



**Town of Concord  
Climate Action Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
May 19, 2021**

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a virtual public meeting of the Climate Action Advisory Board (CAAB) was held on May 19, 2021 at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

**Members present:** Jake Swenson (Chair), Brian Crouse, Courtney Eaton, John Bolduc, Michael McAteer, Ruthy Bennett, Scott Wood, Warren Leon.

**Staff:** Kate Hanley, Director of Sustainability

**Guests:** Andy Puchrik, Jane Hotchkiss, Mark Hanson, Pamela Dritt

**Minutes**

Ruthy Bennett moved to approve the minutes; John Bolduc seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve.

**Chair's Update**

Jake pointed out the date of the town meeting and encouraged everyone to attend. He described a good informational website focused on "[Yes on 31](#)" that has been developed by Carbon Free Concord and Mothers Out Front. The website gives people an opportunity to take a pledge in support of Article 31.

Jake Swenson, Alice Kaufman, and others have been doing outreach to committees about Article 31. The Agriculture Committee has raised concern about heating greenhouses with alternatives to fossil fuels.

**Director's Update**

Kate Hanley sent out an update in the meeting packet. She discussed the main items in that update.

The 2021 Sustainability Report has been published. She thinks it is useful to produce these reports annually. Jake commented on the utility of the data in the annual sustainability report.

The electric home case studies that CSEC has been producing are very good. Kate will start promoting them soon.

Hannah, a summer UNH fellow, will start on June 7<sup>th</sup> and will focus on financing options for energy efficiency.

In a comment on Hannah's pending research project, Michael McAteer mentioned a useful report he had passed on and he offered to make connections to the company that produced it. Kate then encouraged others to pass on resources related to the financing of energy efficiency.

### **Update on Article 31**

Kate gave an update of where things stand. She said that Jake has been doing an excellent job of reaching out to different town committees and encouraging them to support the article.

There will not be presentations at town meeting, but there will be a booklet that includes everything that is typically distributed as handouts. There will be a FAQ document on Article 31.

Jake said we could send a letter to the Concord Journal on behalf of CAAB. He shared a draft letter. Scott Wood pointed out that some people's initial reaction is to be concerned when they hear about the article, but they can be won over after they learn more about it. For that reason, advance education before the town meeting is important.

Warren made a motion for the committee to submit a letter to the Concord Journal and to authorize Jake to revise and finalize it. Michael seconded the motion.

Several committee members expressed support for the concept of submitting a letter and they were generally happy with the initial draft. They made suggestions for improving the letter. John suggested that the letter include the importance of moving away from fuel oil and that the article aligns well with the state's expressed priorities. It is also important for the letter to emphasize that Article 31 only applies to new construction.

Michael asked about other places where the letter could be posted to get the word out. Jake suggested putting it on the CAAB website, Ruthy suggested posting it on Facebook pages, and others made additional suggestions, including Next Door. Jake said that Kate and he would send several versions of the letter and various resources to committee members for them to disseminate however they think best.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Other Town Meeting Articles**

The meeting agenda identified six articles that may overlap with the CAAB's mission. Jake summarized each of the articles so the CAAB would be aware of them and to identify possible connections to the CAAB's work.

**Article 33** expands the types of historic homes that need to go through a special demolition process before proceeding to demolition. Jake's personal view is for CAAB not to take a position. John agreed that we probably shouldn't take a position, but the committee might want to use the warrant article to raise the issue of embodied carbon.

Michael made a general comment that he found it difficult with almost all the articles to draw a tight line to the committee's charge, with the possible exception of the sequestration article. Jake agreed that the connection may not always be tight, but many of the articles refer explicitly to either sustainability or to the town's climate plan.

**Article 35** seeks to update the town's Tree Preservation Bylaw.

**Article 36** includes amendments to the town's Flood Plain Conservancy District to with the national standard and to create a higher standard for the town that supports resiliency. John indicated that flood risks will change with climate change and that we could recommend that the town incorporate climate-change-related future risks into its planning.

**Article 38** would amend the section of the Zoning Bylaw related to two-family and additional dwelling units to support two-family dwelling units, thereby encouraging greater density and supporting smart group.

**Article 39** relates to Earth Removal and Fill.

**Article 40** would prohibit the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on new leases of town land.

Courtney Eaton made a general comment that there is a connection in the case of all the articles, but it is a small connection. She expressed uncertainty about how critical it is for the committee to weigh in on them. Perhaps it would be useful for the committee to at least show the connections.

Jake asked guest Mark Harmon, a member of the town's Pollinator Health Advisory Committee, about the status of article 40. He described the damaging impacts that even vanishingly small quantities of neonicotinoids can have on pollinators. Mark noted that concerns have been raised about how passage of the article could impact a couple of leases in the town. But in general, it is important to take steps to reduce and eliminate use of neonicotinoids. Michael asked Mark if it might make a difference on the outcome of the article if CAAB took a stand. Mark felt CAAB taking a stand would help.

### **Topics for Future Meetings**

Jake and Kate have been discussing possible topics for future meetings. One topic they suggested is for Courtney to brief the committee on sustainable infrastructure. As a preview of the topic, Courtney briefly discussed Envision, which is a standard for assessing the sustainability and resilience of a site and the area around a building. Several committee members indicated that it would be useful to hear an extended briefing from Courtney on Envision at a future meeting.

Jake asked for other topics for the committee to consider. Topics that were raised:

- Scott raised the possibility of discussing whether the town should consider establishing a net zero goal for the town.

- Jake pointed out that there will be discussion of home energy scores at the June meeting with representatives from the Portland, Oregon home energy score program. There could then be work by CAAB afterwards to see how to possibly apply the idea to Concord.

Jake and Kate noted that CAAB might make the most progress by assigning some topics to subcommittees that could delve into a topic in greater depth.

### **Public Comments**

Pamela Dritt asked about the exemption in Article 31 for public housing. She wanted to make sure that the Article does not give the impression that heat pumps are necessarily more expensive and does not want to create a second-class status for public housing. She would like to eliminate the exemption for public housing. She also thought that the public does not necessarily understand that going all electric is now different than old-fashioned electric radiators.

Jake responded to the comment about the exemption for public housing. That exemption was created in close collaboration with the affordable housing community. Affordable housing builders initially asked for the exemption. Nevertheless, there is increasing momentum to move towards all electric for affordable housing. Hopefully, the exemption will not be used if it remains in the Article.

### **Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was approved at 7:58.