

City of Cambridge
Climate Protection Action Committee

Minutes
April 8, 2021

Attendees: Melissa Chan (chair), Steven Nutter (vice chair), Rosalie Anders, Lyn Huckabee, Trisha Montalbo, Jerrad Pierce, David Rabkin, Fred Hewitt, Nicole Morrell, Paula Phipps, Keith Giamportone, Ted Live, Julie Wormser, Peter Crawley

Staff: Susanne Rasmussen, Bronwyn Cooke, Seth Federspiel,

Minutes

March minutes approved unanimously.

Director's Report

- New bike education program for seniors launched, couch to bike fitness approach.
- Cycling safety ordinance unfolding; Putnam Ave project underway. Some neighborhood concerns. Have to deliver report to City Council on impact assessment.
- Working on two new zoning petitions: MoF green roofs petition; advancing and has to be d ordained by May 5 to go into effect, City Council hearing on Monday, lots of support. Vice Mayor has suggested allowing solar PV to count as green and may be debated. Monday would be vote on moving to second reading and could be acted on by April 26. Second is "Green New Deal" petition (Zondervan, Sobrinho-Wheeler, Carlone); come up with methodology to count embodied plus operational emissions and charge fee based on total emissions with revenue to subsidize for green jobs, RE, and energy efficiency. Would only apply to institutional and commercial, not residential. Affects ongoing CDD work including BEUDO amendments.

NZAP Draft Recommendations

Seth presented draft recommendations developed for the task force; presented slides. Reviewing centering racial equity, evaluating green buildings, individual measures.

GHG emissions have been level in face of growth, but we are not on track to meet goals.

Working with DNV as consultants which is evaluating GHG impacts for each measure

Peter is CPAC representative, other community members, residential building owners, commercial, institutional, Planning Board, etc.

3 meetings and two working group meetings held so far.

By end of process, final meeting in late May, after which final recommendations will be compiled and then submitted to City Council.

D Rabkin: What was the process to understand changes relative to baseline? Seth: looking at quantitative impacts and process. Goal is to develop an implementable plan to move forward over next 5 years based on what we learned from the past 5 years.

Adjustment proposals are in 4 categories:

- Energy efficiency in existing buildings
- New construction
- Energy supply
- Enabling actions

Overarching adjustments:

- Tighten up time frames, short term 2 years, medium 3 to 5 years, 5+ long term
- How could electrification and renewables be embedded throughout
- For equity, updating to make it a distinct action, avoiding negative but also more positive impacts like wealth building
- CCA = evolving aggregation program to serve more than clean energy and investing more in transition

Action 1

1.1 Custom retrofit – make sure serving multifamily, low and moderate income MF, and small commercial; building on current retrofit program to provide technical support and make sure it is working; coordinate advisory services with MassSave; state law requires Mass Save to convert to carbon base from energy basis

Peter: task force has not seen recommendations yet, will be discussed on 4/15. Surprising: there was discussion to reduce BEUDO to 25 units for MF; then prescriptive measures would apply to 25-50 and performance at 50+. Is that a good change? David: Should have a simple version of BEUDO eg presence of fossil fuels as a trigger; doesn't matter how big they are doesn't matter because we want to get rid of all of it. Will need mandates, good will and incentives not enough. Jerrad: PACE is something that is languishing and would be good to get extended to residential. Time of sale or renovation could also apply with different kinds of threshold. Time of lease is another possible transaction to leverage. Lyn: elephant in room when talking about carrots which are barriers in old housing stock. DOER did survey of customers in Columbia gas area; number of people went thru MassSave could not get thru barriers, eg, asbestos shingles. So barriers in those cases can be dealt with better thru incentives than requirements. David: other barriers include lack of knowledge, lack of faith in technology and contractors, so develop experience base in the city. Paula: why is it not an issue to replace siding. Lyn: insulation is under siding so incentives don't address siding and siding is more expensive. Boston did a program to cover copay for triple decker and uptake was terrible. Peter: Why are medium term not in short terms and long term in medium? Keith: lowering threshold to 25 is good to do; besides siding, need to upgrade amp service so how to get utilities to get to include that; how to get bundling of all things needing to do? Seth: biggest barrier is decisionmaking barrier where there are multiple parties. Keith: barriers justify putting smaller MF into BEUDO. David: System replacement is a barrier because decision is time sensitive when systems fail (eg boiler must be replaced in winter).

1.2 BEUDO requirements

Peter: The one action that is most important. CPAC said there should be an EUI requirement in addition to emissions requirements. Why not use task force to bang out an EUI requirement. Seth

said NZAP is to focus on policy level, and details have to be worked on with stakeholders. Paula: how much are condos part of the challenge. Seth will get answer.

1.3 Financing capacity

Action 2 New Construction

Require net zero new construction

Net zero incentives

Increase green building requirements

Increase municipal requirements

Develop embodied carbon requirements

Keith: Incentives should be considered for promoting timber, less steel, etc.

Jerrad: Are there things internal to City that need to be changed; in past large wood buildings have been seen negatively. MIT Bldg 20 was replaced by Stata. Keith: laminated wood allows buildings to be built big. Seth: City could look at urban design guidelines and incentives.

2.1 Net Zero New Construction

State level action is key, new law mandates DOER develop net zero stretch code that would be optional for cities and towns within 18 months. So by end of 2022 hoping for a code that Cambridge could opt into. So City may no longer need to develop standards locally and could work to advocate for code that aligns with what we want. Peter: could city advocate to include embodied carbon criteria. David: difficult to understand what we could do. State building code preemption has been a barrier. We have tried to do go around with zoning and Boston is also trying to go down that path.

2.2 Net Zero Incentives

Possibly this action will be eliminated given state is developing net zero code, but possibly there are other things city could do.

2.3 Green Building Requirements

What should happen with this given state net zero code. But LEED is more holistic so perhaps it pivots to other values. Peter agreed action at state is probably faster and more meaningful.

2.X Embodied Carbon

Would be new action

Work toward embodied carbon standards in medium term with projects to provide information on what is going into buildings coordinating regionally. Tom Chase commented previously to skip studies and go directly to standards. David how much is embodied vs operating. Trisha: Tom had a study. Embodied covers short emissions and operating are spread out. Rosalie: should we think about reusing vs replacement. Keith will try to track down some methodology info.

Action 3: Energy Supply

Peter: Need to accelerate actions

LCES, how to advance recommendations from study done. Hard time with district energy. Should system be built first or buildings that would be connected. Look at opportunities like geothermal microdistrict; virtual microdistrict

Onsite, what is role of PV and being more proactive on offsite RE; will need significant supply of offsite RE

Peter: noted medium term includes no new fossil fuel buildings; should it be in another section like new construction; Seth, this is cross cutting since supply enables some actions. How best to express. Peter, maybe it should be more about ensuring adequate RE supply to enable fossil fuel buildings. David, how can we mandate no fossil fuel. Lyn, in short term, second bullet, utilities looking at this differently, take out electric.

3.2 Rooftop Solar

Multiple benefits of rooftop solar; recommending all of the above approach; require new buildings to install solar and to enable community solar. Peter: is MoF proposal impacting this. Seth if amended to allow solar as option; If not then have to figure out how to layer on top of green roof, more to learn. Keith, with a lot of solar going in, is there an opportunity to train people to work in solar in high school or elsewhere? Could Cambridge schools do this instead of or in addition to training car mechanics. Could require installers to take on students. Peter, medium term goal to require existing buildings to be solar ready is irrelevant; make long term goal medium term.

3.x Offsite RE access

Want to offer access to offsite new RE, create standards and pathways so all kinds of buildings can access. Peter: might have to consider siting outside ISO region. Seth, trying to track state actions to see how much Cambridge can ride on state work and how much is left for Cambridge to do? Also, is state schedule fast enough? Melissa, if out of state, should consider where RE in other states would have most impact, eg. High carbon states. Rosalie, would we consider municipal purchase of something big like offshore wind turbines? Seth, we are working on municipal supply strategy which might bundle in CCA

4 CCA

Look at CCA as a more cross cutting strategy to achieve multiple purposes including equity. Pilot CCA 3.0 principles which would involve participants as owners. Peter, supply is critical if electrification is the key. David, slide was confusing. Seth said we know there are possibilities but we don't know how to get there yet. Melissa, City should look at California models on CCA; she can connect to people. Jerrad, what are knock on effects of electrification, like stress on distribution? On increasing service in buildings, perhaps waive permit fee?

Members can provide additional feedback to Peter before next task force meeting.

Would be useful to think about how the recommendations relate to macro goals. Seth, consultant are estimating GHG emissions of actions which should be available before task force meeting. At May meeting, task force will work on implementation plan.

Info requested on embodied carbon

David: real goal is to get other people to do things, so we need to set goals; behaviorally what do we want to happen as a result of what we want to do. Do not lose track of behavioral outcomes we seek.

Lyn: June 30, Eversource filing grid modernization plan for next 3 years. City and/or CPAC might want to influence. Plan will be important if NZAP is to happen. Susanne will follow up with Lyn because Eversource has to make presentation to council on forecast.