Town of Hingham

HINGHAM CLIMATE ACTION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: January 7, 2026

PLACE: Online via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elliott Place, Jo-An Heileman, Lisa Hennessey, Doug Troyer, Matt Curran, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Tom Morahan, Alyson Anderson, Maria Zade, and Brad Moyer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

GUESTS: John Borger, Brianna Bennett, Brenda Black, Paul Sprecher, Patricia Burke

---

Opening and Call to Order: Maria Zade called the remote meeting to order. She opened the meeting with the required remote meeting and recording notices, confirming that the session was being recorded in compliance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. She temporarily filled in for Chair Brad Moyer, who was delayed, and also for Elliott, who was having technical difficulties.

Agenda Item 1: Climate Leaders Follow-Up: decarbonization roadmap

Patricia Burke reported that the Climate Leaders Roadmap has been submitted and that feedback was expected in December (2025). She has not heard any news yet. She will follow up next week, giving Lisa Sullivan ample time after holidays to catch up.

Agenda Item 2: Solar Net-Metering / Payback for Residential Solar

Background: Solar net-metering/payback allows HMLP to pay solar panel homeowners for excess energy produced. As two of the three members of the Hingham Light Board currently have solar panels at their residence, voting in favor of such a policy is seen as a conflict of interest per the State Ethics Board. The Light Board is further restricted from setting rates that would affect less than 10% of the community, which would be the case with setting rates for solar panel homes in Hingham. The HCAC is determining if we can support the adoption of solar panels in Hingham, given that the Light Board is currently restricted from offering incentives for excess energy produced.

The Commission discussed the current limitations on residential solar net-metering and payback policies.

Key discussion points included:

- The Light Board sets the solar rate; therefore, a Town Meeting vote would not be of use.
- Ethical considerations related to potential conflicts of interest were discussed, including guidance from the State Board of Ethics. Brad Moyer has communicated with Laura Burns regarding the approach to the Board and anticipates further discussion.
- Members noted that the Town does not currently meet the required 10% penetration threshold for expanded net-metering, limiting available options.
- Questions were raised by Doug Troyer regarding the origin, flexibility, and negotiability of the current threshold. He raised the question of whether a letter was issued stating this objection and whether we can make a legal argument to have it overturned. Otherwise, he believes this issue is not in our best interests to pursue.
- The Commission discussed whether a formal request, petition, or written submission to the Light Board or Ethics Commission could help advance the conversation.
- Members emphasized that the intent of pursuing policy changes would be to encourage broader adoption and equity, not individual financial benefit.

Potential next steps discussed:

- Exploring whether a formal written request or white paper could be developed in partnership with the Light Board.
- Clarifying the formal ethics review process and whether advisory or ethics bodies should be engaged.
- Gary suggested contacting Lauren Duca who sits on the advisory board at the Ethics Commission, who has previously collaborated with him and the Town.

No formal action was taken.

Agenda Item 3: Fossil-Fuel Pilot Program Outreach

Members provided an update on outreach to other municipalities participating in or considering fossil-fuel transition pilot programs.

Discussion included:

- Other communities are further along as early adopters.
- The importance of understanding the pace of development, mix of project types, and local impacts.
- Coordination with regional efforts and interest in learning from municipalities such as Lexington, Acton, and Brookline.

The Commission noted that climate certification remains a first priority, with this initiative as a secondary focus at this time.

Agenda Item 4: Building-related Updates

a. Center for Active Living : Paul Sprecher provided an update on the Center for Active Living, focusing on siting, affordability, and cost estimates. The current projected cost is approximately $30 million. The Light Board is scheduled to review the budget, with the goal of finalizing materials for an upcoming agenda.

b. Hingham Housing Authority: Matt Curran will attend the next meeting on February 10th at 30 Thaxter St at 5pm.
c. Library HVAC Replacement: Patricia Burke reported on the Library HVAC project:
    - Engineering and architectural services have been engaged to conduct a feasibility study.
    - The existing system includes natural gas boilers for heat and an electric chiller, which requires replacement.
    - Due to site constraints, the replacement chiller will need to be modular.
    - Energy conservation measures are of interest; however, broader assessments are on hold pending future decisions by the Board of Trustees regarding the building's long-term vision.
    - Members discussed the importance of identifying early, low-cost energy efficiency measures and aligning sustainability goals with future planning. Patricia Burke offered to meet with the Board of Trustees to discuss these considerations.
d. Public Data Review of HVAC Systems: Brianna Bennett collected preliminary permit data related to HVAC systems:
    - Oil and gas system permits dating back to 2011.
    - EV permits issued from 2020–2025.
    - Heat pump permits issued from 2012–2025 (approximately 488), based on available search terms.

    The Commission discussed how this data may inform targeted outreach efforts, particularly to residents likely to need HVAC replacements in the near future, in order to encourage heat-pump adoption. Brad Moyer reminded members that the first step is data collection, and next step would be our targeted outreach efforts.

Agenda Item 5: Warrant article submission and follow-on processes

The warrant article for dissolution of the EAC and reconfiguration of the HCAC was submitted. Brenda Black reported that the full list of articles has not yet been presented to the Advisory Committee. Updates will be shared once hearing dates are scheduled.

Agenda Item 6: Review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes were approved.

Agenda Item 7: Other business brought before the Commission

- Patricia Burke announced a new residential composting pilot program sponsored by DPW in partnership with Black Earth Composting. The program was initiated at the high school with food scrap collection in the kitchen, then the lunch room, and today the residential curbside option was announced. Participating households receive an initial discount, and if they sign up via the high school flyer, residents will receive $10 off. Appreciation was expressed to Ashley at DPW for supporting the initiative.
- Paul Sprecher noted that Linden Ponds has recently adopted a food waste diversion program and the community is now participating.
- Elliott Place asked Alyson Anderson about an update on electric school buses. The initial delivery of three school buses has been delayed, and additional units have been ordered. The buses are

expected to support summer recreation programming via battery.

Agenda Item 8: Adjourn at 8:40 pm

Next Meeting: February 11, 2026