

City of Cambridge

CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 9, 2017

City Hall, Sullivan Chamber

Attendees: Lauren Miller (chair), Johanna Jobin (vice chair), Sarah Mandlebaum (secretary), Betsy Boyle, Keren Schlomy, Peter Crawley, Bill Zamparelli, Quinton Zondervan, Ted Live, , Marguerite Reynolds, Tom Chase, David Rabkin, Christopher Nielson, Anthony Michetti, Paula Phipps, Olga Faktorovich, Lyn Huckabee; *staff:* Louis DePasquale (City Manager), Lisa Peterson (Deputy City Manager), Owen O’Riordan, (DPW), Ellen Katz (DPW), Michael Orr (DPW), Claude Jacob (Public Health), Kari Sasportas (Public Health), Sam Corda (Water), Kristen Middleton (Schools), Iram Farooq (CDD), Susanne Rasmussen, Bronwyn Cooke, John Bolduc

Annual Meeting with City Manager and Departments

- Introductory thanks to CPAC and staff

Louis DePasquale (City Manager): Key steps: municipal governments must lead by example, we need to partner with residents, businesses, universities as well as other cities and with the state, leveraging our universities and tech hub. Must measure our results / performance. Our commitment will remain strong and CPAC has the city’s support.

Iram Farooq (CDD): Implementation couldn’t be possible without all depts here today. Thanks to CPAC for guiding our efforts. Documents such as the climate protection goals and objectives, Net Zero Action Plan, Envision Cambridge, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Plan will be our blueprints. One key driver for Envision Cambridge is climate/energy and resilience. Partnerships are so valuable – with universities, homegrown businesses, etc.

Owen O’Riordan (Public Works): We have an overwhelming number of advocates in Cambridge. Municipal operations: We’re less than 3% of the city in terms of GHG emissions, but it’s important we exercise our leadership, such as with the school building program. Now moving on to improve several more municipal buildings, including energy efficiency. Starting to look at municipal fleet. Improving the urban tree canopy. Municipal electricity from renewables. Vulnerability is now being considered and identifying opportunities.

- Given the new federal political context, how will this affect Cambridge over the next four years?

We need to set the trend, set commitments, we’ve come too far to go backwards, and we’ll lead the way. We can’t look at everything dollar-wise. Good news is that the financial impact is minimum.

Cities have always been the leaders on climate action, so federal change hopefully won’t make too much of a negative impact. We have targets that won’t be influenced by federal level. We can’t put a bubble around us – so some federal issues (i.e. EPA) will affect us. We’ve had the resources and are trying to be as open-source as possible, sharing with smaller / less able communities. Important

to stay the course with the standards and goals. We need to show that it's smart for economic reasons, pollution prevention reasons, health reasons, etc.

One area where federal government could be very influential is federal tax credits for solar and wind. Fortunately, they were voted in last year for a 5 year period. We're lucky to be in the state of MA, who will try to make up for the removal of EPA rules. The State has strong goals so we can move ahead with things controlled locally.

For schools, we see this as an opportunity for leadership, we need to share best practices, be a role model for others.

Ripple effects – such as public health, i.e. vector borne illnesses. We will continue to collaborate and share limited resources so we're more resilient as a community.

Quinton: We may have to do more than stay the course. Like the state is stepping up, if the state or feds aren't going to do it, we have to do it. Our community cares – community attendance at events regarding these issues is up 2-3 times – how can we harness that energy?

Restructuring of emergency preparedness and resilience – with cross-functional disciplines. Partnering with 60 communities - This amplifies the amount of people working on this topic. New momentum – looking for non-traditional partnerships.

Keren: The City should be picking up where the State is falling down – i.e. environmental regulations. More of these things that the City has the authority to enforce.

- How can we show we're a better investment given climate change risks

We decided that our climate info (e.g. Vulnerability assessment) is a positive and the reaction from bond rating agencies was positive after seeing this information – they think that we're ahead of the game (at bond rating meeting, presented next to financial info). We have the information, we're sharing it with developers, especially with Alewife. Rating agencies *are* asking cities these questions – do you have a risk assessment? Why not?

Peter: Potential to apply a different valuation method – to value environmental benefits, investing in land. For example, heat island effects of open spaces.

City: We can only pay so much, and we're limited as a competitive buyer. Any opportunity, we're looking at but it's too expensive.

As a City, we're incredibly small, so opportunities for open space are extremely limited. We've been good at allocating resources. Land may not be our smartest allocation of resources, maybe they are better put toward renewables capacity in Cambridge or neighboring communities.

- CPAC aims to be equitable, not speaking in an echo chamber. How can we make this conversation more inclusive and equitable? Are there any barriers we can try to address?

Getting people to be heard and involved is an issue for all parts of the City. Often it is just the few strong voices who come to City Hall. We're creating a Citizen advisory committee which addresses many things including community outreach, bringing govt to the neighborhood – we'll go to them. We're committed to this.

The schools are a channel – and are micro communities. My goal is to broaden that reach to families. We have great translation services – i.e. flyers about compost in 7 languages.

2 years ago we assessed the health needs of the City. Engaging different representative groups. Importance of non-traditional partners, being intentional about it. Importance of being a trusted source. A major strength of the City thanks to our collaborations.

Quinton: trying to bring solar to more members of the community, important that we communicate and share new technologies.

- Is there anything we haven't tried yet to reach our ambitious climate change goals?

Alternative ways to finance all we need to do. Susanne and John and Lisa have pushed me to look into new ideas. Lisa has been a leader, i.e. investing in schools.

Susanne: work with energy supply, has potential to be revolutionizing. On municipal side, we're trying to show what green procurement could look like (100%), trying to be clear about what is truly green energy supply. Good area to invest in. On community side, low carbon energy supply study, will come up with one or more strategies, including what kind of investments are needed from private and public side.

Approval of Minutes

Approved with correction of spelling of Quinton's name

ETP Director Report

- Moving ahead for separated bike facilities from Inman square to Quincy square. Will have a stakeholder committee and public meetings, try to get to installation by June. Challenging because will have to remove 90+ parking spaces. Inman square reconstruction in Fall with preferred solution (TBD). Trying to accommodate bikes and buses, which is a huge technical challenge. Engaging with best transportation planners from North America. Also working on Mt Auburn St, trying to improve bus transport, DCR effort. Express bus lane and cycling facilities!
- Transportation communication – "Getting Around Cambridge" magazine will come out late spring to every household, hoping MIT and Harvard will buy copies for all their students. A digital version will be available.
- Working on our sustainability indicator dashboard – check the website.
- Close to finishing the Community GHG inventory. It will tell us where we are. It won't fix our baseline going backwards (different methodology). We will likely update this every 3 years. Will move onto climate plan once that's finalized.
- Collaborating with 10 other cities on a Net Zero carbon project. Will help us flesh out net zero action plan items (which is currently just conceptual), this will help us figure out HOW to implement the Net Zero plan.
- School dept is getting an electric school bus (City will own), (Have we considered using it as battery storage? Yes, but there are logistical issues)
- Lexington and Newton are moving forward/asking us about how to develop a Net Zero Action Plan too

- Envision Cambridge working groups: there will be a CPAC person on the climate & environment committee. Narrow down to focus areas, develop indicators – what goals and objectives, then strategies for how to get there, shared with public and steering committee. Kickoff in April to talk about goals, May and June talk about indicators targets and strategies, then recommendations in Fall.

Net Zero Report

- CPAC subcommittee will draft a letter for discussion and approval with edits in April
- Regarding our recommendation to adopt net zero construction, the City has already adopted the whole plan, so no need. City is committed.
- Plan to remove the simplified progress summary matrix in the public version to encourage people to look at the more descriptive version.

As the City moves to net zero energy supply, how does that influence buildings built under Net Zero? It's an active discussion in the City. We're working on ways to implement for private buildings.

Vulnerability Assessment Part 2 Update

- Posted Part 2 report this week. No big surprises, we'll continue to refine modeling for precipitation based modeling. Haven't yet incorporated new NOAA sea level projections. Assessment is still sound – since objective was to understand vulnerabilities not make perfect predictions. Sea level rise would bring us back to our water levels 100 years ago before the 2 dams. Sea level rise was the driving concern. Dams do a good job today and at least until 2030 from coastal storm surges. 2070 models show Alewife and Fresh Pond is the most at risk from storm surge flooding. Area in North Point that could experience flooding, and MIT area to a lesser degree. Storm surge flooding is a regional problem, we need to work with neighboring cities. Propagated flooding in Kendall Square / Broadway. In Alewife, elevation difference between 10% and 1% risk is only a difference of a foot in height. There are no assets that are only vulnerable to storm surge flooding (vulnerable to other impacts also) – storm surge just presents an addition to previous risks (i.e. precipitation and heat). We are moving forward with preparedness and resilience plan (coordinating with Envision Cambridge committees - Preparedness plan feeds into Envision Cambridge, sometimes complementing sometimes conflicting). Flood protection guidance, urban forest canopy, working with Boston, applying for a NOAA coastal resilience grant, engaging at the state.

Notes by Sarah Mandlebaum