City of Medford
Medford Energy & Environment Committee
City Hall Room 205
Medford, MA 02155
781-393-2137
enviro@medford.org | www.medfordenergy.org

Medford Energy & Environment Committee (MEEC) Agenda
January 9, 2023 @ 6:30 PM
Via Zoom Virtual Meeting Connection (connection information below)

Office of Energy and Environment: Alicia Hunt

Committee Members: Gaston Fiore (co-chair), Benji Hiller, Barry Ingber, Lauretta James, Kathleen McKenna, Luke McKneally, Martha Ondras, Bob Paine, Jessica Parks, John Rogers, and Paul Taslimi (co-chair).

Committee Attendance: Bob Paine, Paul Taslimi, Gaston Fiore, Luke McKneally, Barry Ingber; Kathleen McKenna, Martha Ondras

Staff: Alicia Hunt, Lilly Worth

Guests: Mark Breslow (Electrify Arlington)

6:30-6:55 Administration.

1. Greetings, roll call, and introductions of guests.
2. Review of minutes from December 5, 2022. - Minutes approved
3. Administrative updates from Alicia Hunt. What's the status of the waste initiatives?
   a. OCD office updates: several jobs posted. Danielle Evans is now a senior planner and her old job is split into 2 new FT positions - Housing Planner & CPA Administrator. Economic Development Director position is posted; Vik Schrader helping part time for now. Climate Zoning & Policy position is new, and this will be posted soon.
   b. Waste Initiatives: Advisory Committee & Public Outreach processes are ongoing. The consultants are reaching out to additional companies and drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP) - staff will look at this in mid-January to present to the City Council in February. Companies would expect 10+ year contracts and any City contract >3 years must be approved by City Council. RFP will be released in March and will be open for ~3 months. We don't have to go with the lowest bidder.
      i. Question - do we have metrics or criteria to use to evaluate the bids? Yes - Solid Waste Task Force has developed these and publicized them
   a. Suggested: 1st Monday of October, December, and January-June, unless a conflict with Jewish holidays. 2nd Monday in Sept and November. July and August are combined and a date is selected ad-hoc. Motion to accept this schedule is passed.
   a. Suggested date: October 14 - the weekend after Indigenous People's Day/Columbus Day weekend. Motion to accept this date is passed.

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6:55-7:00 Can Medford still apply and, if so, should Medford apply to be one of the 10 cities in the Massachusetts pilot program that bans the use of fossil fuels in new buildings and major renovations?

1. It may be possible for Medford to apply if one of the 10 communities drops out.
2. From Alicia: this would likely stifle development in Medford so it would be beneficial for us to wait it out until other communities (Somerville, Cambridge) have set this precedent. Complete net Zero is a leap too far.
3. In a recent webinar, Luke saw a slide of buildings in Boston that can get very close to net zero, but need a tiny amount of gas for peak situations. Clear evidence showing that it is better to have some gas available for peak conditions.
4. Medford needs housing and development and we do not want to risk stifling this with rules that are too strict.

7:05-7:10 Any updates on tree and leaf-blower ordinances?

1. No updates

7:10-7:15 New Massachusetts law meant to reduce traffic deaths. Law requires drivers to stay at least four feet away from “vulnerable users” of the road when passing them.

https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S3162

1. Gaston summarized this new law and mentions the importance of raising general awareness

7:15-7:30 Presentation summarizing Oslo’s response to the climate crisis.

Paul is not completely finished so this will be added to the agenda of a future meeting

7:30-8:00 Review of Electrify Arlington Program.

- Overview of residential weatherization-to-electrification process
- Overview of risks of natural gas - leaks, air quality impacts, etc
- Arlington has an intake form to match residents with coaches and partner companies (Abode, Heat Smart). They have been doing this for ~2.5 months. Coaches were trained in 4 sessions by partner energy companies (Abode Energy Management) funded by a MassCEC grant.
- Consultations: Arlington coaches have done 6-8 consultations each since the program started. Coaches are doing this on a volunteer basis. ~1hr prep plus ~1hr of meeting per consult. This service is over-and-above what is provided by MassSave.
- Overview of likely price ranges for different electrification options. Bottom line - every house is different and it’s hard to give “ballpark” estimates. Solar panels can help defray electrical costs.
- Question - how does one sell the idea of electrification to the average person, and/or landlords? One point is that heat pumps are cheaper than oil and electric heat. Gas is cheaper at the moment. Over time, gas prices will go up.
- Coaches are primarily helping people who already are interested in electrifying, presumably because of a desire to reduce emissions rather than save money. Coaches will thus help people assess the various options available to help people electrify.
- Heat pumps may be putting the cart before the horse - it’s also important to get clean sources of electricity, as well as to weatherize, before converting to heat pumps. Counterpoint - in order to be eligible for rebates via MassSave, you must weatherize and air seal first. Also the grid is currently cleaner than just gas, because sources include solar and wind and nuclear. Grid is only getting cleaner. You need to clean up both supply *and* demand. We need to get people to

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switch to heat pumps when they are ready to upgrade their existing system.

8:00-8:30
Discuss the future direction of MEEC.
Initial discussion of Paul Taslimi questions for committee consideration:

1. What is the operational bandwidth of our committee?
2. What issues are approachable within the parameters of this committee? What is the extent of influence this committee has on any city decisions?
   a. Broadly, we exist to promote environmentally sustainable initiatives and policies. The mayor can direct us, but most mayors do not. Alicia often brings projects. Can we meet once a year with the mayor?
   b. There is an existing list of goals; Luke will find this document and forward

3. Do we have any advocacy bandwidth outside of current concerns that are defined in the city of Medford resiliency plan? The gist of this question is navigating city policy and concerns of individual members of the committee.
   a. Is there more we can do to engage with the public? The content in E&E meetings is often information that should be publicized more widely

4. Are we an ancillary committee that only disseminates information to the public on energy and environment issues or are there advocacy paradigms that provide for more direct input into city or even State decisions?
   a. We are independent and autonomous, empowered to formulate our own opinions and make our own recommendations, but we have to operate within the constraints of state and city law because we are a committee of the City
   b. E&E members should consider ideas for how we can measure our impact.

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Community Development is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Energy and Environment Commission Meeting

Time: January 9, 2023 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

https://zoom.us/j/96291215902

Meeting ID: 962 9121 5902

One tap mobile

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Find your local number: https://zoom.us/u/aVXjXTo94

Anyone wishing to send comments or questions to the meeting can send email to enviro@medford-ma.gov

The meeting recording will be available on the committee website within a few days: https://medfordenergy.org/gogreen/medford-energy-committee/

On July 16, 2022, Governor Baker signed into law An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations. This Act allows public bodies to continue holding meetings remotely through March 31, 2023 without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location, and to provide "adequate, alternative" access to remote meetings.

In accordance with this Act, this meeting of the City of Medford Energy & Environment Committee is being conducted totally via remote participation using Zoom, including committee members and the public. The use of Zoom complies with the law’s requirement to provide live “adequate, alternative means” of public access to the deliberations of the public body, instead of holding meetings in a public place. Persons who would like to listen to or view this meeting while in progress may do so by using the link that was included on the meeting agenda posted on the City of Medford website. We will also post a record of this meeting on the city’s website in the near future at the link provided in the meeting agenda.

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**Medford Energy and Environment Committee Members**

**Gaston Fiore (co-chair):** Gaston believes that an environmental education campaign leveraging our youth, encouraging active forms of transportation (pedestrian and bicycle), and making green technologies reachable to low-income households are key to achieving world-class environmental sustainability for Medford. Gaston has a background in AI and machine learning and has experience in self-driving cars and demand modeling to medicine. He has BS and MS degrees in Aerospace Engineering from MIT, and an MS in Computer Science from Harvard.

**Benjamin ("Benjie") Hiller:** is a now retired lawyer. He has a Masters degree in biology/ecology. He spent most of his career engaged in toxic tort litigation, specializing in representing children harmed by lead poisoning. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, he was part of the Clamshell Alliance which fought to prevent the construction of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant and which brought the dangers of nuclear power to the attention of the world.

**Barry Ingber:** has spent most of the past four decades with non-profit organizations that serve low-income communities and work for a more sustainable and affordable energy future. Most recently, he managed energy programs for Tri-City Community Action Program. Previously, as Executive Director of MassEnergy, he founded the state’s first and largest green power program, and the nation’s first non-profit renewable energy coop.

**Lauretta James:** is a real estate agent and Realtor®. She works within the Committee to design and promote energy, sustainability, and environmental programs and events to educate and benefit residents and businesses. Her background includes working in the elevator industry, event organizing, and art and design. She was previously President of the Massachusetts Elevator Safety Association.

**Kathleen McKenna:** environmental engineer at Commercial Construction Consulting, Inc. (C3), which deals with LEED and sustainability consulting, energy audits, and implementation. She is secretary of the New England Chapter of The Association of Energy Engineers. Kathleen served in the role of community solar coach for the very successful 2013 Solarize Mass Program, when she coordinated the community outreach process, answered questions from residents and businesses, and was the main point of contact for community members.

**Luke McKnealy:** registered architect with in-depth experience in energy-efficient, environmentally responsive design and the use of renewable energy in buildings. He is an Energy Engineer at ICF, implementing MassSave Passive House incentives for multifamily development in Massachusetts to encourage best practices and the highest performance possible with minimal project cost implications.

**Martha Ondras:** with a Master’s degree in environmental health at Tufts, she is a research associate at the Health Effects Institute (HEI) in Boston, working on air quality research. HEI provides high quality, trusted science for cleaner air and better health. Prior to pursuing a second career in environmental health, she retired from the post of Director of Design at Harvard Business School.

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Bob Paine: Certified Consulting Meteorologist and Qualified Environmental Professional. Experience in meteorology and air pollution studies and consulting. Associate Vice President at AECOM, a company that focuses on areas of air quality consulting, engineering, and compliance, climate adaptation, and PFAS mitigation. Bob has been a member of this committee and legacy municipal committees (e.g., wind turbine committee) since 2004.

Jessica Parks: with a background in sustainable design and urban planning, she has experience in developing greenhouse gas reduction plans, driving energy efficiency projects, and establishing energy reporting protocols. She is currently a Senior Project Manager at MIT for projects under the campus-wide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) program. Jessica hopes to utilize her experience and expertise to help create opportunities for community engagement and education in support of a more sustainable and resilient Medford.

John Rogers: extensive background in energy conversion (motors, batteries, chargers, power grid, electric vehicles). With Solectria, he worked on the electrical system for the “Solectria Sunrise” EV and on their Grid Tied Solar Inverters. With Azure Dynamics, he worked on a Ford E250 Electric Van Prototype and on the onboard charging system for Ford’s Transit Connect Electric. He now works for Instrumentation Laboratory - Bedford, MA.

Paul Taslimi (co-chair): Senior scientist at Merck Research Laboratories Boston. Paul has been an active scientist for 40 years. Paul has a BSc and MSc degrees in Chemistry and Biochemistry respectively from Canada. Paul has a deep interest in mitigating the climate crisis through science education and raising awareness at the local level and hopes that his years of experience in science can be beneficial to the Medford community in addressing the climate crisis.
**Alicia Hunt**: Director of Planning, Development and Sustainability. Alicia started working with the city in 2010 as the Energy Efficiency Coordinator and has managed extensive energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for the City’s buildings. She facilitated the City’s Green Communities designation and works to bring in energy and environment related grants and programs to the City of Medford. Alicia is a Medford resident who brings her green knowledge to other Medford organizations in her spare time.

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