

City of Cambridge

CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION COMMITTEE

Minutes

October 8, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

*Attendees:* Melissa Chan (chair), Tom Chase (secretary), Jerrad Pierce, Rosalie Anders, David Rabkin, Fred Hewett, Julie Wormser, Keren Schlomy, Lauren Miller, Lyn Huckabee, Nicole Morell, Peter Crawley, Ted Live, Trisha Montalbo, Paula Phipps. *staff:* Bronwyn Cooke, Seth Federspiel, John Bolduc

Approval of Minutes

September minutes approved

Net Zero Action Plan: Annual Report – Seth Federspiel, presenter

- Process: CPAC to review NZAP and provide analysis/recommendation letter to City Manager
- 5-year anniversary of NZAP. A major 5-year revision/update of the plan will take place over next 6 months.
- Custom retrofit program advancing in partnership with Eversource.
- BEUDO amendments that require performance requirements are in the works. BEUDO buildings comprise a large percentage of the City's GHGs. This step was originally targeted for 2019 but delayed due to stakeholder work needs and COVID.
- Time of Renovation or Sale Policy was targeted for adoption in 2020, but also delayed due to complexity and equity impacts of policy. A feasibility study of policies is underway.
- 2022 New small buildings required to be Net Zero.
- The Density Bonus for buildings that achieve Net Zero is being "parked" because Councilors want all buildings to be Net Zero as requirement, not in return for zoning bonus.
- Article 22 Amendments for Existing Buildings allows additional exterior insulation of buildings as of right.
- Municipal Buildings – Schools are being designed to New Zero standards.
- Working on strategy to acquire 100% Renewable Energy electricity supply with consultants.
- Defining what counts as "Renewable Energy" for municipal and private buildings, given the many options in marketplace.
- Solar installation on new buildings requirement being studied. Maybe combined with green/white roof policies and aligned with State requirements.
- 5-year review of NZAP will occur starting November 2020, working with Task Force with stakeholders and consultants. Peter Crawley will be CPAC representative on this Task Force. Intend to complete this process in Spring 2021. Revised plan will have a special focus on achieving City's equity goals.

Questions & Answers:

- What other plan initiatives are behind schedule? There are some, but given time restrictions did not cover. CPAC will cover NZAP in November meeting, also.

- CPAC NZAP review letter requested by next meeting in November for a vote.
- State legislation may include a Net Zero Stretch Code. How does this effect NZAP?
- Are there Budget needs for NZAP? Yes, and resource allocation is under consideration.
- What is included in a thermal analysis? Studies impact of fuel switching and other energy HVAC upgrades.
- Lot of opportunity to align NZAP revisions with pending legislation at State level and Eversource initiatives. 5-year review of NZAP may be too early to know what State policies get adopted. Levels of uncertainty will have to be dealt with regardless of timing of 5-year review.

#### RAC/CPAC Subcommittee re: Consumption GHGs/Circular Economy – Bronwyn Cooke, presenter

- Need CPAC guidance on keeping Subcommittee on track and working toward viable policy recommendations.
- RAC efforts primarily on end-of-life recycling, like composting & recycling. And CPAC focuses primarily on high-level GHG goals and emissions from fuel sources. But the full life-cycle of products needs attention, not just end of life or fuel consumption.
- Subcommittee focused analysis and policy recommendations to Food sector.
- Want to partner with other City Departments, such as Health Dept, to implement Food initiatives.
- Textiles may be next sector to address the full life cycle of impacts.
- Want to identify effective strategies & actions that are cross sector and cross departmental.

#### Q&A/Discussion

- May want to expand focus beyond emissions reduction initiatives.
- CPAC focuses on emissions because they drive climate change which is a core existential problem. Also need to limit focus so that CPAC efforts don't get too diffuse.
- Local food sourcing would have significant emission reduction impacts.
- Important to target most impactful initiatives from emission reductions POV, like reducing meat/dairy based diets vs urban farming.
- Regenerative farming is both healthier and a source of sequestration. Are there enough local area organic/regenerative farming farms to supply area with food?
- Educational programing re: benefits of plant-based diets and local food sourcing.

#### Climate Change & COVID-19 Lessons Learned

- How has COVID effected systems in Cambridge, as they relate to Climate Change?
- COVID and Climate Change are both stressors, and especially for lower income communities and people of color.
- Office workers commuting via car because afraid of Public Transportation, so even though fewer commuters, not necessarily a reduction in auto commuters. Perhaps opportunity to promote bike use/commuting, which is healthier.
- Home energy bills are rising due to tele-commuting. As bills rise, owners may be more motivated to implement energy efficiency of homes. Home solar systems, insulation, HVAC retrofits, etc.

- Federal & State stimulus spending may be targeted toward home energy efficiency, such as Green New Deal.
- Pandemic & Climate Change are linked because risk-based behaviors are required. For example streets given over to pedestrians – will they be given back post COVID?
- “Flattening the curve” of GHG emissions is important, too.
- COVID has accelerated our understanding of the importance and power of collective action and effective political leadership.
- Sense of urgency is helpful for collective political action.
- Relationship between Climate Change and health impacts from disease vectors caused by biodiversity destruction. Dr Basu from Cambridge is authority/writer.
- Home air conditioning became more needed during summer and work from home habits. Emphasize heat exchangers. 32 days of over 90 degrees is high!

#### ETP Director Report

- Somerville opted into PACE, and Boston pending. John Bolduc to send memo to Cambridge City Manager to get Cambridge to opt in.
- Measuring rooftop albedo project underway. Cambridge is absorbing less heat historically.
- Eversource has 100% insulation refund program, extended through Oct 31, 2020.
- Tom Chase working on housing project on Mass Ave with small footprint and tall building that will be Passive House.
- Biogen announced new net-zero climate commitment by 2050 but stop using fossil fuel use by 2040, which means abandoning co-generation plant in Cambridge. Johanna Jobin involved in this effort.

#### Member Updates

- Had minor drought this season but not bad enough to trigger the MWRA system support. Also stresses roadside trees.
- If Winter severe, home heat demand will be high if still working from home. Lifestyles under COVID conditions are macro systems stress experiment!

*Notes by Peter Crawley*