

City of Cambridge
CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday, September 8, 2011
City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway

Attendees: David Rabkin (chair), Quinton Zondervan (vice chair), Marguerite Reynolds (secretary), Milton Bevington; Carri Boiselle, Betsy Boyle, Jackie Cefola, Janet Curtis, Jan Dillon, John Francis, Nathan Gauthier, Sarah Hill, Lyn Huckabee, Johanna Jobin, Steve Lanou, Ted Live, Lauren Miller, Tom Page, Keren Schlomy, Terrence Smith, Victoria Wolff, Scott Wood; *staff:* Susanne Rasmussen, Rosalie Anders, Meghan Shaw, John Bolduc

Guests: John MacDougall, John Pitkin

Welcome by David Rabkin, CPAC Chair at 6:04 and introductions by members including new appointees.

Minutes of July 14, 2011 approved unanimously.

Report of the E&TP Director

Susanne Rasmussen reported that the City has a policy that 20% of energy be renewable and this is accomplished by a combination of purchasing renewable power and purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). Bids were due on September 8 from energy suppliers. She noted that the price of RECs is falling.

The City is a partner with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) in an application to US Department of Energy (USDOE) solar roof top grant program. Participants in this program agree to reduce the regulatory process to install solar. The program covers any kind of community projects, addresses interconnections with utility, works with banks on financing, and assesses community ownership models in solar installations.

The Cambridge Energy Alliance (CEA) is now part of CDD and staff are working to integrate CEA activities into the Department's environmental work.

Bike share has been a success in Boston and the City is working on getting stations into Cambridge. Bike share closes in November and reopens in March. The City has funding for 22 stations and has identified sites for four. The City may need to take some street parking.

CDD staff are developing a scope for the RFP for a vulnerability assessment. The work will then be put out to bid. Hope to put out to bid in October.

Climate Change Communications: Using Art to Convey Science & Challenges in Communicating Climate Change

The Committee heard a presentation by Eli Kintisch, Reporter for Science and author of Hack the Planet: Science's Best Hope – or Worst Nightmare – for Averting Climate Catastrophe. Mr. Kintisch is a Knight Fellow at MIT and is developing a public art project to convey information about climate impacts.

Committee members were intrigued by the idea of using art to communicate issues around climate change and expressed interest in providing additional input to Mr., Kintisch. He collected contact information from members and promised to follow-up with the Committee.

Cambridge Climate Protection Goals & Objectives

Following Mr. Kintisch's presentation John Bolduc asked the Committee to review and comment on the revised draft of the overall goal statement and proposed language for some of the specific objectives. His first question was whether the preamble is necessary.

Committee members expressed general concern that the preamble was too long and not engaging. Some members felt the draft needed to be better organized and that is important to link the next plan with the previous plan.

Comments on the goals and objectives included:

- The new goal is less specific than old
- New goal statement provides a vision for end state in some ways and process in others
- Goals and objective should be worded to make clear what will be achieved
- The goal statement should not be so specific that it does not allow for adapting actions as conditions change.
- Greenhouse gas focus, not general discussion of sustainability
- Is water included here? John said this is typically viewed as energy issue. Some thought the statement around eliminating waste can be viewed as including water.
- Start with new goals, possible review of what happened in past as part of that document or as a separate document.
- The new goal is more of a vision statement.
- Develop objectives from the goal statement.
- Goal should make clear that Cambridge is a thought leader and has a role in educating and influencing actions beyond Cambridge.
- There is a need for numerical goals.
- Concern that the issues around measuring, particularly on a community scale, may overwhelm actions
- Question whether the stated goal is correct as it relates to development.

- Should have some mention of carbon neutrality.
- Goals should include some discussion about social justice issues around sustainability.
- Concern that adding social justice discussion makes the goal mushier, less focused on climate
- Stay within mission of CPAC
- Question about sustainability goals
- Should reference existing policies
- Eliminating waste seems impossible, possibly reduce waste
- Not Cambridge being a smaller producer but contributing to reducing overall emissions.

Committee members offered suggestions for additional objectives including:

- Cambridge seeks to be laboratory for actions to educate other communities
- Develop capacity to better measure.
- Need to emphasize innovation.
- Ensure that conditions are in place that encourage innovation

John summed up the discussion by asking if the goal around carbon neutrality should be rewritten and Quinton thought this was too limiting. John will take input and work with it.

Committee Organization

The next part of the agenda was a review of plans to elect new officers in October and clarify expectations of membership

Regarding new officers, David says has chaired as long as anyone should and would like to step down as Chair. He asked for volunteers for election at next (October) meeting and he encouraged volunteers for the three officer positions; Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary

Members were asked to contact John if interested and members are also encouraged to nominate others.

Upcoming meetings

The Committee then discussed the October and November meeting agendas. The tentative agendas include a presentation via webinar by a representative of the Portland, OR Bureau of Planning & Sustainability in October and a presentation by a representative of the Stockholm Environment Institute on their recent GHG analyses for Seattle and Massachusetts.

Members asked about expectations part of next meeting agenda and whether there is any reading material about the Portland program. John said he would check. There was a question whether members would read material prior to the meeting.

Closing

Before adjourning members reported on the following:

- September 24 Moving New England will try to bring 5,000 Cambridge residents to a main event in Boston
- Tour in East Boston around coastal sustainability on September 24
- October is Energy Month

Meeting adjourned at 8:00.

Notes by Terrence Smith