

Town of Brookline

Select Board's Climate Action Committee (SBCAC)

January 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members present: Nancy Heller (co-chair), Werner Lohe (co-chair), Michael Berger, David Gladstone, Alan Leviton, Linda Olson Pehlke, Deborah Rivers, Kathleen Scanlon, and Don Weitzman

Committee Members not present: Daniel Bennett, James Carr, Swannie Jett, David Lescohier, David Pearlman

Staff: Mel Kleckner, Kara Brewton

Public: Approximately a dozen members of the public were in attendance.

Materials: Agenda for 1/27/2020 meeting; draft minutes from 12/16/2019 meeting; LEED for Cities summary (3 pages, courtesy James Carr); Draft Zoning By-Law proposing to remove minimum residential parking requirements in the Transit Parking Overlay District (1 page, petitioner Michael Zoorob)

General Update: Sustainability Staffing

Town Administrator Mel Kleckner gave the SBCAC an update on the consultant work that will soon be underway regarding sustainability staffing for the Town. Mr. Kleckner was intrigued about the notion of the Town deciding to be certified as a LEED for Cities community, an ILFI community, or similar designation; he asked for staff to report back any conclusions about that topic. In response to Committee member discussion, he agreed that it was critical that the consultant understand the importance of the sustainability office's role and responsibilities in connection with other departments, including the appropriate authority to effectively prioritize sustainability efforts across all Town departments. Mr. Kleckner will be able to release the final scope of this work to the Committee in the next week or so.

After Mel Kleckner left the meeting, Werner Lohe welcomed further conversation about pursuing a LEED or ICLEI community designation, and whether that decision should occur prior to or following the hiring of sustainability staff. Committee members had a variety of initial reactions, but agreed that it would not hurt for members to start learning more about each of these designations. Deborah Rivers agreed to review Architecture 2030 standards with the Committee at the next meeting, noting that it included concerns about carbon embodiment. She was not sure that Architecture 2030 had an official community-wide designation process, but that they had helpful standards that could be adopted. Werner Lohe will ask James Carr to speak about the LEED designation at the next meeting. Nancy Heller also noted that it would be helpful for any future hire to include knowledge of one or more these programs.

Minutes of the October 28, 2019 Meeting

Minutes were reviewed and approved, as amended by Kathleen Scanlon.

General Update: Urban Forestry Grant Award & Upcoming Process

Nancy Heller announced that through the leadership of Erin Gallentine, the Town recently received a Municipal Vulnerability Grant for consulting services related to an Urban Forestry Grant. The existing Committee on Tree Protection will be utilized to participate in this work, and it is anticipated that the study process will take 18-20 months. Additional staff from several Departments will be involved with this project, including selecting a consultant. All of the Tree Protection Study Committee work will be open and welcome to additional public participation, including anyone interested in forming an Open Space working group. David Gladstone asked whether the scope would also include an analysis or recommendations about underground factors that affect our tree canopy, such as natural gas. Nancy Heller was not sure, but agreed it was an important factor. The first of these meetings would likely occur at the end of March or beginning of April.

Potential Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles: Toxic Materials

Clint Richmond introduced himself as a Town Meeting Member, member of the Green Caucus, and member of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. In partnership with Claire Stampfer, they have been focusing on issues related to toxic chemicals. They have had preliminary discussions with the Public Health Advisory Board and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. He noted that keeping toxic materials out of the recycling stream affects our ability to control recycling costs and keep those markets viable. Specifically, they've been interested in education and reduction of PFAS (Perfluorinated alkylated substances). These are present in many items that the Town purchases, such as some brands of carpeting, paints, floor waxes, and flame retardant materials. Deborah Rivers agreed that these should be especially a concern for any design and construction process related to our Schools.

Alan Leviton stated he would recirculate warrant article standards that had been drafted a year ago amongst staff and Committee members, as he felt like any article that the SBCAC takes up should explain what the impact on greenhouse gas emissions would be. Clint noted that PFAS is now commonly used for propellants in a variety of products including heat pumps.

With regards to banning sales of products with PFAS, Nancy Heller reminded everyone that the Town is limited to the packaging or creation of products within Brookline, but could not frustrate interstate commerce.

Werner Lohe thanked Clint for starting the conversation and noted that the Committee is generally supportive of efforts like this one; he looked forward to hearing more information.

Potential Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles: Single-Family Parking Requirements

Petitioner Michael Zoorob noted that while the Town was a leader last Fall in working to regulate fossil fuel free buildings, we were way behind other communities in that we still require

infrastructure for vehicles that use fossil fuels. For example, several communities including Buffalo, NY, South Burlington, VT, and Somerville, MA have no residential parking minimums anywhere in their municipality and some of these examples have maximums. Michael stated that 23% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States are due to transportation, which is the single largest contributing industry. He added that taking one car off the road is equivalent to 5 tons of Carbon Dioxide a year, and that 26% of the households in Brookline don't have a vehicle.

[Linda Olson Pehlke left the meeting].

Michael continued that the Town is already experiencing a decline of vehicles: in 2013, there were 34,259 vehicles on our tax rolls and in 2018, this number was 33,210. Deborah Rivers added that reduced parking requirements could result in reduced pavement areas.

Tree Protection committee member Richard Murphy asked whether this proposed bylaw would lead to more, larger residential buildings. The petitioner did not know, but stated that even if that were the case, it would not be helping sustainability efforts if more people were moving to Framingham and driving to Boston rather than finding new housing in Brookline. In response to a question from David Gladstone about whether this would have an effect on parking availability for businesses, the petitioner did not know but stated that Co-Chair Paul Saner was full on board with this article.

Nancy Heller wondered whether the article could instead focus on any parking spaces that are required to be built with charges for electric vehicles.

Potential Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles: Electrical Receptacles required for Bike Racks

Petitioner Hugh Mattison is working on requiring any bike rack to have one receptacle for every five bicycles accommodated. This would be extremely helpful for expanding the useful range of micromobility modes such as e-scooters.

Brookline Green Electricity Working Team Update

Diane Sokol updated the Committee on this working team, led by Edward Bates, Planning Department staff member. Approximately 700 customers have opted up to the 100% renewable product; Nancy believes this number may grow the next time data is released as more people are picking up "I Opted Up" lawn signs from her. Diane is concerned about two specific issues:

- 1) Whether when a resident moves to Brookline and calls to opt up or opt in to the program, Eversource is required to first issue a DPU opt out letter notice before the customer can sign up for the program; and
- 2) How to connect with approximately 3,000 customers that are utilizing third party energy suppliers, and whose addresses are unknown to Eversource or Good Energy, the Town's energy broker – which means they will not get information about the Town's aggregation program. Her estimate is based on a recent report from the Attorney General's Office [<https://www.mass.gov/doc/2019-ago-competitive-electric-supply-report/download>], which

lists on page 45, Brookline as having 2,370 third-party customers and Chestnut Hill (which includes many Newton residents) as having 962 third-party customers.

David Gladstone asked whether Eversource or Good Energy could utilize the list of new residents requesting new water meter accounts to reintroduce the Town's community aggregation program to third party customers. Michael Berger asked whether information could be pushed through realtors assisting new residents.

Transportation Working Team Update

John Harris summarized that Jacob Meunier and others are working on a potential bus island pilot on Brookline Avenue, Harvard Street, and Washington Street. Willy Osborne is interested on building incentives for employees to buy electric vehicles, as well as organizing some additional ride and drive events around Brookline.

Open Space Working Team Update

Michael Berger and Deborah Rivers have been talking with the Greenspace Alliance, and they may participate as a Subcommittee of the Greenspace Alliance, which would have three functions: (i) to gather public input on green infrastructure; (ii) to work with Town agencies to explore strategies and incentives; and (iii) report back to the Greenspace Alliance.

Public Buildings Working Team

Kara Brewton updated the Committee on the status of the municipal solar panel power purchase agreement: the joint public hearing with the School Committee and Select Board will be scheduled once we receive comments from one of the School Committee members with specific interest in the PPA contract. Additionally, we are working through some contract items such as getting a live data portal for each site.

Other Business

David Gladstone invited Christie Electriss to speak; she is working with the Green Programs at the Schools and is more than happy to report to the SBCAC on a regular basis about their ongoing work.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 pm.