



MELROSE ENERGY COMMISSION

Thursday, April 27, 7:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Cassidy Conference Room

Melrose City Hall

Attendees: David Bliss, Martha Grover, Ellen Katz, Susan Murphy, Lori Timmerman Andrew Skyler, Jeff Doody, Doug Harriet, Doug Dick (minutes scribe)

Guests: Margaret Remensnyder, Kate Lippert-Garabedian, Janine Venuti, Diane Astle Bagley, Lisa Montuori Trimble

Guest Speakers: Carol Oldham, Executive Director of Mass Climate Action Network, Tyler Hilliard from the Mystic Node of 350ma.org

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Discussion with Carol Oldham, Executive Director of Mass Climate Action Network on creating sustainability plans/climate action plans

- Ellen explained that Susan Murphy developed a greenhouse gas survey in 2016/17 and MEC has been developing ideas about how MEC and the City of Melrose can move forward with positive efforts related to Climate issues over the next several years
- Carol described MCAN's history and current work. She said that Melrose is in a similar position as other Massachusetts communities in trying to define their greenhouse gas production. MCAN is trying to help communities through their checklists and tools to develop a Climate Action Plan, Greenhouse Gas Plan and/or a Net Zero Energy plan without committing to a \$125k to \$250k consultant.
- **Net Zero Energy plans:** use no more energy than the renewable energy that towns use (heating, electricity and transportation). These plans do not typically consider energy required to create or consume food, clothing or other consumer goods.
- **Sustainability plans:** are more like a general master plan with a sustainability focus
- **Climate Action plan:** has a goal to reduce carbon production, like reducing by 80% in 2050. Some only include municipal operations, but ideally and most effectively it would include all aspects of the city including residences and businesses.
- Cambridge's Net Zero Plan or Climate Action Plan does not include transportation partly because the city is very walkable and has lots of great public transportation.
- Some Net Zero Plans focus on net zero energy use and some focus on net zero carbon emissions
- A Climate Action Plan generally begins with a greenhouse gas inventory to discover what the largest carbon producers are so that they can be the focus of the

effort. Transportation tends to be a very long term effort (like a complete streets effort, which requires state funding).

- Ellen and Martha suggested that a broad sustainability plan might bring together a larger group of people, resources and energy that would a climate action or net zero energy plan. The main challenge for a sustainability plan is that they do not have clear goals, particularly carbon emission reduction plan within the context of a broader sustainability plan. The carbon emission reduction plan should be the center piece.
- Susan M. suggested that a focus on carbon emissions is most important. Carol said that the real key is to PRIORITIZE the effort (ie: what will make the biggest cuts in the shortest amount of time). The emission reductions (especially if quantified) will also help with general sustainability, making the community more livable and helping individuals feel that they are each contributing. The emission reduction plan could describe how other sustainability efforts contribute to the effort
- Carol stated that the most effective Plans are grass roots based but also requires that the Mayor and Alderman be behind it as well. This public/grassroots partnership is important. Also making it a part of competitive political races (it should be part of the education of the candidates, this is a good grass roots effort)
- For mainly residential focused cities (like Melrose) the 3 most effective things to go after are: 1. Residential energy efficiency and Solarize efforts, 2. Community electricity aggregation (continually increasing its percentage of renewable power and 3. Community owned Solar putting solar on every community building roof, every large commercial buildings (citizen groups that reach out to owners of big roofs for community solar).
- Also mainly residential focused cities create a lot of carbon from transportation. Transportation is typically a very difficult challenge for suburban towns. The main thing is promoting walkability and getting people out of their cars. Often the key is culture changing (making walking “cool”). Also try to determine what transit improvements would make transportation in Melrose better an easier to use (talk to both the MBTA and the governor). It is important to let them know that this is about economic development.
- Carol stated that improved ability to have charging stations available helps promote electric vehicles and will make it more mainstream (this is a big barrier). Incentives are important but “range anxiety” is the often the biggest concern.
- After a greenhouse inventory is done, what is the next step for a grass roots group to begin a climate action plan? Carol suggested that we review some example climate action plans and Net Zero plans that she can provide and see what other communities with a similar emissions profile have done. The most important first step is to set some goals and then base the effort on how to achieve that....perhaps some sort of a public process to address goals (5 years, 10 years) and get some feedback from both citizens and city government officials.
- Technical assistance (provided by the Green Communities program) was very helpful for MEC and would be helpful with this process as well.
- A community solar effort could begin by using google tools to determine the 20 largest roofs in Melrose and reach out to building owners about potentially putting community solar arrays on their roofs.
- Susan M. and Dave B. have volunteered to be part of a sub-committee to review Carol’s sample climate plans and zero energy plans.

3. Mystic Node of 350ma.org

- Tyler Hilliard (from Medford) spoke about the Mystic Node of 350MA.org

- The Mystic Node began in September is made up of people from Winchester, Malden, Medford, Stoneham and they would like to have Melrose become involved in their meeting.
- email address: tylerjhilliard@gmail.com

Carbon Pricing, Solar Renewables, Opposing new Gas Lines and Gas Leaks their major initiatives. He recommends that MEC report back to 350.org Mystic Node about our activities.

4. Trivia Bee wrap up
 - The team of Peter Makrauer, Jeff Doody and Lisa Tremble came in 2nd in their round and did a great job.
 - Lori will write a thank you note to our team's sponsors.
5. Healthy and Sustainable Melrose Fair (MEC Table)
 - Tyler is organizing volunteers for the table
 - The Health Melrose Fair sub-committee (Tyler, Lori and Lisa) met and came up with a focus for the table
 - Homework's will be tabling for the Melrose Energy Challenge to sign up people for energy assessments
 - A children's activity will be included
 - 2-3 dealerships with electric cars will be there for test drives (Martha organized)
 - A poster of the greenhouse gas survey will be there.
 - MEC is paying for advertising for Sustainable Melrose at this event out of our budget and to pay for Sustainable Melrose space at the Fair (voted to support)
6. Melrose Master Plan draft comments
 - Ellen provided comments regarding the energy section of master plan draft related to goals for climate efforts, on behalf of MEC
 - The Pedestrian and Bike Committee, Recycling, and Conservation Commission also provided comments
 - Martha G. said the Master Plan received many good comments which will be incorporated as is appropriate and the draft Master Plan will be presented initially to the Planning Board in May for a potential vote in June.
7. Energy Manager's report: Martha Grover (have Martha review and note)
 - Ideas for spending the Melrose Energy Challenge \$30,000 include: water bottle filling station, solar lighting for the dog park (\$9,000), converting the new Chevy van for water meters into a hybrid vehicle (saving approx. 20% in gasoline usage and which would have a label that MEC funded the hybrid convert which costs \$9,000), bench with cellphone charging station set in a park (\$4,000), Bike Share program in Melrose, Fund a technical consultant for developing a Climate Action Plan. MEC should make a recommendation for using the \$30k. A discussion for a recommendation should be an agenda item for next month)
 - The MBTA commuter lots are having solar canopy built and Melrose will be recipient of the net metering credits
 - Melrose is going out for new bids for aggregated green electricity and due to a big spike in capacity costs, the electricity costs may be higher than the National Grid rate, which may end the program. They will go out for BID in the next month. If that happens then Martha will begin work on the next aggregated electricity program.
 - DPW solar array (65kw) is being installed over the next several months.

8. Legislative updates and action items: David Bliss (no report this month)
 - David Bliss: passed out list of proposed laws concerning sustainability.
 - Will attach to minutes and discuss our priorities at the next meeting
 - Put this on agenda for next meeting.
 - Representative Paul Brodeur is no longer on the Energy Subcommittee
9. People Climate March in Boston on Saturday, April 28th
10. Lori Timmerman will chair next MEC meeting, Thursday, May 25

Events of interest:

- May 13th - Healthy Melrose – MEC is seeking volunteers to organize and staff table!
- May 11th – Tyler Ballew will represent MEC at the Alderman’s meeting
- April 29th Boston Climate March
- SEE AGENDA FOR MORE EVENTS

MEC Meetings in 2017
 4th Thursday of the month at 7:15 pm
 May 25, June 22, July 27, September 28, October 26, November 23
 City Hall, Cassidy Conference Room (except November meeting)
 NO AUGUST or DECEMBER MEETINGS

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