

City of Cambridge
Climate Protection Action Committee

Minutes
April 8, 2010
City Hall, Sullivan Chamber

Attendees: David Rabkin (chair), Quinton Zondervan (vice chair), Betsy Boyle (secretary), Jackie Cefola, Jan Dillon, Janet Curtis, John Moore, John Francis, Kat Potter, Kathy Araujo, Keren Schlomy, Lauren Miller, Lilah Glick, Marguerite Reynolds, Mead Wyman, Mitch Hunter, Barry Hilts, Suzanne Shepard, Terrence Smith, Tom Page, Bill Zamparelli

Staff: Susanne Rasmussen, Rosalie Anders, John Bolduc

Guests: Bob Healy (City Manager), Rich Rossi (Deputy City Manager), Beth Rubenstein (CDD), Lisa Peterson (DPW), Owen O’Riordan (DPW), Sue Clippinger (Traffic), Sam Corda (Water), George Fernandes (Electrical), Sam Lipson (Public Health), Ted Live, John Pitkin, Joanna Herlihy, John MacDougall, Ellen Mass, Kathy Reine, Katherine Lydon, Abigail Tischler

The meeting was largely devoted to a discussion with the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, and department heads and staff concerning recent CPAC recommendations.

David Rabkin opened the meeting. Bob Healy gave opening remarks and introduced the department heads or their representatives then present.

Rabkin introduced the new members of the committee who were recently appointed: Jackie Cefola, John Moore, Kathy Araujo, Lilah Glick, Marguerite Reynolds and Tom Page. James Eliscar was also appointed but was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement.

Susanne Rasmussen gave a history of CPAC. Rabkin introduced the review of the Interim Report and the Recommendations for Adaptation.

Mead Wyman presented issues and recommendations of the Measurements and Controls sub-committee.

Rosalie Anders presented the issues and recommendations of the Communications and Engagement sub-committee.

Janet Curtis presented the issues and recommendations of the Building Energy Use sub-committee.

Terry Smith presented the issues and recommendations of the Transportation sub-committee.

Quinton Zondervan presented the recently completed position paper Recommendations for Climate Change Adaptation.

Healy gave a response to the review:

Healy said that he supports the CPAC recommendations, including adaptation. The City is actively investigating a number of steps which would improve further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including single stream recycling, “pay as you throw” rubbish collection, electric vehicle infrastructure and building energy use infrastructure. The City Manager supports the idea of capturing savings from energy efficiency projects to leverage additional energy savings. He announced that the City will go forward with an application to the Massachusetts Green Communities Program to attain designation and apply for a grant.

Rich Rossi focused on communication and outreach, spoke to the importance of engaging the wider Cambridge community. He suggested the development of a letter about the environment similar to a document sent to citizens called “tax facts”. He said that CPAC’s activities had already begun to change City employees’ attitudes.

In terms of future communications with the Committee, Healy thought it is reasonable to expect that he should attend a CPAC meeting once a year and as circumstances warrant. He thought the Committee should engage department staff who can attend meetings as needed.

Healy noted that return on investment is not the only value that the City should pursue. Environmental benefits such as lower GHG emissions are important to consider in decisionmaking. He thought it was important to view climate change as more than an environmental problem in order to persuade people to take action.

Overall, Healy believes Cambridge is doing good work on climate change, but recognizes the need to do more.

Rasmussen discussed the current status of sub-committee work: **Measures & Goals.** With difficulty in developing disaggregated data, goals should be set on the basis of the data in hand. **Communications.** Engagement strategies are being explored. The group is considering “what’s the message”. **Building energy.** Examining implementation of Stretch Code and the implications of building labeling. **Transportation.** Looking at EV charging stations and studying parking. Rasmussen also reported improvement in resident trips which is down 5% year over.

Comments were then provided by the department representatives present.

Public Health. Lipson noted his department's interest in climate change adaptation and sees where they can play a useful role in the vulnerability assessment. **Community Development.** Rubenstein reported progress with corporations, especially on parking and subsidy for T passes. Emphasized the importance of outreach. **Cambridge Water Dept.** Working on improvement on energy use and more environmentally friendly vehicle use. **City Engineer.** Willing to look at adaptation. **Public Works.** Peterson noted her department's efforts on energy management and vehicle efficiency. **Traffic and Parking.** Clippinger discussed her department's involvement with taking the CPAC recommendations on parking to the next step. All the City's traffic signals have been converted to LEDs. **Electrical.** Fernandes talked about reducing nighttime lighting around the city and the City's interest in LED street lighting.

CPAC members engaged in a question and answer period with Healy, Rossi and the department representatives.

Rabkin: How do we work better with departments? Healy: Have the department heads come to sub-committee meetings.

Schlomy: What is the schedule for response on adaptation? Healy: Don't have a schedule yet. Rossi: Give us a chance to get together with the dept heads.

John Francis: Remember the diversity of the community.

John Moore: Capture savings from energy efficiency projects and leverage them for further investment in energy savings.

Zondervan: How do we do better? How do we get to the people? Rossi: work with the Cambridge public information officer. Healy: This is a problem that cuts across issues for the City.

Rabkin: What are the best things we can work on in the short term? Go to goal setting directly? Healy: Goals should be realistic and achievable. Rossi: Must be practical. Goals will have to pass by and be approved by the public.

Members of the public were given time to comment on the discussion:

Joanna Herlihy: Change has taken place. Would like to see better city-community communication and more empowerment given to citizens to take action in their neighborhoods.

John Pitkin: Mentioned the Climate Emergency Congress. It was heartening to see things being brought together. It is necessary to get civic commitment. There is urgency in this matter.

Glick was asked by Rabkin to briefly discuss the activity of the Cambridge Energy Alliance. Glick gave a brief description of activity. She indicated the organization is re-examining its strategy.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Rabkin declared the meeting concluded.

Prepared by Mead Wyman