

## CPAC Meeting Notes

**4/14/2022**

Present: David Rabkin, Julie Wormser, Susanne Rasmussen, Alex Steinbergh, Patricia Nolan, Keren Schlomy, Jerrylyn Huckabee, Steven Nutter, Tom Chase, Trisha Montalbo, Margery Davies, Abigail Utterson, Keith Giamportone, Peter Crawley, Rosalie Anders, Seth Federspiel, Jerrad Pierce, Ann Stewart, Vanessa Cine

Minutes from Feb and March approved unanimously

Most notes taken on Jamboard, provided below.

### Director's Report:

#### Key Issues

- BEUDO amendments. Several changes, some fairly complex, being considered by city council:
  - Net Zero compliance—2035 from 2050. There are a number of actions that can be taken to address faster timeline.
    - Allow use of carbon credits instead of building-level compliance.
    - Also allow deferred credits if plan within five years, execute within seven years.
    - Building owners will seek individualized plans (pay city to review).
    - Allow biofuel offsets, and
    - Charge newly-built buildings for embodied emissions.
  - Require outliers to accelerate decrease in carbon emissions
- Updating Net Zero Action Plan
  - Most updates focus on more aggressive timeline—in process of revising based on 2035
- May 4, 5:30 pm—Zoning proposal for residents with off-street EV chargers to allow others to use chargers without calling it a business transaction
- Proposal for reducing max parking ratios, eliminate minimum parking ratios
- Newly formed working group re: fare-free bus pilot(s)—
- Hearings tentatively for week of May 8 for ban on fossil fuel leaf blowers and results from Climate Crisis Working Group (Counselor Nolan, Mayor commissioned)
  - Main recommendations of latter:
    - Lack of progress in reducing GHG emissions, urgent need to take action through transparent, inclusive process (including with CPAC)
    - Importance of ongoing and timely reviews of actions, including course corrections
    - Strong call for additional mandates and funding for climate action
  - Seven recommendations:
    - Amend BEUDO ordinance with shorter timeline to 2035. Assure that alternative compliance payments are higher than compliance, and accelerate change by outliers
    - Electricity aggregation—increase Mass Class 1 Recs offered in Green Option, low-income accounts for shared green program

- Trying to figure out how this can be done legally; city not allowed to be a financial backstop for low income residents. Needs to work under municipal law AND a market procurement situation with very large
  - renewable power operator (solar or wind).
- Solar: install on all city buildings, invest in solar virtual power agreements. Use city buildings and others to help low-income residents to opt into CS program
- Transportation: transition entire city fleet to all-electric by 2030, rapidly expand public EV charging, require 100 in next five years. Continue to expand walking/biking/transit opportunities, places where only low-emission vehicles can drive.
- Geothermal grid demonstration projects
- Preventing further fossil fuel infrastructure from being constructed in Cambridge, advocate for strong Net Zero building code at state level
- Misc: Ban gas-powered leaf blowers, increase composting and microforests, ban idling
- CPAC has been underutilized, should be better included in discussions. Wanted to not duplicate role of CPAC, but wanted to know how best to partner with CPAC to move things forward more quickly.
- Bike lanes in North Cambridge (Mass Four)—City presented a proposal for how to advance the cycling safety proposal. Decision will be made April 18<sup>th</sup> council meeting.

Move on to main topic of meeting. Last two meetings: open exploration conversations re: CPAC—how/if to expand CPAC's role before focusing on our direction. Today is about focusing.

A few considerations:

- Do we need to change our bylaws? (see Jamboard for contents)
- These bylaws were created 20 years ago—our thinking, staffing, data are far further along by now.

Remaining notes are on Jamboard

# CPAC Agenda

April 14, 2022

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 6:00 pm | 1. Icebreaker   |
| 6:10 pm | 2. Approval of minutes – February 9, 2022 and March 10, 2022  |
| 6:15    | 3. ETP Director's Report  |
| 6:30    | 4. CPAC Roles and Objectives<br><br><i>Objective:</i> CPAC will continue the process of considering its role and objectives and how CPAC can function most effectively going forward. |
| 7:45    | 5. Public Comment   |
| 7:50    | 6. Member Updates<br><br><i>Objective:</i> CPAC members will provide updates on activities and issues relevant to CPAC's work.  |
| 8:00    | 7. Adjournment  |

# Straw-Proposal

**One potential structure for forward-looking CPAC role and function:**

- **Core role: conduit on climate and equity issues to/from the community**
  - Serve as community network to disseminate information on City climate programs and policies and provide feedback from community on these issues
  - Provide high-level input on ideas and directions for City work to meet community climate needs
- **Membership: should enable the above role**
  - Strategic recruitment of community representatives
  - Clear responsibilities and expectations
  - Consider smaller size
- **Meetings: seek more interaction**
  - Chair to facilitate dialogue
  - Prioritize topics that are of interest to the community
    - Annual plan based on community input
  - All members should participate in each meeting
- **Process: Pursue renewed/new membership and update bylaws accordingly**



# Straw-Proposal

## Discussion Notes

How do we define community? Who is it? Residents, institutions, etc?

have direct service folks, for example, people most effective, people who communicate with those who aren't so resilient. This is about who is represented on CPAC; right now, we don't involve those in our city who are NOT

We could do a better job with the "discussion forum" aspect of CPAC's original role.

Maybe this should be an analog of what CPAC is now, only with implementation experts. Or maybe it should be really different, like a quarterly forum for people involved in climate/equity/social services to coordinate outcomes.

There shouldn't need to be other outside groups to promote climate proposals--there should be room within CPAC to do that.

We talk about exporting our knowledge to other communities. What have other cities/committees learned so we can import that knowledge when figuring out what a new version of CPAC might look like?

If we are already members, would we be assigned a "constituency?"

Some may not be comfortable coming to CPAC to make voices heard, or not recognize their issues as related to climate. A CPAC that's like a NGO "board of directors" could draw wider sources.

A strength: planning without involvement from those who will be most affected is likely to run into implementation problems.

Strongly support moving from planning to implementation.

Community conduit is fine - need to define "community" better. Business, residents, bikers, drivers, retailers, underserved, etc. It's complex and time-consuming work and need to be realistic re: CPAC capacity/authority.

Might consider CPAC seats reserved for student representatives from CRLS, colleges, annual, rotating

Conduit w/Community is important, but is the Straw proposal suggesting other functions, like overseeing City-wide goals and progress and annual reporting are not part of CPAC anymore?

is there a forum between CPAC and the community groups

1) CPAC has a lot of great expertise that we have made use of in a number of ways, including technical, institutional, advocacy, etc. As noted, we don't have any members of Environmental Justice communities and .....

One key role "discuss and assess progress" (from original charge)

2) .....should be actively recruiting from those most vulnerable constituencies not just to be a communication arm, but to add expertise on what policies would help EJ communities most. ...

various community constituencies, business, residents, retailers, bikers, underserved, building owners, etc. is quite complex (which is why it's difficult for City) and it will be time consuming and difficult for CPAC -

still an advisory role as well

3) ...Those members would be an addition to what CPAC does, and whose voices are needed.

# Thoughts in response to straw man proposal...

Trying to speak for any constituency is very tricky in this City. It'll take access to community meetings. Creating a "voice" of the community is a very tall order!

Tracking, reporting, etc. is more typical for a group that meets monthly.

If the City does not have professional "outreach"/implementation staff it should, but that should not be CPAC's main job

with oversight of progress, e.g. the Net Zero Action Plan, so that would continue. The straw proposal contemplates bringing new/other people into CPAC to represent those likely to experience the impacts of climate

Most people have no clue about what we're doing. How to promote the idea of Cambridge being a climate action city, a place where we do great stuff. Reps from many groups. (Rosalie...)

How much time will this take from CPAC members? Let's be realistic about what we're asking of our members?

What places in our community don't have voices, don't have groups? Can we engage with them?

Bring more diverse voices into the conversation in order to the actions truly consider those who will be impacted, on whose actions we'll rely to implement change, how to mitigate impacts, etc.

Consider small, practical moves which may open up CPAC to more constituencies and community connections, some of which may be difficult for some of us, in the way that participation may currently be difficult for non-members  
^could include:  
occasionally holding meetings mid-day, in-person out at community locations, in tandem with events like parking day

1) It would be a waste of CPAC's member's talents to limit the group to "outreach"....

2)...There are members who represent different "communities" and who should be a conduit to their communities but as far as policies, not limited to implementation.



# Additional/Other Possible Role Priorities

Discussion Notes

## **Past views on CPAC's role:**

- From the Bylaws: “CPAC was created with the following purpose: To advise the City on how to address climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the City of Cambridge; promoting energy conservation, technological innovations, and renewable energy; engaging residents, businesses, and institutions in efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions; and adapting to the effects of climate change.”
- From the original climate plan: “The committee would provide a forum to discuss progress, advise on needed actions and changes in approach, assess progress, be a liaison with the community, and conduct outreach. Without such a committee, the effort would likely lose its focus.”



# Agenda Attachment

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## **Summary of potential CPAC roles identified in CPAC's February and March discussions:**

- Collaborative/advisory **sounding board for City staff** on design and priority of goals, projects and policies.
- **Develop specific [program or policy] recommendations.**
  - Focused efforts to research and make recommendations on new, high priority areas
- **Support staff in their advocacy** for new and potentially controversial policies and programs.
  - Advocacy to others such as the City Manager, Council, other departments, community groups, the general public, other stakeholders, etc.
- **Forum for assessing** and sharing progress toward goals
  - Assessing and sharing progress toward goals (e.g., results like emissions)
  - Assessing and sharing progress on program implementation
- **Connect to a broad range of constituencies** both to bring those constituents' perspectives into City decision-making, and reach out to them to develop awareness and support of the City's climate-related work, and to motivate action.
  - CPAC members participate in other groups/communities
  - Including those communities in CPAC as members and through other forms of participation
  - Bringing in outside expertise to educate and inform the City, CPAC and the public, and to help further engage the public and other stakeholders.
  - Provide a forum for engaging the CM, City departments, boards, etc. in discussion of climate goals with each other, with CPAC, and/or with stakeholders.
- **Help City institutionalize** change beyond government policy and action.
- **Support "export" of our successes** to other places.

Maybe the forum item captures the oversight role we've discussed. But that's still different from reporting (rather than just discussing) and being a reference on progress toward goals.



## Summary of “What’s in the way?” identified in CPAC’s February and March discussions:

- CPAC members’ **limited time** commitment
- **Lack of clear role** for CPAC / Lack of understanding of how CPAC fits into the “org chart” and can uniquely contribute in ways staff and/or consultants can’t or don’t.
- CPAC is not aware of, and thus able to help overcome, the **barriers that staff face**, which could be a useful role for CPAC given its independence.
- **Resources**: Should CPAC consist of volunteers or be a “resourced externally-facing team of professional communicators, marketers, teachers, lobbyists, expanding on what current staff do well?”
- Meetings: **Agendas** aren’t necessarily aligned with annual goals, aren’t necessarily useful to the City or to residents, and have often been repetitive and not high-level enough.
- CPAC is often **involved too late**, which means that its influence comes too late and is disruptive to a process that’s very far along
- Insufficient diversity on CPAC members in terms of demographics, affiliation with different communities, areas of expertise
- Insufficient CPAC **engagement with broad sets of stakeholders**, awareness of their perspectives, and ability to represent them.
- (Maybe) our non-use of **subcommittees**
- Staff expertise makes CPAC members’ **expertise** less useful. At the same time, we don’t necessarily use CPAC members’ expertise effectively.
- Lack of **input on what’s needed from CPAC from others**