

Meeting Minutes  
Town of Concord  
Climate Action Advisory Board  
Wednesday, May 20, 2020

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 20, 2020 at 4:00 pm via Zoom. CAAB members present were Brian Foulds, Brian Crouse, Courtney Eaton, Jake Swenson, John Bolduc, Michael McAteer, Pam Hill, Peter Nichol, Ruthy Bennett, Warren Leon. Also present was Kate Hanley, Director of Sustainability.

1. Welcome and Zoom reminders

Kate Hanley announced the meeting was being recorded. Brian Foulds welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Meetings and minutes

Brian mentioned that the next meeting would be scheduled by Doodle poll for the week of June 8<sup>th</sup>. The meeting date will be scheduled and posted by June 5<sup>th</sup>. The July meeting date will be decided at the June meeting.

Brian Crouse moved to approved the minutes from April 9, 2020. Peter Nichol seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Update

Brian Foulds shared that Town Meeting has been postponed until the fall and that the committee can discuss the articles at a later meeting.

Brian also shared that committee memberships are usually renewed after town meeting, but the Select Board has extended the membership of all committees until the fall. If anyone wants to make a change to their membership or is interested in being Chair, let Kate know and we can discuss at the next meeting.

Brian shared an update on the middle school building project. The committee has decided to pause the project after wrapping up the feasibility phase due to concerns about budget and timing during the pandemic. Brian noted that he thinks the sustainability aspects of the project are in a very good place. There is a summary document of the sustainability work as part of the feasibility report.

Michael McAteer asked if the middle school committee acknowledged receipt of the letter from CAAB. Brian Foulds replied that the committee did not bring up the letter at the meeting but that the committee receives a lot of correspondence and it is not all mentioned. Brian added that he spoke to Tim, one of the committee chairs, and they are committed to sustainability.

Pam Hill asked who was representing CAAB on the middle school committee and asked if CAAB's committee representative should be bringing this up. Brian noted that Kate is a member of the committee in her capacity as Sustainability Director, not as a representative of CAAB. Kate noted that there will be a report summarizing the feasibility stage of the project and she will share that when it's available.

#### 4. Climate Action and Resilience Plan

Kate Hanley shared an update on the 1<sup>st</sup> full draft of the climate action and resilience plan. Kate recapped that at the last meeting CAAB confirmed the priority actions for the plan. Since then, the remaining implementation blueprints have been drafted and all of the introduction materials have been combined as well as feedback from the municipal team and CAAB to-date. The next step will be a designed 2<sup>nd</sup> draft released the week of June 8<sup>th</sup>, which will be put out for public comments along with a recorded introduction to the plan. The final plan will be put out in early July.

Brian Foulds noted that accountability was brought up in many committee member's feedback with a focus on ensuring the plan gets done. He suggested that one option would be to submit a letter to the Select Board and Town Manager asking for an update in a year about how the plan is being integrated into town planning.

The committee discussed the topic of accountability. Comments included:

- Suggestion that the plan include more explicit language about a policy that requires town staff to adhere to Article 51
- Suggestion to follow a RACI (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) model for implementation
- Suggestion that we should reach out to the Select Board and the Town Manager when the draft is out for review and ask for their concerns and questions before its finalized
- Suggestion that the plan could elaborate on an accountability process, such as an annual progress report put together by staff and reviewed by CAAB; could be a simple green/yellow/red status check on actions
- Suggestion to designate one department to be responsible for actions while also making sure that not too much is put on one department
- Suggestion that departments should own the action and Kate can serve as a subject matter expert

Kate Hanley shared a summary of the feedback received. (See summary document below.)

The board shared additional feedback. Comments included:

- School transportation issues seemed to be missing
- Need to be greater and more profound changes to school curriculum
- The plan should be more ambitious, particularly in terms of the 2030 targets
- Equity should be revisited to ensure that the actions are designed to specifically and directly address equity
- Overall, the plan is coming along and is well laid-out
- Leadership priorities will require some additional thought in implementation
- Need more analysis of how the action steps get us to 2030 goals
- Climate emergency is laid out really well
- Need discussion of whether we met our 2020 goals
- Need to focus on energy use and emissions tracking town-wide
- Revisit champion structure and determine if that translates into primary responsibility
- Make someone responsible for tracking the indicators of success
- The plan has become a much more focused climate action plan, which is good
- Climate section focuses on extreme weather events but should also consider the implications of changes to the averages as well

- Concern about accounting of emissions, particularly as it pertains to how the town is accounting for RECs
- Message about emissions reduction trajectory could be clearer in terms of what we need to do, what trajectory we are on, and what gap we need to fill
- Impressive to see all the sustainability efforts coalesce together into how we move big-picture ideas forward in specific steps

Kate Hanley shared a list of indicators of success and asked for feedback on the draft 2030 targets. The board commented that it was nice to see ambitious targets and that tracking and reporting data can be time-consuming, but it is important.

## 5. Public comments

Brad Hubbard-Nelson commented that the IPCC has recommended 45% GHG reduction by 2030 and that this plan should have that same goal. Achieving that goal will require all-hands on deck and making hard choices. He also noted that CSEC should be called out more specifically for implementation and in achievements.

Janet Miller commented that the role of CSEC is important and should be recognized and spelled out in the plan. She also asked if the benefit of cleaner air from transitioning to electricity is noted in the plan.

Laura Davis commented that she was happy to see the indicators and that they seem much more aggressive than the steps outlined. She noted that she would like to see more detail around some of the bigger ticket items for emissions reduction like retrofitting homes to be more energy efficient. She would like to see more attention to some of the sticky subjects like how to get people to take advantage of incentive programs and transition to taking the commuter rail.

Gary Kleiman commented that he is sympathetic to the desire to make an ambitious plan, but also recognizes that we need to be realistic in terms of what can we accomplish. He encouraged the group to consider how to finance the big-ticket items like retrofitting buildings and shifting people to take public transit in a realistic and practical way. He noted that it is hard to ask town department heads to implement actions just because we want them without considering the practicality.

Linda Nieman commented that the concept of the plan could be simplified so that people who are not in the climate world can follow along. For example, talk about actions in terms of percent reductions instead of metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e. She suggested that the plan could highlight which actions are the big-ticket items for emissions reductions so it's clear what needs to be done first.

Pam commented that the plan does not indicate the emissions impact from consumption of residents. John Bolduc shared that there is a methodology for a consumption-based inventory, which is being used by large cities but it is difficult and time-consuming.

Warren suggested that we need to be realistic about what can be addressed in the time we have to complete the plan. He noted that the committee has already identified some immediate next steps to address including the cost to implement and the emissions reduction of the actions in the plan. He suggested the committee should focus on this after the plan is submitted.

Michael McAteer suggested that we make it clear where we are on the pathway to success to engage the public, making an analogy to a fundraising barometer. Laura added that this could also be useful in engaging key partners.

Peter Nichol suggested that the committee could make a list of suggestions for how the school community could help to advance the town's sustainability goals. Ruthy Bennett offered to work with Peter on this idea. Pam Hill noted that she likes this idea and emphasized the importance of the group being a guide for what are the transformative changes we need.

6. The meeting adjourned at 5:55pm

Minutes were prepared by Kate Hanley.

1<sup>st</sup> Draft Climate Action and Resilience Plan  
Feedback Report to CAAB – May 19, 2020

Below is a summary of frequently submitted questions and feedback on the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the climate action and resilience plan. It is not a comprehensive list of all feedback received, but rather a highlight of comments and suggestions submitted by multiple reviewers or areas that received repeated feedback.

**General**

1. Good plan with a lot to like, ambitious yet doable
2. How are we measuring success?
3. Flag priority actions that align very well with Envision Concord and community preferences

**Part 1**

1. Add to timeline and acknowledge effective work of community groups and volunteers in action to-date
2. Update the graph showing GHG emissions trajectory to 2050 to be a steeper curve down in the next decade
3. Highlight some of the specific recommendations from the ONE architecture report
4. Define mitigation and adaptation
5. Add to “next steps” section some actions that we have already discussed we need to take after plan completion including costing out actions in terms of cost, staff time, and resources needed to carry them out, understand competing priorities for departments that are championing multiple actions, discuss which actions are most important to move forward quickly, and set a schedule for reporting on progress and updating the plan
6. The description of the plan elements and principles is confusing and the purpose of the principles is not clear
7. On priority action list, not clear on the purpose of the table with the plan’s principles. Also, need to update some of the indicators. For example, some of the actions indicate neutral impact on equity but actually have positive impact - built environment actions that improve energy efficiency and reduce energy bills, improved access to walking, biking, and public transit, and threat assessment of critical town infrastructure.

**Part 2 – Blueprints**

1. Why are there different approaches to residential and commercial buildings, especially related to policy? Can we strengthen steps to electrify and improve energy efficiency of existing residential buildings?
2. Strengthen the steps related to bike infrastructure and creating a bike-friendly community
3. Blueprint steps need more detail and more commitment

\*Also received detailed suggestions for pieces to add to blueprints including additional stakeholders, engagement strategies, equity considerations, and financing mechanisms\*