

Energy Action Committee

September 15, 2022; 7:00 PM

Minutes – Meeting held remotely via Zoom

Present

Brad Carr
Brad Moyer
Aisha Oppong
Tom Morahan
James Byrne
Paul Sprecher

Brianna Bennett

Regrets

Abi Sood
Sue Nickerson

1) Introductions and Logistics

As many of the members of the Energy Action Committee (EAC) are new to their roles, the attendees took several minutes to introduce themselves.

2) The committee discussed several projects they are aware of in town and agree that one (or more) members will attempt to attend project update meetings to stay abreast of the activities and to identify any assistance the EAC can provide. The following topics were discussed and the people whose name appear in parenthesis agreed to be the EAC primary point of contact.

a) Transportation related (Brad C)

i) School Buses (Aisha)

- Hingham Public Schools (HPS), through its bus provider, has submitted an application to the process administered by the EPA for funding for up to 3 EV school buses. The EPA is expected to announce winners of this round of funding by the end of October
- There was a site visit of the bus depot in July to better understand charging infrastructure needs should HPS eventually acquire 3 EV school buses. Aisha, other school members, Tom, Brianna, and representatives from ENE were present.

ii) Police fleet

- Chief Jones is interested in procuring EVs for his fleet as existing vehicles reach end of life. Vehicles need to be tested by the Michigan State Police or the LA County Sherriff which allows it to be designated a Police Pursuit Vehicle (PPV)
- The police version of the Mustang Mach-E was successfully tested, however, at this time, it doesn't appear there are any available.
- If an EV can't be located, Chief Jones will continue to use hybrid Ford Explorers (or similar)

iii) EV Chargers

- HMLP began installation of level 2 chargers this week at three locations (Station Street, Country Club and Carlson Fields). Installation could be complete as early as the end of the month.
- HMLP received grant funding for 2 level 3 chargers and has started the process of installation. The expectation is that they will be complete in the spring of 2023. Locations will be Station Street and Lynch Field
- Aisha inquired about fleet EV charging incentives. While the funding HMLP was awarded requires charges to be publicly accessible and on public property, there are other sources of funds potentially available for fleets, including a MORE-EV program and via the EPA EV School Bus program.

b) Public Safety Building (James)

- Aisha reported solar panel infrastructure is being planned
- Brad M reported that there are several upcoming public meetings about the building in preparation for a vote at the special town meeting
 - (a) Oct 13, 7-9 PM at Town Hall
 - (b) Oct 19 7-9 PM via Zoom
 - (c) Oct 22 7-9 PM at Hingham Middle School

c) South Shore Country Club (Paul)

- Paul reported that there is some litigation delaying the project but no further information available

d) Foster School (Aisha)

- New concerns with flood plain issues
- The elevation will be raised after demolition of the current building
- There is discussion on-going about how high the new school will be raised based on varying projections of sea level rise over the next ~70 years and/or will it need to be coordinated more broadly with the entire Hingham Shoreline.
- The current projection is that the elevation will need to be increased 17 feet.
- The direction is that the new school will be "completely green" and all electric

e) CAPC (Brad M)

- Zoom session schedule on Sep 22 for public engagement. CAPC has a goal to finalize the define the contours of the plan by the end of September
- Likely have another public meeting for a read out in October

- October begins the season of warrant articles for town meetings. CAPC will determine / recommend articles based on the end-of-September plan
 - Town meetings take place in the Spring (~April)
- f) HMLP activities and programs
- i) New Substation
 - Public meeting scheduled for September 28 at the Library
 - Zoom presentation scheduled for October 12 for Hingham and Weymouth (the system will connect to overhead lines in Weymouth)
 - ii) Heat Pump program
 - Still in progress
 - Rebates increased to \$750 / ton; maximum of \$4,500 for Oil, Propane and Electric customers. Nat Gas customers can utilize the MassSave program
 - There is also a \$500 weatherization adder and a \$1,000 whole house adder for a total potential of \$6,000
 - There is still funding available from the amount set aside through the end of the year

3) Discussion of potential EAC future activities

Contribution to Heat Pump installations

The group, led by Paul, had a robust discussion about how to better communicate the benefits of, and incentives available for, heat pump installations. Many decisions are made between a property owner and a contractor; before any meaningful interaction with the town or others who can provide input for the decision maker. Ideas include (in no particular order):

- HMLP to provide a clear and easy to understand heat pump ‘incentive calculator’, perhaps with comparisons to other HVAC options
- Inflation reduction act
- MA just passed a budget with additional incentives
- Can the building department be involved – concern is that they are involved at the permitting stage which is typically after the decision and HVAC selection has happened.
- Can we influence Hingham to change the building code (restricting gas/fossil HVAC installations / conversions)
- Hold information sessions for contractors
- Training technicians for heat pump installations
- Educate real estate agents who often advise or give recommendations on renovations and contractors
- HMLP is also working on an advertising campaign – the feeling is that customers become saturated if too many flyers are sent
- Is there anything Abode can do to help – Abode currently reaches out to contractors when a heat pump is installed outside of the process

Action items:

- Brad C: contact the building department to invite them to an upcoming meeting for a brain storming session (Contractor Education and Stretch Code)
- Paul / All: what calculators are available (Rewiring America, for example) that consolidate all available incentives for prospective buyers
- Building codes – Optional stretch code coming out later this year for the State. Perhaps we recommend the town adopt the new codes
- Paul / Brad / All: Plymouth River uses electricity for heat but not a heat pump. Are there incentives available for schools. Team to research incentives (IRA, etc.)