

## Energy Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Thursday January 15, 2026

#### Call to Order

Jamie Paquette calls meeting to order at 5:41 PM

#### Roll Call

Present: Jamie Paquette, Connie Dawson, Alex Barron, Steve Linsky, Sophie Protano,

#### Review/Approve Minutes

June 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved.

#### Public Speak

No members of the public asked to speak

#### Committee Updates

##### 1. Member Update

- a. Cassie Eckhoff and Josh Rosenblatt declined to renew their membership to this committee.
- b. Alex Barron and Steve Linsky have applied to be members of this committee.

##### 2. 2026 Meeting Dates and Times:

- a. Thursdays at 5:30 PM on 2/29 and 3/19 are on the City calendar

##### 3. BEES Committee Updates

- a. Jamie is designated committee member from EAC
- b. Demonstration garden planned in collaboration with the Girl Scouts. Sophie is coordinating. Funds come from \$500 reimbursement grant plus \$200 raised at Cultural Chaos.
- c. Invasives removal is ongoing in coordination with DPW. The community is asked to participate. Removals are scheduled every other Saturday. Next removal is Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, meeting at Marigold Café at 9:00 AM.
- d. Sign up on the city website to get BEES newsletter.

##### 4. Green Communities & Climate Leader Communities

- a. Not currently looking at any of the decarbonization accelerator grants, but Sophie is considering some projects for the Green Communities competitive grant that's due in April.
- b. Sophie attended a site visit at the water department on Tuesday with a representative from Energy Source. They determined that the building could support the installation of two single port, level two chargers inside the garage, and a single port, level two charger on the outside of the building. This would make it possible to purchase either electric or hybrid transit vans. These chargers would be for city-owned vehicles only.
  - i. Energy Source will apply for an Electric Vehicle Incentive Program for the chargers.
  - ii. Sophie is looking into a potential Green Communities grant to buy three electric vehicles if the finances work for the city.
- c. Sophie has completed and submitted the Green Communities Annual Report.

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5. Electrification & Efficiency Programs

- a. Electrify Easthampton/Northampton
  - i. \$500,000.00 grant through Mass CEC
  - ii. \$4,000 per individual + state incentives (\$8,500)
  - iii. Moving more slowly than expected. Six households signed up for heat pumps, but none are eligible for grant money.
  - iv. Revise is the designated partner
  - v. Targets: Landlord or moderate income
- b. Mass Save Community First Partnership
  - i. Hannah has been enlisting people for MassSave inspections and sending them to Revise
  - ii. In-person outreach has slowed down in cold weather.
    - 1. Radio ad was on New England Public Media for 6 weeks.
    - 2. Census envelopes will include information about program (Easthampton, Northampton, Westhampton)

6. EDIC Business Recognition Program

- a. Excess Community First \$\$ could be used for program
- b. Need to find someone to spearhead

7. Public Outreach Events

- a. ECO Initiative had an initial six-month roll out of public-facing events held at least once a month. The last event was in September. The MassSave outreach has taken precedence since then.
- b. Next event is scheduled for Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 11AM-2PM at the Library Annex. Members of the public will be invited to “drop in”. People with experience in various areas will be available to provide information. Ideas:
  - i. Members of the Bees Committee provide information about native gardens, offer “seed sowing” information
  - ii. Hannah will provide MassSave materials re. Home Energy Assessments, grants and incentives
  - iii. Electric bike “petting zoo”
  - iv. EV’s in the parking lot Heat Pumps
  - v. Solar Panels
  - vi. Induction Hot Plate (borrow from Northampton Library)
  - vii. Backyard Composting
  - viii. Mass Climate Action website suggested to provide peer counseling re. heat pumps. No financial involvement

8. Municipal Aggregation

- a. The Aggregation Plan is approved and Good Energy is monitoring rates. Last spring and summer, the pricing wasn’t quite where we wanted it to be so, the decision was made to wait. Good Energy will let us know when they recommend initiating the program. It will be necessary to consider Eversource’s rate changes as well. We want to take advantage of any differential we can create between the going rate with Eversource and what the city will be able to offer through the aggregation program.
  - i. Eversource has instituted reduced heat pump rates. It’s unclear how this will

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interact with the Aggregation Program.

- ii. Eversource's discount rates for low-income users will still apply to the Aggregation Program.
- iii. Jamie will contact Good Energy for an update.

9. Old Business

- a. This committee needs to review the Climate Action Plan to identify focus for the future
  - i. Sophie will share document about progress to date

10. New/Other Business

- a. Discussion re. this committee advocating for/against climate legislation and policy issues related to climate. The BEES committee recently took the initiative to draft a letter against Bill H4744, which rolls back a lot of the state's climate initiatives. Sophie sent it to the mayor, who was happy to sign it, and then sent it through the state legislature portal to our reps.
  - i. Steve has volunteered to take the lead in identifying and informing the committee about larger legislative issues as they arise. He also mentioned that he and Connie met with Rep. Gomez, who was very open to receiving input about climate legislation.
  - ii. Alex said that he intends to write a personal op-ed re. climate initiatives. He wants to rebut re-emerging spurious arguments that claim climate initiatives will "destroy the American economy". He would be happy to help with language and content of letters or resolutions we may ask the mayor and/or the City Council to support. Alex will be teaching an energy and climate policy class at Smith College this coming semester, and may have more things to bring to the committee based on that.

Meeting adjourned at 6:39 PM

Respectfully submitted by Connie Dawson