



## City of Medford

Medford Energy & Environment Committee  
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### **Medford Energy & Environment Committee (MEEC) Minutes November 13, 2024 @ 6:30 PM**

**Via Zoom Virtual Meeting Connection (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82570889067>)**

**Office of Community Development / Energy and Environment: Alicia Hunt, Director**

**Committee Members:** Lois Grossman, Benji Hiller, Barry Ingber, Laretta James, Kathleen McKenna, Luke McKneally, Martha Ondras, Bob Paine, Dan Pappo, Jessica Parks, John Rogers, Will Sherwood (chair), Paul Taslimi

**Attending Committee Members:** Benji Hiller, Laretta James, Kathleen McKenna, Bob Paine, Jessica Parks, John Rogers, Will Sherwood (chair)

**Municipal Staff:** Brenda Pike

**Guests:** Arianna Mosca, Katherine Buckingham

#### 1. Administration

- Greetings, roll call, and introduction of guests
- Review of minutes from October meeting – approved with Laretta, John, and Jessica abstaining
- Next meeting: December 2
  - If you're interested in being cochair, please express interest at this meeting.
  - Martha is leaving the committee because of other commitments.
  - Could add two new members.
  - Members are interested in someone with experience in zero waste, possible experience in things other than energy or environment.
  - Members will ask people they know if they're interested in applying and to join us for the December meeting. Brenda will reach out to those who have applied through the boards and commissions application.

#### 2. Monthly update on initiatives involving climate policy for Medford (Brenda)

- Electrify Medford
  - Applied for Mass Save Community First Partnership. This is a three-year program where we work closely with National Grid to do outreach about the Mass Save program. This will give us monthly updates from them, including

data about measures that have been installed, and bill inserts. Our economic development planner will do small business outreach, too.

- 92 people have signed up, 26 have been coached
- Events –
  1. Past - bilingual storytime, farmers market, Harvest Your Energy Festival, pumpkin smash
  2. Upcoming – winter preparedness 11/14, winter extravaganza 12/4, electrify Medford event at library 1/16
- Aggregation
  - Letters went out to residents about the new pricing that starts with their December billing cycle. We've had a lot of calls, mostly people already on the aggregation who think they have to sign up again (they don't), but we've come across some people on competitive suppliers. One person this week was paying 28 cents/kwh.
  - Suggestion to have social media posts about savings and renewable energy over the life of the program.
- Brenda submitted Green Communities annual report. Medford's total energy use (city-owned buildings and vehicles) is down 19% from the 2009 baseline (14.5% weather-normalized).

### 3. Harvest Your Energy Festival (Brenda)

- Feedback
  - Seemed like more people than previous years, a constant flow, especially with the recycling
  - Need vegetarian/vegan options, snacks, drinks
  - The weekend after Indigenous People's Day is a good time for people to come out.
  - Need two traffic lanes – waiting for recycling and going by (with cones and sign for traffic?). City truck blocked traffic for a little while. Dehumidifier recycling truck should be moved, because it was on the corner, blocking traffic.
  - Topics people brought up at the energy committee table – preserving tree canopy, waste management (expanded recycling, textile recycling).

### 4. Trees Medford (Lauretta)

- The Committee of the Whole will be discussing the tree ordinances next Wednesday at 6:00. Members who would like to show support should attend.
- TreesMedford's next meeting is Tuesday at 6:00.
- TreesMedford was going to meet with building department first, not sure if that happened. The ordinances went to city solicitor for review
- Years ago, the committee said it would be good to educate people about landmark trees in Medford. The [tree report is on our website](#). They'd like to create a walking tour map of significant trees. There was a meeting last Thursday to move this forward.
- Dee Morris gave a presentation at the library about historic trees in Medford a few years ago.
- Lauretta will send the last version of the ordinances and information about the landmark trees group.

## 5. Air quality communications (Brenda)

- Do we want to develop any communications about how to deal with bad air quality due to wildfires? The city didn't have any advice prepared last week. Bob sent along some information.
- Members suggested that we prepare materials on other events, as well: drought, rainfall, snowfall, and other extreme weather.
- Brenda will reach out to the board of health to see what materials they already have.
- The state had a grant program to get Free Purple air monitors that we should look into. Bob said we have some gaps in coverage.
- Brenda is underwater with her workload, so she asked if someone could take the lead on this. Bob said he could.
- Brenda envisions that this would include simple tips and a link to an air quality map.

## 6. Waste reduction (Bob)

- Bob looked at what other cities do
- Medford already has a [polystyrene ordinance](#).
- Recycling for hard-to-recycle items
- Melrose had a swap event.
- An Arlington church hosts a Buy Nothing Day swap.
- Medford Family Network does a toy swap and kids clothing swap.
- Could we build off Everything is Free Medford? Theresa in PDS is part of Everything is Free and helped to organize the junk in the trunk event.
- Maybe host a swap in conjunction with the farmers market or library?
- Maybe a campaign for restaurants not to use black plastic takeout containers, which aren't recyclable.
- Seattle has a Ridwell program, with boxes to collect things that we don't often recycle. It's a subscription service.
- For his day job, Will advocates for right to repair and has electronics fix-it clinics. Medford library has had a fix-it clinic.
- Staples accepts single-use batteries.
- Recycling was a large draw at the Harvest Your Energy festival.
- Will will distill this discussion into something we can discuss next month, so we can plan to do something actionable.
- Do we need a separate zero waste entity or just an outgrowth of this committee?
- Suggested that we have a guest presentation from Zero Waste Melrose in 2025.

## 7. New Business

- Rat poison – there's a group on Facebook called New House Wildlife rescue that takes in animals poisoned by rat poison. There's a petition to ban rodenticides in Massachusetts. They're been meeting with pest control board in Massachusetts. Also Cape Ann Wildlife Rescue in Gloucester.
  - Health department has a good program – they'll assess and use dry ice in burrows to exterminate them. They have a [good video posted online](#), too. [Contraceptives](#) also exist, but they're expensive.
- State call today with Melissa Hoffer, Rebecca Tepper, Gina McCarthy. Talked a bit about the vote on the economic development bill and climate bill. Seemed to be changing framing to climate as an economic, national security, health issue.