

Energy Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday March 19, 2026

Call to Order

Jamie Paquette calls meeting to order at 6:06 PM

Roll Call

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

Review/Approve Minutes

February 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved.

Public Speak

No members of the public asked to speak

Committee Updates

1. Member Update
  - a. We have two new members, Steve Linsky and Alex Barron. Lydia Barry may join.
2. BEES Committee Updates
  - a. The committee is considering updating the charter in order to add more members and change the requirement for members of other committees to attend.
  - b. Next meeting is next week
3. Update from the Sustainability Coordinator, Sophie Protano
  - a. Hannah Davis submitted their resignation notice as Energy Advocate on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Their last day will be March 26<sup>th</sup>. Hanna will be leaving for a full-time position with Abode Energy Management
  - b. Sophie met with the team working on the EmPower application on March 19<sup>th</sup>. It was decided to move forward with applying to fund the stipend Solar Advocate role rather than trying to acquire, full-time funding for a vacant position. She will work with the city to get the part-time position reposted. There is potential for Green Communities funding to support the solar advocate position.
  - c. Energy Source completed its report on weatherization & heat pump installation at the Senior Center. Mass Save will cover the full cost of weatherization, so there are plans are to move forward with this. However, heat pump installation will not be pursued due to high cost and the potential for a new space in the near future
  - d. Sophie met with Denise Lello to talk about gas pipeline replacement projects happening in Northampton and the community education campaign that she is spearheading. This will make people aware of electrification opportunities for heating and cooling.
    - i. The GSEP (gas system enhancement plan) data for Easthampton does not indicate any planned locations (HEET [map](#) for anyone interested)
4. Public Outreach Events

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- a. March 7 Recap:
    - i. We had small attendance (about ten people), but it was nice to get our committee, the BEES committee, and the Energy Advocate together. We had a few interested people show up and a few with agendas that were not necessarily related to the event. A few people signed up for MassSave audits. Several people took home seeds provided by BEES and got information about the importance of planting local pollinators. Connie shared information about her EV and Alex provided an extensive e-bike demonstration.
  - b. Future Events
    - i. When/Where?
      1. Piggy-back onto larger events that have a big attendance (Millside Park events, Sport League events (e.g. Soccer Carnival, Little League opening day), Arcadia Folk Festival, Harvest Festival, Bill McKibbon “Sun Day”)
      2. Have regularly scheduled events (e.g., once a month)
      3. Table at events that occur on a regular basis, like the Farmers’ Market, or the Coop (Steve will look into possibilities)
      4. Have events for vendors (If City sponsors it, there would have to be an open invitation for all vendors)
      5. Keep our eyes out for events happening this summer
    - ii. What?
      1. E-bikes, BEES/pollinator gardens, MassSave, heat pump information, solar panels information, EVs (ask the New England Electric Auto Association to participate)
  - c. Discussion about where this committee should focus
    - i. Should we focus on outreach events? What is the most valuable thing we can do? It’s good to connect with the community, but what is the balance between outreach and other areas we can address, such as structural issues.
5. Legislative & Policy Updates
- a. H.5151 Update: Passed the House, very quiet on the Senate side
    - i. MassSave cuts are still in bill
    - ii. Climate Bank amendment failed.
    - iii. Healey’s new targets for storage, solar and energy efficiency are inconsistent with cutting MassSave. Changes to MassSave may not be so bad if role of utilities’ role is changed.
6. Climate Action Plan Action Item Review
- a. Monitor heat pumps vs. fossil fuel use in municipal buildings. Alex will pursue how to get information
  - b. Stretch Code—How is that going?
  - c. Council on Aging building plan (Connie will reach out to City Engineer)
    - i. Site controversy?
    - ii. Will the RFP include requirement for Passive Building?
  - d. Collective Project

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- i. Building /Facilities Audit
      - 1. Upgrades for municipal buildings and housing authority buildings
      - 2. Replacement schedule for furnace upgrades, water upgrades
        - a. e.g., are heat pumps viable?
  - e. EV's change-over
    - i. City plans to change to leased vehicles
    - ii. What vehicles are EV currently?
    - iii. What vehicles are scheduled for replacement in next years
  - f. M12 Zoning Code Review: Where are we at?
    - i. Form Based Code, e.g., Mixed Use Density
  - g. M13 Electric Options for off-road or handheld equipment
    - i. How are decisions being made?
  - h. M16 Electric Buses (Alex Students plan to look into this)
  - i. M17 Bicycle and Pedestrian infrastructure and improvements
    - i. Is there a master plan for Complete Streets?
    - ii. Safe walk to school?
  - j. Zipcar? (Alex will pursue)
  - k. Urban Canopy: Sophie will apply for a grant in the fall to develop an urban tree survey. Connie suggested the city evaluate methane levels in soil before planting.
    - i. BEES pursuing organizations that help people get trees to plant on their property
  - l. M14 Microgrid/energy storage projects (Lydia may be able to help with this)
    - i. ? Moratorium on data centers? (Huge energy users)
      - 1. Data Centers are not being built in Massachusetts so far
      - 2. City council ordinance to restrict (state must enable municipalities to implement zoning restrictions)
    - ii. Put onus on centers to generate their own energy
      - 1. Minnesota is requiring paying for demand-response things like water heaters for citizens
  - m. Can public housing authority sign up for community solar if they are paying the electric bill?
  - n. Meet with City Engineer (council on aging) what is the process? Who approves building designs?
    - i. Old school buildings? What are next steps? Planning Dept Meeting (Jamie will reach out)
  - o. Parks and Rec-new buildings-Jamie will reach out
7. Electrification & Efficiency Programs
  - a. Electrify Easthampton/Northampton
    - i. No income limit
    - ii. Post to Easthampton Facebook page
  - b. Mass Save Community First Partnership
    - i. Hannah stepping down

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- ii. Several events have been held at participating cities
- 8. Municipal Aggregation
  - a. Meeting with mayor's office to bring mayor up to date was postponed.
  - b. No full updates re. pricing
- 9. Green Communities & Climate Leader Communities
  - a. Climate Leader Certification
    - i. Grant Opportunities have opened up for the city
    - ii. We should meet with city dept. heads about what they may want to apply for
  - b. Sophie met with the Green Communities regional coordinator on March 11. She was informed that as a Climate Leader community we are eligible to apply for \$125,000 per Green Communities PON (Program Opportunities Notice), not the standard \$250,000.
  - c. Sophie will coordinate with city leadership to determine if they want to move forward with the high school lighting upgrade project or only apply for funding to support the purchase of a new E-transit van.
    - i. The lighting project request was to have been for \$147,710.00, which would save \$1kWh in the first year
    - ii. Instead, the city could apply for \$30,000.00 towards the purchase of a 2025 Ford E-Transit vehicle.
- 10. New/Other Business
  - a. Jamie will invite the mayor to attend one of our meetings

Next Meetings: Tuesdays at 6:00 PM April 14, May 19, June 16

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM

Respectfully submitted by Connie Dawson