

DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
Town of Concord
Climate Action Advisory Board
June 15, 2020

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a virtual public meeting of the Climate Action Advisory Board (CAAB) was held on June 15, 2020 at 4:00 pm via Zoom.

Members present: Brian Foulds (chair), Brian Crouse, Courtney Eaton, Jake Swenson, John Bolduc, Michael McAteer, Pam Hill, Peter Nichol, Ruthy Bennett, Warren Leon.

Staff: Kate Hanley, Director of Sustainability; Abigail Ahern, Intern

Guests: Laura Davis, Pamela Dritt, Alice Kaufman, Andy Puchnik

1. Welcome and Zoom reminders

The Chair reviewed the rules of public meetings on Zoom.

Kate introduced Abigail Ahern who is a new intern working this summer; she comes through the UNH Sustainability Initiative and will work on identifying barriers to sustainability of older or historic homes and develop some guidance. She graduated this spring with a master's degree in architecture. Abigail is doing interviews with other communities and property owners in Concord. Anyone that knows someone who has done renovations for sustainability, please pass on contact information to Kate.

2. Meetings and minutes

The next meeting will be on July 15, returning to Wednesdays. The Chair asked if Wednesdays at 4 pm work for members. Pam will likely teach Wednesdays, possibly Thursdays at 6 pm but that will not start until the fall. Ruthy, Brian Crouse, and John indicated that 4 pm generally conflicts with their jobs and would prefer a later start time. For July 15, 4 pm works for everyone.

Following, CAAB will return to meeting on the third Wednesday of the month Aug. 19th, Sept. 16th, Oct 21st, Nov. 18th, Dec. 16th of 2020. The time of meetings will be decided at a future date.

Minutes of the May 20, 2020 meeting were approved with 9 voting yea and Pam Hill abstaining because she was not able to review.

3. Climate Action and Resilience Plan

Background: At the May 20th meeting, CAAB discussed feedback on the 1st draft of the climate action and resilience plan. The 2nd draft has been shared and put out for public comment. The 2nd draft of the plan is out for public and internal comment. A 7-minute introductory video is on the Town website.

Kate reported that the Concord Sustainable Energy Committee (CSEC) met on June 12 and reviewed the plan. Generally positive comments and eager to start on implementation.

The plan will be finalized plan in July. Comments on the 2nd draft plan should be sent by email to Kate by June 19; no need for minor edits.

The Chair reminded the board that there will be more opportunities to shape the Town's direction through updates and other deliberations, so it's not the last word on everything. He then called on board members to provide feedback.

- Ruthy Bennett commented that the document is dense and would benefit from other ways to communicate the priorities. She suggested an executive summary may not be the best fit but many perforated blueprints would be a good way for readers to take away what they are interested in to inform action. She also commented that schools need to be bolder in terms of facilities and communications with families.
- Michael McAteer commented that the plan is dense and includes a lot of actions and detail. In the future, CAAB should focus on adding detail to the financing options for implementation as well as a timeline for when the actions will be implemented. He also commented that plan seems deliberately very cautious and a reader doesn't come away with sense of emergency except in the introduction. He added that the accountability section should be more detailed to ensure that recommendations are followed through on.
- Jake Swenson commented that the plan is looking really great and agrees that it is dense and could benefit from some guidance so that the community can get a sense of where we are now and how the priority actions will play out.
- Warren Leon commented that it looks very professional and is dense, but attractive. He agreed that a guide for readers is needed, perhaps a roadmap to guide readers through the document. Warren also commented that he would like to see the next steps section more detailed to make it really clear that we know there's a lot more work to be done on tradeoffs and development of actions.
- Brian Crouse commented that he liked that each section has actions-to-date but suggested it could be better connected to the priority actions to take. Her noted that the indicator of carbon emissions is missing in the energy section and also asked if we could quantify the carbon impact in the natural resources section.
- Peters Nichol commented that he appreciates the density and detail of the plan but it needs to be accessible. He added that the urgency needs to be conveyed to public and households need to make their own plans. The town needs to lead and tell the community why its important not to delay.
- Courtney Eaton commented that a roadmap would be helpful in navigating the document and help people find the information they are most interested in. She also commented that the leadership section may be too early in the document and that the graphics are fabulous and professional.
- Pam Hill commented that the plan needs to demonstrate how serious a matter climate change is and an effort needs to be made to change the tone to get at the sobriety of climate change. She commented that the plan lets us feel good, but doesn't challenge us to do difficult things and we should not lead with what's been done but what needs to be done. She added that GHG emissions are most important and resilience has become more heavily weighted in document.
- John Bolduc commented that the structure of the plan works well and he likes that this draft called out the need to reduce emissions faster than we have moved so far. In terms of

communications, John's view is that this plan document is not the vehicle to communicate and engage the community and a separate communications and engagement program or plan needs to be devised that tailors messages to the audience and conveys the content of the plan without the detail. John commented that he has a philosophical issue with the renewable energy elements of the plan because they are based on purchasing renewable energy certificates and he wrote a memo to this effect for the board. John suggested the plan would benefit if the municipal government demonstrated it is leading by example by committing to meet the emission reduction goals in terms of municipal operations because if we are asking businesses and other organizations to meet the goals, it is important for the Town to be out front. There are many actions for the Town government in the plan that could be pulled together more cohesively and coupled with an explicit commitment. John commented that the adaptation part of the plan has a lot of good elements and recognizes that more needs to be understood to plan adaptation, such as with our forests, but it still focuses on the extreme effects of climate change rather than how climate change will alter our everyday climate and the effects that go along with that (e.g., buildings will use energy to cool more than heat). John also suggested that the plan needs to say that planning and design should be based on future climate parameters, not on the parameters of the past.

- Brian Foulds commented that he could actually see plan as a recruitment tool. Generally, he would have liked the plan to be even more technical and have communications tools be used to disseminate information. Brian expressed that the Letter from Town Manager is disappointing and suggested that a stronger tone of the town taking responsibility would be good. He added that we need to stop looking at what we have done and focus on what we need to do. Regarding the history of action in town, Brian commented that many volunteers and community members like that section and want to see their accomplishments noted. Brian commented that the graphic on rate of progress on GHG emissions not being fast enough is good, but cautions against messaging of doom and gloom. He said that the plan is a great step because it says there are 22 actions that are agreed upon by the Town. He loves that the municipal team has identified themselves as champions, and while he thinks some of the wording is still weak, it is what they have agreed they can do and it is up to us to push them on it. He likes most of the blueprints but is most disappointed by the energy section and that it does not include distributed battery storage. Brian commented that he is very happy the prioritization has been done and the plan doesn't say we will do everything. He commented that many residents would like us to mandate more change and he wants the committee to explore where we can mandate, but this document lays out some of the tools we need to move forward. He concluded that the plan is the jumping off point for taking action.

The board briefly discussed. Pam Hill noted that the Town Manager's letter reflects the tone of the plan. Michael commented that ordinances, bylaws, policies are mechanisms that other communities use and we should consider them. John commented that it would be useful if the plan discussed the process of accountability more explicitly and asked if this will be CAAB's role. He added that the plan will not change drastically because of logistical reasons but that it can be viewed as a foundation and steps can be taken to strengthen it. Courtney commented that she would also like to see more details about costs and financing. Kate commented that the next steps section can be expanded to capture the tasks of evaluating costs and accountability.

4. Annual Town Meeting: Letter of Support for Article 40

At a previous meeting, CAAB decided to draft a letter of support for Annual Town Meeting Article 40 (prohibition of fossil fuels).

The Chair just received the draft letter, so he suggested consideration of the letter be take up at the next meeting to allow more time for members to consider it.

5. Discussion of Agenda Items for 2020 meetings

Brian Foulds shared that with the climate action and resilience plan wrapping up, CAAB can now consider what to focus on in future meetings. What should be the approach of how CAAB moves forward? What is the role of CAAB in the plan implementation? Brian suggested that the a couple of board members could take on specific issues and help educate the board about those issues and develop responses for the full board to consider.

John commented that adaptation is a big topic and needs further development in Concord. John agreed that having subcommittees would be useful, although it does involve more time commitment by members.

Warren commented that he would like to work on an assessment of the plan and the feasibility of it being implemented. He suggested that we consider which of the actions will happen with little prodding from CAAB, which involved significant tradeoffs, which are biggest priorities, which does CAAB think we could affect most with policy recommendations, etc. Warren also agreed that dividing up actions among CAAB members to be lead, maybe on each blueprint.

Michael noted that CMLP doing well on supply side but is more challenged on demand side. CAAB needs to understand CMLP and how it works and can work, and leverage CMLP's capacity to scale up. For example, consider if Concord needs to go from 400 electric vehicles to 8,000 or need to go from less than 20% of homes with energy use intensity ratings to 75%.

Ruthy commented that she would like to be involved in developing the role of schools.

Jake commented that he would also like to have further discussion of CMLP's renewable energy goals and RECs. Where do we have the influence and where is there a need and what do we prioritize.

John commented that there is a need to think about communications and engagement. How is the Town going to engage residents, businesses, and others? All hands have to be on deck to reach the goals.

Brian Foulds commented that for Town Meeting, Articles 32, 34, 36 could be reviewed for possible CAAB positions. The schools are not moving forward on the capital project involving parking expansion. Article 31 is also not moving forward. CAAB is drafting a letter on Article 40 (gas ban). Brian asked if CAAB should think about 2021 TM and what in plan should be brought to the warrant? He listed a few additional ideas for future meetings and agreed to share his full list of ideas.

- Have a discussion about the clean energy strategy and RECs.
- The new middle school and its implications for emissions.
- The Planning Board is interested in definitions of sustainability.
- Multi-modal transportation is an important topic.

Michael agreed that CAAB can and should write TM articles.

Warren noted we owe Kate appreciation for her work and patience on the plan and everyone agreed.

Pam reiterated CAAB needs to define its role. Brian responded that we should refer to the board's charge and we should figure out what we want to do.

John reiterated how accountability for the plan will be accomplished is an important future topic for discussion.

6. Public Comments

Laura Davis commented that the language needs to be tweaked to say that Concord needs to stop building buildings that burn fossil fuel. She urged the Select Board and Town Government to advocate for a net zero stretch goal at the state. She also suggested that the plan include explicit language on electrification of the bus fleet; for example, at least 45% since 2030 goal is 45%. She emphasized that we have to make some commitments, time is running out. Community groups like Mothers Out Front can help reach goals and would like to have two-way dialog about how.

Pamela Dritt seconded Laura's comments and commented that the middle school is committed to be green but not defined and it needs to be net zero. Brian Foulds responded that he will share a letter from building committee which indicates they are committed to net zero.

Andy Puchnik is interested to understand what town is doing on climate change and asked for access to draft plan. Brian pointed him to where it can be accessed.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Minutes were prepared by John Bolduc