycle, walk, etc.) Data show significant green shifts among participants on Walk/Ride Days and other days throughout the month. Promoted by Green Streets Initiative, a Cambridge-based grassroots group. [Register your company for the Challenge here](#).
- **350MA.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 6:30 PM. 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

- **Municipal Building Energy Use Reported** – The Cambridge Public Works Department [reported on 2013 energy use in municipal buildings](#) as required under the [Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance](#). The report covers buildings larger than 10,000 square feet and provides weather-normalized site energy use intensities (i.e., energy used per square foot on site), weather-normalized source EUI (i.e., energy use per square foot taking into account electricity generation offsite), greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and Energy Star scores when applicable. Under the ordinance, the City was required to begin reporting first. The City will report on 2014 energy use by May 1, 2015 when private buildings must begin to comply.
- **BEUDO Property List Posted** – The Community Development Department has posted lists of the properties that are subject to the Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance in 2015. The lists sort the properties by street address and Assessor's map and lot number. Some parcels contain multiple buildings.

Notification letters were sent to property owners and trustees in December. While most buildings affected in 2015 are aware of the compliance obligation, the department is continuing its efforts to contact owners and trustees. Affected owners, trustees, and managers should [reply to a survey](#) to acknowledge their status and to provide appropriate contact information. Questions about the ordinance can be addressed to buildingenergy@cambridgema.gov.

- **Cambridge Advances in Georgetown Energy Prize** – The City of Cambridge advanced to the semifinal round of the [Georgetown University Energy Prize](#), a national competition among small and medium-sized U.S. cities to reduce energy use. The competition involves 50 communities competing for a \$5 million prize. [[City of Cambridge news release, 1/14/15](#)]
- **Harvard Green Building Standard Revisions** – Harvard University has updated its green building standards, which apply to all capital projects across its campuses. The upgraded standards include healthy material requirements for the disclosure of health and environmental impacts of produced used; requirements to analyze the feasibility of Net-Zero and Living Building Challenge certification for major capital projects; and special considerations for laboratories and data centers. Additional updates include a requirement for LEED v4 Gold certification, energy reduction targets beyond ASHRAE 90.1-2010, and revisions to Measurement and Verification standards. [[Harvard Office of Sustainability news release, 12/17/14](#)]
- **Solar Tool Updated** – Mapdwell, which hosts the Cambridge Solar Tool, released a major update to its Solar System platform that improves the accuracy and delivery of the rooftop irradiation analysis and make the user experience better, faster, and more intuitive. In addition an Accessible Site has been implemented to make the tool easier to use for those with visual, motor, and cognitive disabilities. [Visit the upgraded tool by clicking here.](#)
- **Energy Resilience Grant for Cambridge** – The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources awarded the City of Cambridge a grant of \$851,868 for an energy resiliency project at the Sullivan Water Treatment Facility. The project would involve installing battery storage to complement a planned 170 KW solar PV system at the site and other equipment to enable the system to island during an outage event. The storage systems would enable the Water and Electrical Departments to maintain operations of the offices, water laboratory, and the Emergency Operations Center during outages. Installation of the energy storage system and islanding equipment is subject to completion of the system design. Cambridge was among a number of cities to receive grants in the second round of funding. [[DOER press release, 12/29/14](#)]
- **HEET Race to Solar** – Homeowner's Rehab, Inc., a Cambridge-based non-profit affordable housing developer and manager, is the first Cambridge non-profit to complete the [Race to Solar program](#) offered by [HEET](#). HRI has installed 30 kilowatts of solar photovoltaic systems under the program. A 26.25 KW system is on the Magazine Place property, where it supplies electricity to 20 low-income units, and a 4.5 KW system is on 280 Franklin Street, the organization's office. The Magazine Place installation is providing four times the electricity needed, so the surplus is being shared with other properties through net metering. Cambridge and Boston non-profits have until March 31st to qualify for the Race to Solar program. [HEET Newsletter, February 2015]
- **Harvard Natural Gas Leakage Study** – Harvard University researchers published a study of methane leakage in the Boston area from natural gas pipelines, storage facilities, and other sources that indicates that the leakage rate is three times greater than previously estimated. The research was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The researchers, led by Steven Wofsy and Kathryn McKain, used laser spectrometers located at Copley Square, Boston University, Nahant, and the Harvard Forest in Petersham to take measurements from September 2012 to August 2013. According to the authors, the measurements were able to distinguish natural gas supplied to the area from natural sources of methane by measuring ethane which is not emitted by other sources such as wetlands, landfills, and sewage treatment plants. The study estimated that the area is losing about 300,000 metric tons of natural gas, which represents about 2.7 percent of the natural gas delivered. The natural gas measured includes

sources beyond underground pipes that have been the subject of other recent studies. [[Boston Globe, 1/22/15](#)]

- **2014 Boston Climate Action Plan Released** – The City of Boston released its [Greenovate Boston 2014 Climate Action Plan Update](#). The plan reports on Boston’s progress toward reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050 and includes steps toward preparing the city for climate change.
- **NSTAR is Now Eversource** – Eversource is the new name for NSTAR. NSTAR merged with Northeast Utilities three years ago and the new name rebrands the combined companies. Customers can access their new website at <http://www.eversource.com>.
- **NSTAR Green Discontinued** – Beginning July 1, 2015, the [NSTAR Green program](#), which provides an option to residential customers to obtain their electricity from wind energy will be discontinued. Customers can continue using NSTAR Green until July 1 or de-enroll beforehand by calling 800-592-2000. NSTAR will roll their existing contracts with the wind energy farms that supply NSTAR Green into the Basic Service offering. An advantage of NSTAR Green was its bundling of both electricity and renewable energy certificates from the wind farms. Other programs usually offer electricity and renewable energy certificates unbundled, which often means the electricity is coming from a fossil fuel or nuclear source and the renewable energy certificates are meant to offset the emissions. For information about options to NSTAR Green, contact the [Cambridge Energy Alliance Program](#).

RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **2014 Town Gown Reports** – The [2014 Town Gown Reports](#) from the academic institutions in Cambridge have been posted on the Community Development Department website. The reports include information about sustainability activities.
- **Top Cambridge Employers** – The [2014 list of Top Employers in Cambridge](#) has been posted.
- **Mass. Climate Preparedness Summary** – A report on [Coordinated Climate Preparedness: 2014 Year in Review](#) summarizes the climate change preparedness activities of the Patrick Administration. The report was posted by the Massachusetts Audubon Society on its website.
- **Melbourne Heat Vulnerability Planning** – Melbourne, Australia is working to reduce its heat vulnerability according to a recent report in [Citiscopes](#). Melbourne has a number of interesting documents including an [economic analysis of the urban heat island effect](#).
- **Planetary Boundaries** – A paper published by 18 scientists recently in *Science* presents an assessment of where the Earth stands relative to 9 “planetary boundaries”. The study finds that four boundaries – extinction rate, CO2 in the atmosphere, and flow of nitrogen and phosphorous into the ocean – have been crossed. The boundaries represent danger zones, not exact breaking points. [[Washington Post, 1/15/15](#)]
- **NOAA Nuisance Flood Report** – NOAA released a report on the increasing problem of nuisance flooding in coastal areas. The report is titled [Sea Level Rise and Nuisance Flooding Frequency Changes around the United States](#). The frequency of nuisance flooding is growing and is expected to increase as sea level rises. This indicates that regular coastal flooding impacts are and will continue to happen in the near term.
- **FHWA Vulnerability Assessment Framework** – The Federal Highway Administration offers useful tools to assess climate change vulnerability in transportation systems. The [FHWA Virtual Framework for Vulnerability Assessment](#) provides six modules of guidance and technical tools.
- **Climate Change Economics in South Florida** – National Geographic published an insightful article titled [Treading Water](#) this month about the realities of sea level rise and adaptation in South Florida.

- **Going Solar in America Report** – The North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center published a report titled [Going Solar in America: Ranking Solar's Value to Consumers in America's Largest Cities](#). The rankings characterize how good of an investment solar PV is in the cities taking into account production potential, financial incentives, utility savings, and other factors. Boston ranked #2 behind New York City.
- **Boston's Evolving Dance with Water** – In a [video](#) of a presentation by Boston Harbor Association Executive Director Julie Wormser, the evolving relationship of Boston to sea level is revealed. The presentation is useful in understanding the implications of sea level rise.
- **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 Mapdwell 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. The Mapdwell tool was upgraded in September 2015 and can now be viewed in Spanish.
- **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.
- **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.

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.