

**Climate Action Committee
Meeting Minutes**

**January 25, 2016, 6:00 p.m.
Brookline Town Hall, Room 111**

Members Present: Nancy Heller, Deborah Rivers, Michael Berger, Ben Chang, Alan Leviton, Werner Lohe, Pat Maher, Linda Olson Pehlke, Kathleen Scanlon, Ali Tali

Staff: Lara Curtis Hayes

Others Present: John Harris, David Pantalone, Rep. Frank Smizik

Call to order, welcome and approval of minutes

Deborah Rivers called the meeting to order.

Linda Olson Pehlke ***motioned to approve*** the minutes from December 21, 2015.

Ali Tali ***seconded*** the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion ***passed unanimously*** (7-0-2, Pat Maher and Ben Chang abstaining).

Discussion and vote on recommendation of a resolution or letter regarding Massachusetts solar net metering legislation

Deborah Rivers introduced the net metering legislation discussion, asking if everyone has read the revised letter. Deborah said David Lowe sent out suggested language for changes to the letter, and read the changes to the CAC. The changes requested more specific language in the recommendation regarding the value of the net metering credits. Alan Leviton said we have to think of what we are trying to achieve, and whether entities should be able to make a profit on solar installations. Deborah said she is reluctant to be wordsmithing the letter. John Harris, a member of the working group that prepared the letter, said in comparing this letter to the resolution last presented to the CAC, the working group pulled out all specific references to bill numbers and policies because there might be changes at the legislative level and we were hoping to put together a pro-solar document.

Deborah Rivers said she thinks the letter is very clear. John Harris said CAB is scheduled to have two solar experts at the next CAB meeting to work on more details and specifics for advocates. John said this letter is just one step in a long process, and a copy of the letter has already been sent to a number of Massachusetts municipalities as a template for consideration.

Nancy Heller said the term “reasonable level” might differ immensely between what’s reasonable for National Grid and Eversource and what’s reasonable for homeowners. The committee continued to discuss the wording of the letter. Rep. Frank Smizik said he thinks this letter is fine, and it shouldn’t necessarily get into details that a legislative committee would really decide. Deborah agreed, this letter indicates we’re pro solar and doesn’t get bogged down in specifics.

Nancy said she has been concerned with some of Governor Baker’s statements, including those on the proposed gas pipelines and solar policy, and she’s concerned he’s turning a blind eye to the likely impacts from climate change. Rep. Frank Smizik said he agrees, because the administration’s big goal is to bring hydropower down from Quebec. Rep. Smizik said the utilities want regular/predictable energy, and the governor is saying solar is more expensive than other energy sources even if it isn’t. Rep. Smizik said there is a real debate going on right now at the state level. John Harris said more people are

becoming more convinced that utilities want more hydro because they make their money on the transmission over long distances, and Maine wind might be able to connect to those trunk lines. The longer the transmission line, the more energy lost over the distance; the closer the energy is generated, the more efficient.

Linda Olson Pehlke **motioned to accept the letter** and send it to the Selectmen for their recommendation.

Michael Berger **seconded** the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion **passed unanimously** (10-0).

Linda Olson Pehlke asked Nancy Heller thoughts about presenting the letter to the Selectmen. Nancy said she would like someone with more fluid knowledge on this subject to come to a meeting as well. John Harris again encouraged interested individuals to come to the next CAB meeting. Nancy asked Rep. Smizik about the legislative schedule going forward and how soon the letter should be sent. Smizik said he thinks the discussion might be postponed further, but it's important to get primary comments and arguments in relatively soon. Deborah Rivers said she thinks it's important to get something in soon so the House knows people are interested in there being a bill. The committee discussed timing going forward.

Discussion of Ninth School Site Study with a climate change perspective and vote on recommendation of climate change criteria for a new school site

Linda Olson Pehlke reviewed the changes to the draft comments on the Ninth School Site study, including the addition of the mention of LEED standards and re-ordering the points. Alan said he would've grouped like points together, and asked why "private open space" is included. Linda said it's mentioned separately from public space, but it's still important. Linda said we could take out the term "private," and the point would still be effective, but it might be repetitive. The committee continued to discuss specific wording changes.

Linda asked what the committee should do with this document if it votes to accept it. Nancy Heller said this is such a complicated issue, and we need to recognize the challenge in the document. Deborah Rivers suggested a concluding paragraph recognizing this is a difficult issue, but emphasizing these points should be considered. The committee continued to discuss wording for the document. Kathleen Scanlon said she has been struggling with the North Brookline v. South Brookline issue, and there might be more than one site in the end. Linda said she thinks the criteria would still apply. Deborah said perhaps there should be wording that says a site should try to meet as many of the criteria as possible. Linda said the document is trying to call attention to factors that matter related to climate change. Alan said he liked the idea that a new school site in South Brookline might actually encourage the development of new public transit in South Brookline. Nancy Heller updated the committee on the current status of the school selection process. The committee continued to work out wording changes.

Michael Berger **motioned to approve the comments** on the 9th School Site selection process, as modified.

Linda Olson Pehlke **seconded** the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion **passed** (8-0-2, Ben Chang and Nancy Heller abstaining).

Updates on other current and planned Climate Action Committee projects and areas of interest, including Community Shared Solar, natural gas leaks, and net zero efforts

The committee discussed dates for the meeting where the advocates from Cambridge Net Zero will be invited to present to the committee, possibly 2/22, 2/29 or 3/28. Alan Leviton said he would reach out to the Cambridge Net Zero proponents. Deborah Rivers said it's important to have a designated member of the Building Commission at that meeting, as well as the Planning Board. Nancy Heller said she and Deborah should sit down and have a discussion about where there are holes in committee membership. Alan Leviton said the Cambridge Net Zero presentation to Climate Action Brookline did not go into extreme detail. Those discussions could come later. Nancy asked Lara to ask which meeting date (2/22 or 3/28) will work better for the Building Commissioner. David Pantalone said Cambridge Net Zero's plan is a 25-year plan, so it's a living project.

Updates from staff

Lara Curtis Hayes said the Selectmen will be reviewing letters of intent next week for 8 municipal sites for solar PV installations, including the transfer station, Soule Gym, Main Library, Tappan Street Pool, Fire Station #5, Runkle School, Brookline High School, and Devotion School.

Lara Curtis Hayes said she has been working with the Climate Preparedness Taskforce, which has been very helpful in working towards the goal of developing a vulnerability assessment for the town. Lara said the Town will be awarded \$20,000 in Community Compact funds to be put towards developing a vulnerability assessment, and she has been paired with two possible scientists through the American Geophysical Union who have agreed to work with Brookline on temperature extremes and heat islands. Lara said she will report back to the CAC as work progresses.

Other business

Next meeting will February 22nd.

Michael Berger ***motioned to adjourn*** the meeting.

Linda Olson Pehlke ***seconded*** the motion.

Meeting adjourned.