



Sustainability Commission – Net Zero 2050 Planning Subcommittee –

Net Zero 2050 Planning Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, Feb 28, 2024
Meeting Time: 12:00 PM
Meeting Location: via ZOOM (recorded)

Attendees: Phil Francisco, Charlotte Weigel, Ken Horton (arrived ~12:30)

Minutes:

Started – 12:18pm

- Agenda Item 1: Review minutes from Jan 31st
 - Phil moved to accept the minutes from the Jan 11th meeting. Charlotte seconded. Phil – aye. Charlotte – aye.
- Agenda Item 2: Discuss follow up to Select Board meeting.
 - Included follow up to meeting with Mark Haddad because he had to leave the Select Board meeting and missed our presentation.
 - To further consider supporting a Town climate resolution and pursuing a Climate Action Plan (CAP), the Select Board and Mark want to see what the experience has been for towns that have taken those actions. Have they been successful in achieving what the plans set out to accomplish?
 - Ken took on evaluating plans, and reported back on five plans that he evaluated: Natick, Arlington, Concord, Dedham and Westborough. Westborough's plan only covers climate resiliency and was therefore removed from the analysis. The four remaining varied greatly in length, all contained to different degrees a lot of filler like methodology, acknowledgements, etc. At the heart, they all essentially follow the Massachusetts plan, but customized for the different towns. He noted that a template from the state would be really enabling for towns to complete CAPs
 - Phil interjected that he had a conversation with someone from the state at the MVP-NBS meeting where they said the state is not funding grants to assist towns with CAPs right now because the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience is going to issue guidance on what CAPs need to contain. It is not known when that will be available.
 - Ken noted several issues with the plans:
 - There is no follow up report on how the CAPs are being implemented or how much they have implemented
 - There is very little measuring of success reported in the plans
 - Most had a Sustainability Coordinator working on the plans that have since left – Charlotte noted that in some cases it could be that a Coordinator was funded by a 1 year grant and if the town did not continue to fund the position, the person may have had to leave
 - It does not appear that bandwidth was allocated by the town for implementing the plan.
 - Charlotte noted that Concord should have an update at least in their GHG inventory from early 2010 to around 2020. Also last summer Acton hired an intern to complete a follow up measurement on how they were doing with emissions reductions. Early reporting last fall indicated they had made progress on vehicles, but not so much on buildings. We don't know if more complete data has been released. **Phil wants us to keep the idea of requesting help**

from an intern funded by the grant mechanism Bruce has mentioned for evaluating progress on emissions reductions in mind when the time comes.

- Ken also noted that only one of the towns he assessed has an MLP and it would be better to evaluate those communities.
- **ACTION:** We will talk to the Wellesley and Hingham MLP Sustainability Coordinators at the next Energy Coaching working group meetings and will use that opportunity to ask them about implementation of their own Climate Action Plans.
- **ACTION:** We will reach out to the other four towns that Ken evaluated to see if they will talk to us about implementation of their plans.
- **ACTION:** We will ask NC4 to submit a request to the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience to inform us of the timeline of availability of CAP requirements. Whoever goes to the next NC4 meeting can do this.
- Charlotte asked about the use of completing a Municipal Decarbonization Plan (MDP) which has the following benefits:
 - There is a specific template to follow from the state, and it is much simpler than a CAP.
 - There is technical assistance coming available soon from the state to assist towns with completing an MDP.
 - Completing an MDP meets one of the requirements for the Climate Leaders program. Either an MDP or a CAP meets the requirement. Without either one we cannot apply for the program or qualify for the funding.
- **Phil and Ken think we should only pursue the CAP, because it includes the MDP and we do not want to keep going back to ask for things from the Select Board, so we will not pursue it for now.**
- Agenda Item 3: Any other business
 - Charlotte noted that the recent updates in the Massachusetts RMV data tool allow for us to have 2019 transportation emissions data.
 - They discussed the value of updating the 2019 inventory now with that date. The 2019 inventory uses 2014 RMV data because that was all that was available when the inventory was completed.
 - **It was agreed that we would wait to update the 2019 transportation emissions whenever we do a follow up inventory to compare to the 2019 baseline.**
 - The group agreed the next step towards adopting a ZEV policy for municipal vehicles is to put together more detailed info to take to the DPW, Emergency Services and School District to see if they would support the policy.
 - Phil mentioned that the warrant articles for spring town meeting include a request for two trucks, two police cruisers and new HVAC for the Country Club and the Police Station
 - Phil learned that the police vehicles will be hybrids according to the Green Community (GC) vehicle policy.
 - One truck will be used for street plowing and cannot be a hybrid
 - A second truck is for the police to haul stuff around. They are looking for hybrid options for this vehicle.
 - Phil also learned that the HVAC replacements would align with Green Communities as well. Charlotte reminded them that historically the town has only replaced gas furnaces with new gas furnaces. MassSave is discontinuing funding for replacements of gas furnaces this year, and she thinks that might be the same for Green Communities requirements. Rather than ask the town to pay entirely for new gas furnaces for those buildings, could the town consider waiting until they can apply for the next round of funding from Green Communities to subsidize heat pumps instead?
 - Phil noted that it could be 2025 before they can get a GC-funded replacement. Charlotte added that the town applied for GC funding to replace the boiler in Town Hall in 2021 and were denied the funding. They considered asking again in Fall 2023, but did not. The Town Hall boiler is still not replaced and the building is heated. Therefore, we need to know the urgency of replacing those furnaces.

- **ACTION:** Phil will request a meeting with Mark Haddad to understand the urgency of replacing those furnaces and ask if the work could wait to apply for GC funding for heat pumps instead.
- Charlotte moved to adjourn the meeting. .Meeting adjourned – 1:25pm

Next Net Zero 2050 Planning Subcommittee meeting: TBD

Respectfully submitted,

- **Charlotte Weigel** Sustainability Commission Member

Minutes approved by Net Zero 2050 Planning Subcommittee, May, 30, 2024.