



**Hingham
Climate Action
Planning Committee**

Meeting Notes January 11, 2023 at 7pm

CAPC Committee Members attending: Brad Moyer, Bob Hidell, Maria Zade, Elliott Place, Kathy Reardon, Tom Morahan, Carlos Da Silva, Alyson Anderson, Gary Tondorf-Dick

Missing members: Beth Porter, Nancy Wiley

Other attendees: Paul Sprecher, Joel Barnes (Patriot Ledger), John Borger, Brianna Bennett, Tanya Bodell, Ginny LeClair.

Attachments: Edited Climate Action Commission article

Brad Moyer opened the meeting with the usual required introduction regarding the Open Meeting Law and permission to meet by Zoom. The meeting was recorded.

Proposed Climate Action Commission Warrant Article: The Committee reviewed typographical clarity and consistency edits to the previously voted Warrant Article submitted to Hingham 2023 Town Meeting to establish a Climate Action Commission.

Paul Sprecher noted that this commits the town to continuation of the Energy Action Committee because the Article specifies a member of the EAC.

It was agreed that there is no need to revote the Article because the modifications were corrections reflecting the previous vote. The edited version will be sent to the Select Board and Town Counsel for review.

Sustainability Coordinator Consultant, Ginny LeClair: it was noted that this is a contract role in the Town with limited hours. We should be careful to use her time wisely.

Review and approve draft Climate Action Plan (most of the meeting is focused on this topic).

Tanya Bodell overview: While there is yet work to do, she was pleased with the thoughtful document so far and grateful for our comments. The carbon inventory is in the works, and she does not expect major changes. Suggested **Appendix A** be reviewed by subcommittees.

Organization Memo Presentation: includes December 7, 2022, public meeting comments and compilation of public survey comments, and evaluations and response to these comments. These are organized by component categories (Energy etc.)

ENERGY: Major Comments & Revisions

Substitute “carbon free” for “renewables” throughout the document.

In regard particularly to HMLP electrification programs, substitute “electricity” for “energy”

Expand definitions for terms such as “Demand Response.”

“Carbon credits” should be clearly defined as to what they do and do not accomplish: e.g. HMLP sells carbon credits and uses the money for solar projects etc.; however, the credits themselves are not carbon free. The carbon inventory should reflect this.

Discussion of education programs regarding energy use:

Bob Hidell: What is the purpose of education? Provide the Town with a generalized electrification education program (education to reach net zero carbon emissions) vs. programs for specific individual projects (i.e., guidance on residential heat pump installations provided by programs such as Abode).

Brianna: HMLP is providing education through Abode and Energy New England.

Elliot: several town groups, cooperating with HMLP, are working on “road shows” to help residents to reduce their carbon footprints.

Brad: Energy education needs will evolve over time. The Climate Action Commission will need to modify as needed. Recommends inclusion in the “Community” component.

BUILDINGS

Large Users: Definition: It was agreed that it is not necessary or even reliably accurate to define “large users”. Rather define by categories and by examples.

Stretch Code: Should we recommend the adoption of the new Specialized Stretch Code? It was agreed that the plan should recommend that the Town seriously consider adoption and initiate a process of review, taking into account such things as grant opportunities.

How to address the big lift from oil and gas to heat pumps: Recommendations vs. Mandates

Tanya: The carbon inventory will outline two programs: a linear and an exponential path to net zero by 2040. The current approach is to plot a pathway for carbon reduction that can be checked in the inventory.

Bob: We should recommend how to begin the process, focus on creating a pathway.

John Borger: Hingham Net Zero is not recommending mandates (e.g., bans on gas hook-ups). Individual homeowners need to assess their carbon footprint, get educated and map their personal pathway. Also, be careful about publishing cost information, which is complicated and can be misleading. We don't want to give people the idea that heat pumps are only accessible to rich folks.

TRANSPORTATION

To what degree do we want to hold the MBTA accountable for carbon emissions?

Tanya: Current plan recommends a study of the issue and potential solutions, including identifying costs and benefits and when entities are responsible. No change recommended.

Do we get more specific about collection of information on Electric Vehicles? The current plan recommends that this information be collected but does not specify how. Again, no proposed change to the plan.

Do we need more specifics beyond recommending that there should be charging stations for multi-family housing?

Bob: Operating, maintaining, and replacing charging stations are costly. More likely private companies will expand into this area in the future. No more specifics needed beyond recognizing the need.

Clarification of Vehicle to Grid (VtoG) and Time of Use (TOU) pricing:

Tanya: Currently there is no market for VtoG. Demand Response, however, is a service of VtoG. Pricing by HMLP could motivate charging in off hours and Demand Response could potentially be used for that. A demonstration using a school bus in Cohasset may provide more information.

WASTE

Comment: curbside compost collection is unlikely to significantly reduce carbon emissions if the trucks are not electrified. Should the Committee recommend this program?

Elliott: The issue is complicated and ineffective without truck electrification.

Kathy: Hingham is not particularly well suited for any kind of house-to-house collection.

Brad: If we recommend eventual electrification of trucks, there's no reason to think that this activity would not also be subject to this recommendation when electric trucks are available

Tanya: this is an education issue now. Stay at the high level: recommend what to do but not how.

SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR TITLE?

The Committee discussed what name to advocate for this position (Sustainability Coordinator, Official, Director?) Agreed that whatever this position is called, it needs to be high level to be effective and its mission should be clear. This idea is supported by Hingham Net Zero conversations with other towns and by Ginny LeClair (currently contracted under the title, Sustainability Coordination, Consultant).

Brad and Ginny will research the Town structure to determine the title for the plan.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Comment by Kathy in public information session: **Electrification of landscape tools** does not belong in the subsection “Carbon Sink Development”. However, if “Land Conservation” were to be titled “Land Conservation and Management” then landscape tools could be relevant to that category.

Elliott: the primary goal is electrification and garden equipment belongs to that category.

There was agreement that landscape tools don’t belong in “Carbon Sink Development”, but no consensus about where they do belong.

Tanya: We should focus primarily on carbon reduction, so everything needs to be tied into that. More work needs to be done.

STATUS OF COMMENTS TO THE DRAFT PLAN: 5 categories: presented by Tanya Bodell

1)Response completed, 2) complimentary comments and suggestions already inserted, 3)Carbon inventory work is underway, 4) comments regarding responsibility, costs and timing – discussion is ongoing and will be addressed in Appendix A, 5)items not in plan because of relevance to purpose or prior discussion.

QUESTIONS REGARDING APPENDIX A:

Do we want a high level of detail in Appendix A? While a lot of details have been filled in from our discussions through the summer, more work needs to be done. The committee needs to take up this task. Brad suggested that teams of two could work on the 6 major categories as follows: Volunteers were: Energy (Tom Morahan and Brianna Bennett), Buildings (Gary Tondorf-Dick and Carlos Da Silva), Transportation (Gary Tondorf-Dick and Elliott Place), Waste (Maria Zade and Alyson Anderson) Community Engagement (Elliott Place and Maria Zade), and Natural Resources (Bob Hidell and Kathy Reardon) These teams would also review the “What can you do to help” section is their category.

Should Appendix A be a part of the whole document or separate?

Reasons to be separate: The document will be too long and no one will read it. The public needs to focus on the “story” that the main document presents. App A is a live document and will be continuously updated as numbers, technologies and responsibilities change. It was also noted that in some towns the appendix is the only document the public sees.

Reasons to keep it all together: Those who need to implement the plan need the whole thing and should not have to look to find the pieces. The document will be read at different levels of interest – it doesn't matter whether it is one piece or several. Parts of the document still can be excerpted for certain purposes (Executive Summary, Appendix A etc.)

It was emphasized that Appendix A will be the critical, living, document that drives the effort towards decarbonization. It was also noted that continuous efforts to engage and reengage the public will be necessary.

SOCIALIZATION PLAN:

Brad set a goal of March 15 to finish socializing the draft document to those town bodies that are directly impacted: including Select Board, School Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Hingham Municipal Light Board, Development and Industrial Commission, Weir River Water System Advisory Board, Energy Action Committee, Hingham Historical Commission.

Other entities mentioned for future outreach include Hingham Unity Council, League of Women Voters, Hingham Downtown Association, Hingham Historical Society, and also our State Representative and Senator. There might be a joint session to reach out to more folks quickly.

It was suggested that Ginny LeClair, the Town's Sustainability Coordinator could reach out to Town departments such as the DPW.

DISCUSSION OF TWO TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES:

"Plastic Bottle Ban By-Law: Commercial Sale and distribution" and

"Plastic Bottle Ban By-Law: Municipal"

Submitted by Green Cleaner Hingham, the articles include language approved by the Attorney General and already in effect in 24 Massachusetts communities.

The articles ban the sale of single use, unflavored and noncarbonated plastic drink bottles under 1 gallon. Distinction is made between sale (which would be banned) and purchase and use.

Questions: Are there any enforcement measures or legal cases relating to these bans? Answer: Compliance has not been a big issue. Robust education in advance has helped.

Issues raised: Safety for fire fighters, light plant workers etc. where it is necessary to have water in small portable containers. Difficulties and inequities in the beverage industry.

Any vote was postponed to a later meeting in February because the article was not on the formal CAPC agenda for this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm. The next meeting will be January 26, 2023 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Reardon

Proposed Climate Action Commission Warrant Article

RESOLVED, that the Climate Action Planning Committee recommend that the Town adopt the following warrant article at Town Meeting in 2023:

ARTICLE: Will the Town vote to establish a Hingham Climate Action Commission charged with supporting, overseeing, and holding to account (1) the Town's implementation of the Climate Action Plan, developed and adopted pursuant to Article 14 of Town Meeting 2021, (2) any updates and amendments to the plan in accordance with the recommendations and processes set forth therein, and (3) periodically reporting progress on the Town's implementation of the Climate Action Plan; with such commission organized as follows: (a)(i) nine voting members consisting of one member of Energy Action Committee or its designee, one member of Cleaner Greener Hingham or its designee, one member of the Planning Board or its designee; one member of the Conservation Commission or its designee; one member of the Development & Industrial Commission or its designee, with each of the above to be selected by their respective board or committee; and four residents, each to be selected to a two-year term, with two selected by the Board of Selectmen and two selected by the Moderator; and (ii) three non-voting members consisting of one member representing the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant as designated by the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant Board; one member of the School Committee or its designee; and the Sustainability Coordinator or any successor role thereto, serving as the Secretary of the Commission; and (b)(i) the Hingham Climate Action Commission shall be led by a Chair and a Vice Chair, with the Vice Chair performing the duties of the Chair when the Chair is not available, each to be elected by majority vote of all nine voting members present at the first duly called meeting of the Hingham Climate Action Commission and subsequently thereafter upon any successful motion for a new election to be held for one or both positions?