

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE CLIMATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

APRIL 9, 2026 | 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, 4TH FLOOR & VIRTUAL ([ZOOM LINK](#))

City Staff attendance (*alphabetical order*): Stephen Early, Nikhil Nadkarni, Susanne Rasmussen, Julie Wormser

Committee Members attendance: (*alphabetical order*): Yi Juan, Lyn Huckabee, Hajar Hyte, Megan Lim, Anna Mezheritskaya, Joel Nogic, Tom Rawson, Hanan Rhodes, Neheet Trivedi

General & public attendance: Susan Murcott (MIT), Elizabeth Bernhardt, Sarah Adkis (Green Cambridge)

MINUTES

6:05 PM **Welcome** – Joel Nogic, Chair of CCCC
Approval of prior meeting's minutes – approved

6:07 PM **Deputy Climate Chief Update** - Susanne Rasmussen

- Finalizing BEUDO regulation updates next week, including guidelines on hardship applications for owners.
- Finalizing extreme heat protocols with the city. Including guidelines for alert triggers and public outreach. This is part of Phase I.
- State will be issuing funding grants to the City for sustainable procurement.
- The City is rolling out mandatory composting at all municipal properties.

Discussion Notes:

Tom R. - Q: Do you expect a lot of hardship applications?

Susanne R. - A: City policy offers either deferral or hardship application. Hardship applications will likely be coming from non-profit or smaller building owners. Expecting more deferral applications. For example, if you have a decarb plan that gets you to net zero by 2050, you can submit for a variance (or deferral) to align required compliance with your organization's plan. First reporting phase (compliance period) includes any improvements that were made in the past 15 years. This will be the easiest period for owners to comply with.

Tom R. – Q: Does your extreme heat protocol include cooling centers, etc?

Susanne R. – A: City now has very specific protocols regarding which sources of weather data will be used, what qualifies as a triggering event, specific steps in alert sequence within the city ranks, followed by communications team notifying the public about preparedness and community resources. Ex. Dept. of public health might organize wellness checks, schools may remind families to send students to school with water bottles, etc. One area still in development is large scale outdoor events. The city has developed guidelines for permitted outdoor events to help improve heat safety.

Anna M. – Q: What does “sustainable procurement” mean for the City of Cambridge?

Susanne R. – A: Procurement includes everything, for example furniture, finishes for renovations, supplies, etc. The state has a list of vetted suppliers of goods and services deemed “sustainable”, or meeting the state sustainable procurement standards. One example is minimum 30% recycled paper, or carpet has to meet low VOC and recycling requirements set by the state, prioritizing re-use for office products, furniture, etc. The goal is to participate in and reinforce the circular economy.

6:17 PM

Chief Climate Officer Update - Julie Wormser

- The city has been lobbying the MA State House, one current example is the “Mass-Ready Bill” (a climate resilience Bill). It would allocate \$100M/yr (\$500M over 5 yrs). Now this bill is going to the house floor, which is a huge win.

6:27 PM

NZAP Review Follow up - Julie Wormser, Jole Nogic, Megan Lim

- Report on March 31 Health & Environment Hearing (Julie Wormser)
 - The city sustainability department presented the city’s progress on the NZAP, which goals are on track vs which are behind.
 - This was followed by a lively discussion and a generally very positive reception by the department and councilors.
 - The feedback was that there needs to be more work on non-BEUDO buildings (i.e. existing buildings)
 - In response, the sustainability department is working hard to provide financial support for Cambridge residents to shift off fossil fuels.
 - The CCC’s comment letter on the NZAP is now public and can be shared out.
 - There were three significant public comments:
 - Susan shared support for energy networks and about her work with MIT. Expressed interest in volunteering time to help with this initiative at the city.
 - Quentin offered help to the city and made recommendations regarding technologies to pay attention to.
 - David R. **TBD**
 - (Megan L. will send the letters to be included in the notes.)
- Next Steps (?)

Discussion Notes:

Tom R. – Q: What are some strategies the city is considering to tackle non-BEUDO building upgrades?

Julie W. – A: Looking at policies requiring energy upgrades for lease/rental of units. There is a conflict of interest in that the renters pay energy bills, not landlords.

Hannan R. – Confirming that many renters are not aware of MassSave programs for MF landlords that provide free insulation upgrades, etc.

Megan L. – Mass Energize Conference (yesterday), the conversation was similar - A lot people don't know about the MassSave incentives.

6:40 PM

NZAP 5-year update - Overview of process - Nikhil Nadkarni

The Role of the NZAP (Net Zero Action Plan): city's plan to eliminate GHG emissions by 2050.

- NZAP Has 4 Key Areas:
 - Existing Buildings
 - New Buildings
 - Energy Supply
 - Financing & Capacity Building
- Within each area includes goals and associated actions and activities
- Requires to be updated every 5 years.
- Last update was in 2021, adopted in 2023.
- Updates take into account:
 - Outcomes to date
 - Technology evolution
 - Changes in state and federal policies
 - Changing costs and economics
 - Changing stakeholder needs
- The updates provide a framework for checking progress and course correction
- 2026 NZAP Update Approach (Part 1 of 3)
 - Looking to hire a consultant to update the plan in a way that:
 - Maintains or accelerates progress toward 2030 and 2050 commitments
 - Emphasizes energy equity and affordability
 - Prioritizes high-impact actions toward measurable decarbonization
 - Offers scalable solutions
 - Starting with updating GHG inventory for the City
 - Completing detailed assessment through 2024
 - Sectors within buildings (based on data availability)
 - Examining outcomes to date of previous NZAP
 - Key metrics, SMART goals, Qualitative findings

- Projecting where our emissions will be under different scenarios, in 2030 and 2050
 - start by quantifying the impact of the NZAP so far
 - Existing policy
 - Changes in state policy
 - Changes in costs, economics, or adoption rates
- 2026 NZAP Update Approach (2/3) - **TBD**
- 2026 NZAP Update Approach (3/3)
 - Conduct community engagement
 - Develop actions and seek feedback
- Timeline:
 - Evaluation of outcomes – Spring 2026
 - Community Engagement in Summer/Fall 2026
 - Including Cambridge Climate Council review
 - Target to develop draft actions by EOY 2026

Discussion Notes:

Tom R. – Q: How early can we start engaging with the community for input? A big chunk of the NZAP work is climate and policy modeling, and some of the best people in the field are at MIT. Has the City considered working with them?

Nikhil N. acknowledged that these are good suggestions. Will update the Climate Committee at the next month’s meeting regarding next steps.

Megan L. – Requesting to engage the CCC in the community engagement.
 Anna M. – Second that!

7:09 PM

Committee Members’ Climate Work and Engagement - Joel Nogic

- Go around the room (physical and virtual) and each Committee member to describe:
 - Areas of interest, experience & knowledge on Climate
 - Communities in Cambridge they are connected to

Discussion Notes:

Hannan R. – Cofounder of Laminar Collective, subject experts in building electrification. Specialize in air-source heat pumps. Online Community – Sub-Stack (~2000 people).

Anna M. – Architect and educator. Interest and experience in building decarbonization and circular economy. Connected to the CLF Northeast Hub, Boston Architectural College, Boston Society of Architects, and locally to Richdale Ave neighborhood group and HOA.

Tom R. – Educator. Involved with The Third Act. Climate 101 for adults – lifelong learning about climate change and solutions. Enroads climate ambassador (through MIT). A lot of connections in Boston through The Third Act. It's not systematic. Leadership team with MassPower Forward.

Joel N. – Member of the OA study group, long-time member of the CCC. Advocated to have IQHQ to incorporate green roofs and meet high level LEED certification for their new building. Install a tree nursery on top of their garage. Large newsletter (300+) reach through this grassroots group. Condo owner with lots of experience in renovating old buildings.

Lyn H. – Energy and Building efficiency for 25 years. Negotiated the residential MassSave program into existence. Manages the team that does large building energy reporting and energy data. Also interested in waste reduction and smart use of resources. Community is not Cambridge-specific, but is a platform for tackling sustainability

Megan L. – Graduated MIT in 2024, Cambridge resident for a few years. Intergenerational capacity building – identify existing systems and gaps. Working with Grey Edge thermal energy networks group. Involved with Susan at MIT with current students to promote education around thermal energy networks and other sustainable systems work. Get students involved with climate action plans. UNFCCC (?)

Neheet T. – Residential decarbonization, coaching for people. Decarbonized his 2-family home. Is a CPHC (Certified Passive House Consultant). Works in immigrant communities, housing, lives in North Cambridge.

Hajer H. – Interested in carbon mitigation and waster reduction. Volunteered with Green Cambridge Canopy Crew. Recent Grad of CRL school. Part of tutoring program in Cambridge, works as a part time educator. Connected to the Harvard Radcliffe institute.

Yi J. – Professional connection with Harvard. Lives in Mid-Cambridge. Connected to MLK middle school through his children. Part of the Buddhist and local immigrant communities. Interested in food systems work, both on local and international level. A lot of carbon emissions come from our food systems. Food is fundamental way to engage communities.

Committee Members missing in the conversation: Meredith, Priya, Cynthia ... who else?

7:40 PM **Discussion: How might we apply results from above agenda item to:**

- Heat Emergency engagement
- NZAP 5-year update engagement

Discussion Notes:

Lyn H. - Event or campaign around Memorial Day to raise awareness of planning for heat emergencies and how to best prepare.

Hajer H.: Ice cream truck event – get people to sign-up for email or text alerts

Anna M. : Leverage the World Cup watch parties, the annual dance party, to spread the word about heat preparedness. On personal level, will share info with my neighbors through our Google Group.

Yi J. : Connect to other committees in Cambridge. Each person to identify one other local committee to reach out to regarding extreme heat and NZAP.

Tom R.: Our committee has a wide range of expertise, but not a wide reach beyond our immediate communities. We should structure a process to listen to a wider group of people.

Lyn H.: Reach out to the Peace Commission (this is a volunteer commission with the City of Cambridge) and present how the City is working to help improve energy independence.

Megan L.: Host a community forum. Engage people at public transit places – Bus stops, subway stops. Create a Google Group about heat preparedness.

Joel N.: Ringe Towers – Fresh Pond Apartments has an annual party in July. This is a great venue for outreach. A great place to have an info table. Danehy Park Day in the Fall. Cambridge River Festival in June (mid to late, on a Saturday, organized by the Cambridge Arts).

Anna M.: Setup tables at Farmers' Markets and Festivals in Cambridge. Reddit groups for Cambridge. Takeaway – leverage social media on individual level to share City- approved materials.

Hannan R.: Very supportive of the ice-cream truck idea.

7:50 PM

Public Comments

- Sarah Adkis (Green Cambridge)
 - Need to invest in green infrastructure, increasing tree coverage.
 - CCC and the City Should reach out to other Environmental Groups in Cambridge: Green Cambridge, People for Trees,
- Susan Murcott - Educator from MIT, teaching a course on Thermal Energy Networks.
 - Part of the Faculty advisory committee to MIT's decarb plan.
 - Her course will be available on Open Courseware.
 - Advocating for greater awareness of residential certifications.

- 7:58 PM Committee Member Updates
- Megan L: May 2nd (Saturday) Decarbonization Showcase (will share link later)
 - Tom R. MIT Climate Action through Education (May 9th) for teachers and high school students
 - Anna M.: Boston Climate Week (May 3-10th)

8:00 PM Meeting was adjourned

Upcoming

May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate Committee Community Engagement Discussion (cont.)
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report on Climate Committee (Chair and NZAP sub-committee) meeting with City Manager & Deputy City Manager ● Food Systems Presentation (Yi Jian, Guest Speakers)
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin review of Office of Sustainability work
August	Recess - No Meeting
September	Begin review of FY 2026 NZAP Report

Ideas for future meeting topics - from February meeting:

- NZAP 2025 Review and 5-Year Update
- Heat Emergency Engagement
- Food systems
- BEUDO update
- Climate leaders program – do shorter version of their training
- Presentation on doing climate work at the municipal level
- Building envelope education
- Learn about MassSave programs
- Committee goals and next steps on engagement and equity
- Clarify role of Education(Capacity Building) Sub-committee

For Reference:

What is the role of the Climate Committee?

The Climate Committee has three roles that help the City reduce climate change impacts, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase equity, and serve as a partner to and example for other communities:

- 1. Provide feedback and ideas to the City on ways to reduce and live with climate change while prioritizing the needs of the most at-risk populations.*
- 2. Share information about City climate programs with community members, listen to community concerns, and raise feedback with City staff so programs effectively serve all community members.*
- 3. Stay informed about the City's climate goals and provide accountability and feedback on barriers and opportunities to improve effectiveness.*

Officer Section of Bylaws

Officers will be elected on an annual basis. Elections will take place in September of each year unless the Committee decides otherwise.

Chair

The chair shall be responsible for setting the agenda in coordination with City staff, for facilitating meetings, for organizing Committee work program and subcommittees in coordination with City staff, and for signing Committee correspondence.

Vice Chair

The vice chair shall assist the chair in his/her duties and fill in for the chair in his/her absence.

Secretary

The secretary shall be responsible for meeting minutes and attendance records.