

# CAAB Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 2022-05-18

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a virtual public meeting of the Climate Action Advisory Board (CAAB) was held on May 18, 2022, at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

**Members present:** Courtney Eaton (Chair), John Bolduc, Paul Kirshen, Michael McAteer, Jake Swenson, Warren Leon

**Staff:** Amanda Kohn, Director of Sustainability

**Select Board Liaison:** Matt Johnson

**Members of Public:** Pam Dritt, Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Alice Kaufman, Lois Suarez, Brian Foulds, Andy Puchrik

## Meetings and Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm. The Board did not vote on minutes from our April meeting, as preparation of the meeting minutes had been delayed.

The Chair (Courtney Eaton) discussed timing for our joint meeting with CSEC (planned for June 16 at 6:30pm), and Board members' availability for summer meetings (currently planned for July 20 and August 17). The Chair noted that the state will continue to allow virtual meetings through at least July; Matt Johnson noted that the state is likely to extend this allowance beyond July.

## Chair's Update

The Chair also noted that this meeting was the last meeting for Board member Michael McAteer. Board members shared kind words regarding Michael and his years of service to the Board.

The Board discussed openings on CAAB, and whether our current membership fully complied with our charter, in terms of having representation from various groups (e.g., from the business community, CMLP, etc.).

The Board agreed that we will have a rolling committee Vice-Chair, to ensure leadership continuity in case our Chair is unavailable for a meeting or any other duties.

The Chair reminded attendees about upcoming Cooler Concord events:

---

- May 25th, [Your Sustainable Home Now, Zoom](#)
- June 4th, [EV Display and Charging Tips Open House, Harvey Wheeler](#)

## Director's Update

Our director noted that the April 30 [Cooler Concord Climate Festival](#) went well, despite being organized on relatively short notice.

She also reviewed the written [Director's update](#), noting that since the update, Concord had received the contract for a DC Fast Charger, which will be installed at Rideout park.

Matt Johnson noted that there are eight Grant of Location petitions from National Grid coming before the Board of Selectmen in the near future, which is a routine order of business. Matt suggested that we may wish to treat maintenance projects differently from those that extend or expand the network. Board members acknowledged that it did not at this time have a clear legal perspective on how and whether the Town could take climate action policies into account when reviewing these petitions. Matt commented that the Town should at least ask National Grid about what their climate goals are, and how these projects aligned with them. John Bolduc noted that the Town's law firm, Anderson Kreiger, has relevant expertise in this area; Matt noted that we would have to pay for such advice. Michael McAteer noted that "business as usual" expansion of gas capacity is not in keeping with our climate goals, and that the Town should explore what conditions could be applied to such approvals. Matt suggested that the Director check with her peers in other municipalities for guidance. John Bolduc mentioned that a Harvard Environmental Law Clinic member lives in Concord, and might be available for pro bono work, as might the Conservation Law Foundation. Matt Johnson asked John to check with these resources. The Director noted that the DPU has recently completed a study on how to decommission natural gas lines.

## Workplan Check-ins

### Home Energy Scores

Jake reported that he had no material update.

### Planning Board Support

The Planning Board is looking for new climate-connected members. The Planning Board is currently reviewing some development guidelines from Lexington which could be a suitable fit for Concord. As a next step, the Planning Board will circulate a draft with Town departments and relevant committees.

### Climate Vulnerability Assessment

John reported that he had no material update.

Paul noted that the Director had submitted a proposal for a relevant grant (MVP Action Grant) that will focus on flood and drought vulnerability by modeling the integrated water system at the subbasin level. The grant also included funding to support a regional effort to look at flood and drought vulnerability across the watershed. The Town will also be updating the Town Hazard Mitigation Plan, which includes climate vulnerability.

The Director noted that the scope of climate vulnerability will include not just municipal facilities, but also economic factors such as tourism. She also noted that the Fire Department and Police HQ are in a floodplain, and that MAPC will help conduct a siting analysis to identify other possible locations for these facilities.

## Financing

Warren Leon reviewed an update regarding financing options that is included in the [May 18 meeting materials](#). The focus of this memo is to evaluate options for financing for energy-related projects for residential projects that do not qualify for MassSave HEAT loans.

He noted that a next step is to schedule a meeting with CMLP to review these options.

Brian Crouse asked: Knowing what we know now, which of these options would have the biggest impact?

Warren responded that there are two key criteria; one is impact potential, and the other is timing and feasibility.

- ENE: Warren noted that this appears to be a great program, probably our 1st choice, but it may take too long to get up and running. The other options are really plan B.
- CMLP-Administered Program: This approach would be a heavy lift, and likely would take a long time to launch.
- MMWEC: We are not currently members with MMWEC, but should keep the dialog open, as this appears to be a promising and flexible program.
- Slipstream: Slipstream is a national nonprofit organization that runs energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for governments and utilities. They are a potential partner to help e.g., CMLP or ENE implement a program.
- BlocPower: Very promising company, with an approach that is most applicable to multi-family housing. They are not currently active in MA. John Bolduc commented on their work in Ithaca, NY, where they won an RFP to decarbonize Ithaca's buildings. John noted that we will have to take some risks and aggressive steps to meet our climate goals by 2030.

Warren noted that the Ithaca model is impressive, but the key to their efforts is access to a large amount of private equity capital (\$100M). John noted that a similar effort in Cambridge, MA would cost on the order of \$2B. Warren noted that perhaps the key next step for Concord is generating access to capital as Ithaca has, and should be a topic for a future meeting. Michael McAteer confirmed that access to financing, along with a capable implementor, is a key requirement.

Warren requested that Board members provide him and Amanda with feedback in the next week, before he contacted CMLP to set up a meeting. A key question is whether CMLP would be willing to promote a program, and support on-bill payment, before further pursuing options for accessing financing.

## Municipal Fleet Study

The Director reviewed the Municipal Fleet Study, which is included in the [May 18 meeting materials](#).

Michael McAteer asked about school buses, which are not included in this study. Amanda clarified that buses are included in the fleet electrification deliverable, but not the infrastructure or charging study. The buses were categorized differently in the electrification deliverable so that their costs and benefits could be better understood. She noted that electric school buses are currently 2x the cost of conventional buses, which means that the school district would need grants to help defray the costs. Charging at the depot topic is being approached separately. There is an electric school bus working group that is coordinating efforts to advance grant applications and other needs.

Brian Foulds asked, can we track consumption of fuel vehicle by vehicle? Amanda noted that we do track fuel consumption and annual mileage. Hingham has installed monitors on town vehicles that track and report mileage and fuel consumption data. Brian suggested that trucking fuel consumption by vehicle, and tracking mileage from inspection records, could achieve the same result.

Brian Foulds asked, do we have a plan for managing budgets, written down? He commented that he wants to ensure that Town departments have a documented plan for managing funding for these vehicles. Amanda noted that each department currently manages its own fleet, but that additional measures/protocols/policies could be put in place for the charging infrastructure.

Michael McAteer asked, if each department manages their own fleet, is there any central policy or goals for electrifying the fleet? Amanda noted that the sustainable fleet policy does provide guidance for vehicle selection, and that for light vehicles, approval from the Town Manager is required to acquire a conventional ICE.

## Public comment:

Pamela Dritt asked, could we encourage town entities to encourage solar+batteries+heat pumps, as an alternative to legal action? Could boards such as the Planning Board make suggestions for e.g., energy sources during the review process? The Director noted that she has been asking these questions (e.g., what's the planned heating source for new projects?) on developments that require staff review.

The meeting adjourned at 8pm.