



## COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE

*Meeting Minutes*  
*Thursday, June 16, 2022*

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a joint meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainability & Energy Committee and the Climate Action Advisory Board was held on June 16, 2022 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Courtney Eaton, CAAB Chair, called the meeting to order and called roll for CAAB and CSEC. CAAB members present were Courtney Eaton (Chair), Brian Crouse, Paul Kirshen, John Bolduc, Warren Leon, and Jake Swenson. CSEC members present were Karen Gibson (Clerk), Sharon Jones, Michael McDonald, Janet Miller, Douglas Sharpe, and Hany Teylouni. Also present were Amanda Kohn (Sustainability Director), Matt Johnson (Select Board), Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Annabel von Weise, Brian Foulds, Andy Puchrik, Alice Kaufman, Paul Kirshen, and Pamela Dritt.

2. Approval of minutes

CAAB - Warren moved to approve the April and May CAAB minutes. Jake seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

CSEC - Janet moved to approve the April CSEC minutes. Sharon seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

*Jerry Frenkil (CSEC Chair), joined the meeting.*

3. Joint Chair's update

a. CAAB – This is the first joint meeting for CAAB and CSEC. The biggest area of concern for CAAB is membership and keeping momentum. Sharon reported that she attended the Chair's Breakfast and highlighted the plan to have a trolley that will go between a few of the tourist locations and the Commuter Rail stop, with drop offs in West Concord; Amanda added that there are opportunities to apply for federal funding if there is good ridership on the trolley. Sharon also raised the possibility for opportunities to work with the Pollinator committee.

b. CSEC – Jerry summarized the Cooler Concord Sustainability Series. There were six events and although attendance was less than we had hoped for, there was good engagement with attendees. The keynote and the Climate Festival had the biggest draws. The main lesson learned was that promotion could have been better. Jerry recognized all the work by Amanda and CSEC members to pull off the events. Jerry also recognized all the work Amanda has done with CSEC and we are sorry to see her leave. CSEC will be transitioning Chairmanship from Jerry to Sharon Jones and Hany Teylouni will take over the Vice-Chairmanship, a new role. Doug moved that Sharon Jones be elected to position of Chair and Hany to be elected as Vice Chair. Janet seconded. The vote to elect Sharon and Hany passed unanimously.

4. Director's Update (Amanda)

Amanda pointed out that detailed Director updates can be found on [CAAB's website](#). She will also post a summary table of ongoing projects and who will be taking over responsibility when she leaves. Amanda has enjoyed her time with CSEC, but is looking forward to what is next. Amanda highlighted:

- The municipal fleet electrification study was presented to the Select Board on Monday.

- There is a new UNH Fellow, Joshua Arroyo, who will focus on community engagement as it relates to transportation and mobility.
- The hazard mitigation plan was kicked off last week.
- The compost pilot project was expanded.
- The Concord Middle School Sustainability Committee met and solar will be discussed at the Light Board next week.
- On the legislative front, expect an update to new specialized opt in code this summer. Summer public hearings offer an advocacy opportunity this summer. Many bills we are following have been continued until June 30 including the Home Rule petition.

#### 5. Sustainability Awards Program

Annabel von Weiss has been working with Amanda on Concord Sustainability Awards. The awards will be given out to community members, community organizations, local businesses, recognizing them for the work they are doing in sustainability. The awards are beneficial for inspiring others and recognizing sustainability efforts at the community level. Annabel posed the question “What would CSEC or CAAB like to accomplish through the program?” She reviewed a few case studies illustrating what Concord might do. Award categories might include student, individual, community group, and business. Specific areas of sustainability might include: green building, education and awareness, renewable energy, solid waste, vehicle travel, and water conservation.

Discussion: Jerry recognized that the awards could be a popular, low-cost activity for the Town. Courtney liked the idea of both individual and group contributions, and especially student involvement. Janet asked what form the award would take—like plaque or a ceremony. Warren cautioned the awards program could draw resources from CAAB membership away from other priorities. Paul asked if the award could go to a town organization/department, or a state or federal organization, or a senator or congressman. If the impact was local, with broader implications, then the award and recognition of a Congressperson might be appropriate. John cautioned that awards programs often work well for a while, but then tend to go to the same individuals/groups, so it’s important to think about the purpose of the awards. If awards are coupled with other programs—trying to increase the use of renewable energy or promoting energy efficiency—it might be more effective/impactful. Jerry also cautioned about having enough resources to take on an awards program, but CSEC could help. To have four different awards annually might water down the impact of the award. Several members stressed the need to think about goal/aim of awards.

There would be achievement areas for nominations criteria: energy conservation, zero waste, natural resources. One format would be for the Sustainability Director to manage the awards program with members from CAAB and CSEC, and others, serving on the selection and evaluation committees.

Discussion: Brian suggested the award program could reach outside the usual suspects to businesses and organizations that are not sustainability focused, but that are doing a good job. Courtney agreed that reaching outside provides an opportunity to show good works to the Town. This type of program can broaden the conversation.

The timeline could include awards as part of Earth Day celebrations, or part of the Town Sustainability Day in October, or in February as its own event. The event could be a banquet or part of Town Meeting with an opportunity to share their work with others. The award ceremony

could be formal or informal; with promotion through social media, newsletters, journals, and physical bulletins around town.

Discussion: Warren cautioned about committee member bandwidth. Determining criteria and judging nominations for the awards would require time and thought—there would need to be a subcommittee who would take on this role beyond their time on CSEC and CAAB.

Mike liked the idea of making the awards during Town Meeting when everyone is gathered and there is already an annual date. Janet noted that we don't need to award all four categories each year. She also suggested writing a blog with the awardees for the Town Sustainability webpage.

#### 6. Status of Sustainable Concord Progress on Built Environment Element

Amanda suggested that one way for CSEC and CAAB to jointly report out on activity without a meeting would be to do it via the five different elements: built environment, energy, mobility, natural resources, and preparedness. She used the Built Environment Element as an example. This approach would help to remind folks that Sustainable Concord is set up in a way that we have overarching goals that have priority actions underneath of them. She took committee members through the priority action items and implementation steps. Courtney asked CSEC and CAAB members if a quicker format like this would be useful? What is the most effective way of reporting out.

Discussion: John thought it useful to see a summary of all the activities going on. There may need to be better metrics for actually achieving goals and a means to see where we are. Mike asked for clarification on whether the goal is to identify which projects CSEC is working on or CAAB is working on, or where there is coordination. Courtney said that CAAB spent a lot of time over the last year looking at all the priorities and is focusing on four. It might be a good idea to wrestle with how we are interacting with Sustainable Concord as a group. John noted that CAAB has talked a lot about how to prioritize against the climate action plan, and pick projects where they have expertise and bandwidth; they also talked about where there are overlaps with CSEC. The concept of trying to understand how we are working together and the progress we are making will be helpful, and we need a good set of metrics to show us progress over time measured against a baseline. For example, there is an opportunity to reach out to homeowners proactively to reach people who may be switching from oil to gas. Jerry agreed and noted that it is difficult to keep track of all that is going on. Is it better to have a focused report on one topic at a time or all at once? The illustration tonight shows that one topic at a time is still a lot of information. We need to determine how to identify priorities and next steps. Courtney suggested that a regular joint meeting of CAAB and CSEC would be beneficial to share progress and answer the question of how are we interacting and moving the dial on sustainable Concord initiatives along? Amanda has identified ongoing work that would be mutually supportive where CAAB could work on the policy side and CSEC could work on public engagement. Maybe there are other ways to support other elements like mobility, natural resources, and preparedness.

#### 7. Sharing of Current Priorities and Work Plans

Courtney reported that CAAB spent much of last summer going through Sustainable Concord and identifying initiative in CAAB's court. They began with a list of several and narrowed to four. Each CAAB member has taken the lead on a topic: financing opportunities for electrification to add to what MassSave offers—things that CMLP could consider as opportunities for a loan program or other different financing options; home energy score/point of sale so residents can better understand their energy use; resiliency and how to bring resiliency planning to the Town in the form of a vulnerability assessment; and planning policy to bring sustainable decision making

into our planning and plan review process. CAAB is committed to making progress on these four issues over the next year. In the fall they will reevaluate.

Jerry reported that CSEC has focused on and just completed the Sustainability Series. CSEC is now exploring what's next. He also noted that Concord residents have raised two issues with CSEC: electrification of the school bus fleet through grants; and the Concord Middle School boiler replacement. These are issues that CSEC might be able to help with as they proceed. He also noted that as CSEC we need to work more closely with other Town or school committees to anticipate some of the ad hoc issues that come up, and we can then lend our expertise. Sharon noted that by forming partnerships with other organizations, we don't have to do all the heavy lifting. Doug said he hoped that CSEC can continue to have the bandwidth to address things as needed, and noted that CSEC is also engaging with the Library in community engagement.

Courtney opened discussion on how the two groups can work together. Mike pointed out that the new three-year plan that was approved by the department of public utilities had a big focus on electrification. He suggested that when talking with stakeholders, we don't have to limit to CMLP. The most significant incentives for gas will be from National Grid; and there are ways to get them involved. Doug commented that this joint meeting and sharing each other's agendas is helpful. He noted that CAAB is more of an oversight/policy organization and CSEC is more the engagement entity. Courtney agreed that there may be opportunity to drive engagement around some of the CAAB activities. Jerry agreed with the importance of staying connected and understanding where each committee is headed. Amanda suggested the idea of 15 minute talks between individual CSEC and CAAB members to more informally get to know each other. Amanda also suggested improving tracking internally as well as existing groups like the Library Sustainability Committee, or Conservation Coffee on Tuesdays, monthly.

8. Committee and Board Brainstorm of Ideas for Future

Jerry suggested a social meet up where the public are invited to come chat with committee members—no agenda—open lines of communication. Sharon suggested name tags say ask me about “solar panels”, “heat pumps”, etc. Courtney suggested CSEC and CAAB jointly meet a couple times a year interspersed with other joint events.

9. Public comment

Pamela Dritt expressed support for the outreach awards. She asked Amanda if there is still legislation that might allow us to require all electric new construction, and if our Home Rule petition gets granted, will we be able to require that. Amanda responded that the Home Rule petition is still alive, as well as some other legislative avenues. The update to the specialized opt-in building code is another avenue that it will be important to pay attention to and advocate for in the spring. Pamela asked CSEC/CAAB to come up with creative ways to incentivize all electric buildings for the Planning Board. She also urged the Town to go to electric school buses for the children. Janet pointed out that CMLP does a lot related to electric vehicles.

Karen thanked Jerry for his service and all he has done for CSEC as chair.

Courtney thanked Amanda for her service and all she has done for both CAAB and CSEC.

10. Adjourn

The joint CAAB and CSEC meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.