

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2026
APPROVED**

Select Board Members Present: Matt Pisani, Chair; Becky Pine, Vice Chair; Alison Manugian, Clerk; Peter Cunningham; John Reilly;

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair; Brian Callahan, DPW Director; Tom Delaney, Squannacook River Dam Consultant; Katie Kazanjian, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Charlotte Weigel and Ken Horton of the Sustainability Committee; and Andres Correa, Energy Manager.

Chair Pisani called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine mentioned that there was a well-attended demonstration over the weekend. Mr. Haddad clarified that the Town did not cover the costs of the Police Details for this event. It was paid for by the leaders of the demonstration.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- 1. Ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Ed Cataldo as the Interim Building Commissioner.**
Mr. Reilly made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Ed Cataldo as the Interim Building Commissioner, effective immediately. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 2. Ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Michelle Collette as the Interim Zoning Enforcement Officer.**
Mr. Cunningham made a motion to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Michelle Collette as the Interim Zoning Enforcement Officer, effective immediately. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 3. Update on Request to Community Preservation Committee for Funding the Squannacook River Dam.**
Mr. Haddad met with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) on March 23rd to discuss the potential for CPC funding for the Dam proposal. He shared that the meeting went well; however, there are concerns about incurring additional debt within the CPC. As a result, the Committee requested that Mr. Haddad develop an alternative proposal to fund the project. To ensure everyone understood the financial implications of the project's debt service, he reviewed them with the Board. He noted that the total estimated cost for the Dam repair project is \$812,500, which includes construction, engineering, and contingency expenses. He also discussed the debt service associated with borrowing the full amount over both 10-year and 15-year terms.

Based on his conversation at the CPC meeting, Mr. Haddad is proposing that the CPC approve \$133,000 for the FY 2027 project, funded from the Historic Preservation Reserve, with the Town borrowing an additional \$679,500. He outlined debt service options for 10 and 15-year financing. He also suggested an annual \$45,000 contribution from the Historic Preservation Reserve to support the project and minimize the impact on the Town's operating budget. Under 15-year financing, the remaining debt service would be covered by the Capital Budget in the amount of \$22,000 annually, while 10-year financing would require approximately \$50,000 annually from the same budget. Mr. Haddad will bring this proposal to the CPC later that evening, but in the meantime, he has asked Town Counsel to redraft the article. Mr. Cunningham asked what would be removed from the Capital Plan, and Mr. Haddad said he would need to review it. Mr. Haddad stated that this approach wouldn't require a Debt Exclusion question on the ballot, but funding would still require a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting. Mr. Tom Delaney, former DPW Director, said this approach would lock the capital budget for ten years. Mr. Robertson, Finance Committee Chair, said debt exclusions have not been granted for amounts under \$1 million and expressed hope for CPC support. Mr. Haddad said he has received many inquiries about taking over the Town of Shirley's side of the Dam. Town Counsel advised that the Town of Groton would need Special Legislation to take property in another Town.

4. FY 2027 Budget Update.

Mr. Haddad will be visiting the State House tomorrow along with Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee Chair Lacey McCabe, Superintendent Dr. Geoff Bruno, and School Advocate Rebecca Weksner. They will be testifying before the Ways and Means Committee requesting an significant increase in Chapter 70 Aid. He thanked Representative Scarsdale for her efforts.

5. Update on Select Board Schedule Through the 2026 Spring Town Meeting.

Monday, April 6, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 13, 2026 -	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Monday, April 20, 2026 -	No Meeting – (Patriots’ Day Holiday)
Monday, April 27, 2026-	Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Saturday, May 2, 2026 -	2026 Spring Town Meeting

ITEMS FOR SELECT BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

1. Consider Taking Positions on the Various Articles Contained in the Warrant for the 2026 Spring Town Meeting.

Article 1: Hear Reports
 There were no questions.
 Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 2: Elected Officials Compensation
 Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 3: Wage and Classification Schedule

Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 4: Appropriate FY 2027 Contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund

Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 5: Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Operating Budget

The Select Board will take a final position at the April 13th meeting.

Article 6: Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget-

Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 7: Community Preservation Funding Accounts

Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 8: Community Preservation Funding Recommendations:

Unanimously in favor to support.

CPC Proposal A: Lighting Improvements- \$9,850

Unanimously in favor to support.

CPC Proposal B: Cow Pond Brook Fields improvements- FY 2026-\$4,284,000

Unanimously in favor to support.

CPC Proposal C: Housing Coordinator- FY 2027-\$72,829

Unanimously in favor to support.

CPC Proposal D: Pollinator Pathway Garden- \$2,500

Unanimously in favor to support.

CPC Proposal E: FY 2027 Housing Request- \$100,000

4 In favor in support, 1 Against-Manugian

CPC Proposal F: Cutler Softball Field Establishment- \$99,000

Unanimously in favor to support.

CPC Proposal G: Boutwell Playground Renovation-\$233,923

Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 9: Special Act to Exempt Certain Uncontrollable Costs from the Tax Levy-

4 in favor to support, 1 Against -Manugian.

Article 10: Amend Chapter 168 of the General Bylaws-Stretch Energy Code-

The Sustainability Commission will attend this evening's meeting to discuss this article.

Article 11: Squannacook River Dam Repair-
The Board will take a position during its April 13th meeting.

Article 12: Amend Zoning Bylaw- Clarify Appeal Process in Site Plan Review
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 13: Funding for Destination Groton Committee-
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 14: Transfer Within the Water Sewer Enterprise
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 15: Transfer Within the Sewer Enterprise Fund
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 16: Transfer Within the Four Corner Sewer Enterprise Fund
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 17: Prior Year Bills-
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 18: Appropriate Funding to Offset Snow and Ice Deficit
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 19: Debt Service for the Middle School Track- \$648,945
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 20: Funding on Main Street Traffic Study
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 21: Appropriate to Fund Town Forest Expenses- \$12,000
Unanimously in favor to support.

Article 22: Establishing Limits for Various Revolving Funds
Unanimously in favor to support.

OTHER BUSINESS

Authorize the Town Manager and One Member of the Select Board to Sign Warrants for the Next Thirty Days.

Ms. Manugian made a motion to authorize the town manager and one member of the select board to sign warrants for the next thirty days. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

On-Going Issues

- A. PFAS Issue –None
- B. UMass Satellite Emergency Facility – None
- A. Fire Department Staffing – Ms. Pine asked if there was one position added to the Operating Budget. Mr. Haddad replied that yes, the Finance Committee voted to support adding the one position to the Operating Budget.
- B. West Groton Dam – None
- C. Main Street Study –None

Ms. Collette stated that the Accessibility Committee and the IT Department will set up a TV screen with closed captioning on the floor near the front at Town Meeting. The Groton Channel will broadcast live for the hearing-impaired. Ms. Collette gave kudos to the IT Department and Cable Director Ashley Doucette.

SELECT BOARD LIASON REPORTS

None

Approval of the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of March 13, 2026

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 13, 2026. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 in favor, 1 abstained- Cunningham.

Approval of the Special Meeting of March 23, 2026

Mr. Reilly made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of March 23, 2026. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 in favor, 1 abstained- Pine.

6:15 P.M. -Sustainability Commission- updated on the Adoption of the Specialized Stretch Energy Code – (Mr. Haddad left the meeting to attend the CPC Meeting)

Ms. Charlotte Weigel and Mr. Ken Horton, members of the Sustainability Commission, along with Mr. Andres Correa, the Energy Manager, attended the meeting. Mr. Correa announced that the Town had been awarded a \$250,000 Green Communities Grant, which is expected to save approximately \$50,000 per year in electricity costs and maintenance for the schools. Ms. Weigel reviewed the Specialized Energy Code and presented slides introducing the Specialized Stretch Energy Code, outlining its requirements for single-family homes, townhomes, and small and large multi-family homes (see the attached slides for the full presentation and more information).

The Specialized Stretch Energy Code will be presented at the Spring Town Meeting on May 2, 2026, for consideration and adoption. The Select Board commended Ms. Weigel, Mr. Horton, and Mr. Correa for their efforts.

Select Board’s Position on Article 10

Article 10: Amend Chapter 168 of the General Bylaws-Stretch Energy Code-
Unanimously in favor to support.

The Select Board adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectively submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.

Agenda

- Update on Specialized Stretch energy code outreach since 12-15-25
 - Green Community → Climate Leader Community
 - Review of Specialized Stretch energy code
 - Progress on outreach
 - FAQ



Green Community → Climate Leader



- Groton in the Green Community program
 - Met requirements to be a Green Community in 2019
 - Awarded ~\$270K in Green Communities grant funding 2019 - 2025
 - **March 2026** – awarded \$250K grant that is estimated to save \$50K/year on electricity costs and maintenance for schools
- New Climate Leaders Program
 - Towns must meet new requirements
 - Towns qualify for \$1.15 million TA and decarbonization grants
 - State has allocated \$60 million to the program so far



What's next: the Specialized Stretch Energy Code

Energy Code is a subset of the Building Code

➤ Energy Code sets standards for energy use

There are three Energy Codes in MA for municipalities to adopt:

1) Base code; 2) Stretch Code; 3) Specialized Stretch Code

➤ Groton adopted the Stretch Code around 2019

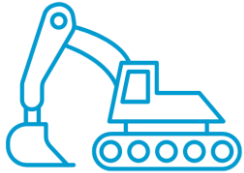
The town will vote on the Specialized Stretch Energy Code at Spring 2026 Town meeting.

If adopted, the Specialized Stretch Energy Code would be effective January 1, 2027



Introduction to the Specialized Stretch Energy Code

Developed to reduce the GHG emissions of buildings and reduces the future cost of electrifying those buildings.



The Specialized Code applies to new construction only.

- It does not apply to renovations, additions or historic buildings.



The Specialized Code incentivizes, but does not require, the electrification of new buildings.

- Multiple pathways to compliance are available (including mixed fuels).



Opportunities for additional state grant funding.

- Climate Leaders Program

Slide from ZeroCarbonMA (modified from original)



Introduction to the Specialized Stretch Energy Code

Requirements for 1-/2-family/Townhome/Small multifamily (<12,000 ft²)

Home/Unit Type	Unit size	Specialized Stretch Energy Code requirement
All-Electric NEW home	Any	No new requirements
Mixed-Fuel NEW home (if using gas/propane/oil)	Under 4000 ft ²	+ Solar PV (min 4kW, unless PH)* + wiring for electrification
	4000 ft ² and over	+ Solar PV (to be net zero energy)* + wiring for electrification

*Solar is required for new, mixed-fuel buildings when there is a solar roof zone ≥ 300 sq ft AND at the right orientation (tree removal is not required).

Slide from ZeroCarbonMA (modified from original)



Introduction to the Specialized Stretch Energy Code

Requirements for Large multifamily (>12,000 ft²)

Building Type	Fuel Type	Specialized Stretch Energy Code requirement
Multi-family (>12,000 ft ²)	All-Electric	Passive House
	Multi-fuel	Passive House + wiring for electrification

Slide from ZeroCarbonMA (modified from original)



Benefits of the Specialized Stretch Code

- Ensures new homes are enabled to meet net zero GHG emissions targets
- Protects Groton homeowners against future costly retrofits
- Cost savings for homeowners: reduction in energy costs of \$1300/yr
 - Estimate based on 3000 sq ft using current GELD electricity and propane prices
- Reduced health, safety and environmental risk in new homes
 - Fire, CO, explosion, fuel leaks and and poor indoor air quality: risk much lower in all electric homes
- Reduces local emissions from burning fossil fuels
- Opportunities for additional state grants



Objections to the Specialized Code

- Adds up front costs if the builder wants to use fossil fuels
 - Adds costs for rewiring for electrification and for solar installation, when solar roof zone requirements are met
- Learning curve for builders not already building all-electric
 - Almost all new SF homes in Groton are built with propane heating and hot water.
 - Local builders who choose to build all-electric but have not already built all-electric will have to learn



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Outreach so far...

- GELD Commission (x3)
- Building Commissioner
- Public Information Sessions (x2)
- Two local builders
- Planning Board
- Select Board
- GDRHS Environmental Club
- Council on Aging luncheon
- Groton Business Association
- Conservation Commission

- Affordable Housing Trust
- Democratic Town Committee
- Invasive Species Committee
- Trails Committee
- Grange
- Groton Conservation trust

Still going...

- Planning Board
- Finance Committee
- Destination Groton



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can heat pumps heat homes in Massachusetts?

A. **Yes!**

- Many Cold Climate Heat Pumps perform at -10F or below without backup
- New homes in Massachusetts built today to the stretch code are over 2X more efficient than new homes built in 2006. That means they require less energy to stay warm or cool.
- The poor energy efficiency of most existing homes makes it more difficult for heat pumps to supply all of the energy required to heat older, inefficient homes. **The Specialized Stretch energy code only applies to NEW buildings.**

[*Can Heat Pumps Actually Work in Cold Climates? - Consumer Reports;](#)
[Heat Pumps: A Practical Solution for Cold Climates – RMI.](#)



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How does a well- insulated, well air-sealed (i.e. energy efficient) building “breathe?”

A. All new homes require mechanical ventilation systems



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does adopting the Specialized Stretch Code slow rate of new home construction?

A. No! –

- 56 communities have passed the Specialized Stretch Code.
- Specialized code communities have NOT added less housing than Stretch code communities
- Communities that have recently adopted the Specialized code have seen a greater increase in the number of housing units the year after implementation.

[Massachusetts Energy Codes are Compatible With Increasing Housing Supply – Passive House Massachusetts](#)



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is it more expensive to build an all-electric home than a mixed-fuel home?

- A 2022 study by RMI showed that the cost of building an all-electric home in Boston **is equivalent** to building a home with mixed fuels: [The Economics of Electrifying Buildings: Residential New Construction – RMI](#)
- A 2023 MIT-Wentworth study calculated the cost of building an all-electric home **is less than** a multi-fuel home: [Public Policy for Net Zero Homes and Affordability](#)
- Costs to build all-electric homes **were within 1% of** building mixed fuel homes in 2024: [BEplus MA is Going Net Zero 04.30.24](#)
- Local HVAC installers have indicated that installation of a fossil fuel heating system + central AC **will NOT cost less** than the installation of a heat pump for heating and cooling in new construction*

*Does not consider every possible configuration of building a new home



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can a home that is all-electric include a fossil fuel generator for emergency back up?

A. **Yes**, it can.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does the Specialized Stretch Energy Code apply to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)?

- If an ADU is connected to or part of an existing home, **NO**.
- If an ADU is freestanding and all-electric, **NO**.
- If an ADU is freestanding and multi-fuel, it must be pre-wired for electrification and have 4kW solar PV, if the roof conditions allow for it.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How does electrification reduce GHG emissions if some of our electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels at power plants?

A. A new all-electric home heated with heat pumps emits about 50% less greenhouse gas emissions than a multi-fuel home TODAY. As the electric grid reduces fossil fuel generation sources over time, GHG emissions from all-electric homes will decrease even more.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How does adoption of the Specialized Stretch energy code impact the electric grid outside of Groton?

- Use of heat pumps for A/C lowers contribution of new buildings to peak electricity demand in summer
- High energy efficiency of new construction in Massachusetts minimizes impact on peak demand of new buildings
- Expansion of adoption of the stretch and specialized code is a recommendation to increase passive load management, “reducing peak loads and saving money for ratepayers”*

[*Peak Potential: Reducing energy costs and empowering consumers with load management and virtual power plants](#)



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What would happen to electricity demand **in Groton if all new homes were constructed all electric?**

A. With some exceptional years, residential development is expected to add ~25 dwelling units per year in Groton. We estimate this will add 0.4% to the total electricity demand annually if those new homes are all-electric.



Next Steps

- Learn about the [Specialized Stretch Energy Code](#)
- Please invite the Sustainability Commission to speak at your local committee or group meeting on the Specialized Stretch Energy Code.
- **Come to Town Meeting on May 2!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- Please find out more at sustainablegroton.org.
- Reach out to us at sustaining@grotonma.gov.

THANK YOU!!!



Supplemental Slides



Introduction to the Specialized Stretch Energy Code

Specialized Stretch Energy Code requirements for commercial buildings

Building Type	Energy Source	Specialized Stretch Energy Code requirement
Schools, Offices and Municipal buildings	All electric	No new requirements
	Mixed Fuel	+ Solar PV for TEDI pathway + wiring for electrification for Passive House and TEDI pathways
Other commercial buildings (> 20,000 sq ft)	All electric	No new requirements
	Mixed Fuel	+ Solar PV for ASHRAE and TEDI pathways + wiring for electrification for Passive House, ASHRAE and TEDI pathways



What is **Passive House**?

 Passive House (PH) is the **gold standard** for efficient and affordable high-performance buildings. It is based on a rigorous control of **air**, **heat**, and **moisture** flows through **air-tight enclosures** + **continuous ventilation**. According to DOER, 92% of new multi-family housing permitted by the end of 2025 is being constructed to Passive House Standards.



Can you spot the **Passive House**?

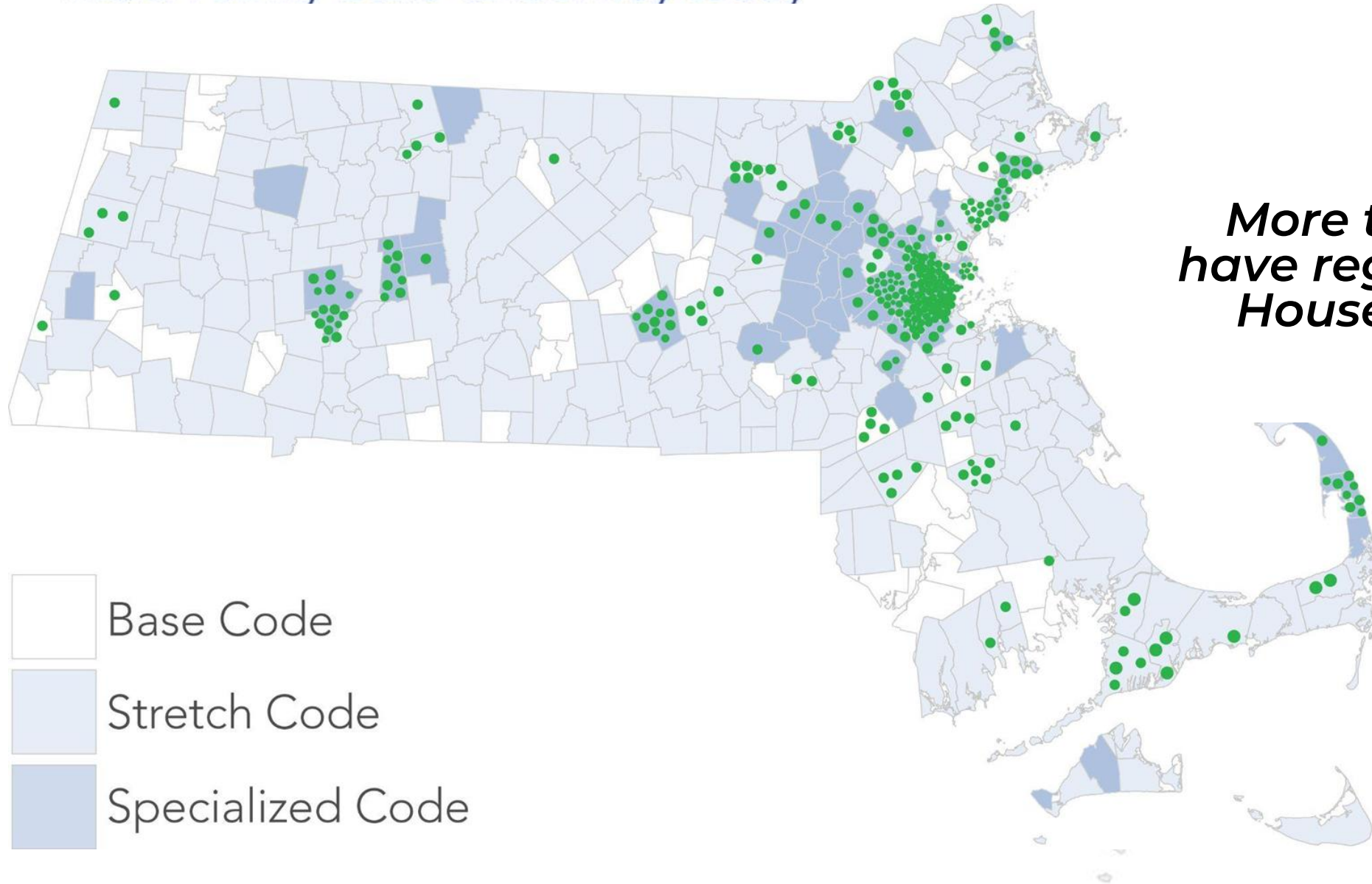


Hint: warm colors = heat loss






Passive House

Multi Family built/ underway today



***More than 30,000 units
have registered for Passive
House incentives from
Mass Save.***

-  Base Code
-  Stretch Code
-  Specialized Code



What are some benefits of **Passive House**?

Better for owners & occupants:

- **Cheaper:** total energy use is 40-60% lower
- **Healthier:** air is fresh and filtered
- **More Comfortable:** stable temperatures with reduced noise and odors
- **More Resilient:** temperatures remain safe for 6+ days even without power
- **More Durable:** moisture control inhibits mold growth
- **Third party verification:** No additional training (and no additional cost) is required for building inspectors - all buildings are independently verified.

Better for everyone else, too:

- **Better for the Climate:** lower energy use means lower emissions
- **Better for all Ratepayers:** lower peak heating demand reduces energy bill growth and demand on the grid.

Passive House and Affordability

- 2-3% Cost Premium for large multifamily buildings ([MassCEC](#))
 - Robust [Mass Save incentives](#) of \$3,750 per unit (plus adders for modeling) significantly offset upfront costs
 - Premium also paid off through lower operational costs
 - 3rd party verification is done through Passive House, avoiding any cost or additional work for building inspectors
 - Many experienced contractors report *little to no additional upfront cost* to Passive House buildings
- [Affordable Housing](#) is especially well-suited to Passive House
 - Passive House projects [get more points in competition for tax credits](#), further lowering costs for developers
 - Lower spending on heating and cooling systems are especially attractive to developers responsible for energy and maintenance costs



Source: Northland Newton Development