

Town of Concord  
Climate Action Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
July 15, 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 July 15, 2020 at 4:00 pm via Zoom.

*Members present:* Brian Foulds (Chair), Brian Crouse, Courtney Eaton, Jake Swenson, John Bolduc, Michael McAteer, Pam Hill, Warren Leon.

*Staff:* Kate Hanley, Director of Sustainability; Abigail Ahern, Intern

*Guests:* Laura Davis, Heather Gill, Alice Kaufman, Jane Hotchkiss

### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and asked for approval for the June minutes. Meeting minutes were accepted and the next meeting was scheduled for August 19 . CAAB will return to meeting on the third Wednesday of the month Aug. 19th, Sept. 16th, Oct 21st, Nov. 18th, Dec. 16th of 2020. The time of meetings will be 5pm.

### **2. Chairs Report and Updates**

Chair noted that Peter Nichol is having health issues and there is a website where members can read updates and sign-up for meals. The Board sent their best wishes. The Chair stated that he and Kate Hanley will be presenting the final Climate Action Plan to the Select Board on July 20<sup>th</sup>. The Chair apologized for the delay in sharing John Bolduc's memo about RECs.

John Bolduc asked for a summary and highlights from the public comments that were submitted as part of the review of the plan. The Chair noted that Kate will share in her director's report.

The Chair let the Board know that Town Meeting will take place on September 13<sup>th</sup> at the high school. He noted that his understanding is that there will be a large consent calendar and there will not be presentations. There will be public hearings in August and suggested CAAB discuss Town Meeting in the August meeting. Brian reminded Warren, John and Ruthy that they should let Kate know if they intend to renew their membership after Town Meeting.

### **3. Directors Update**

Please refer to the Director's Update. Kate shared a number of updates including:

- CSEC has developed a pamphlet to highlight the opportunities for promoting increased energy efficiency and sustainability in the Town.
- Abigail Ahern has been working with the town on sustainability guidelines for historic homes.
- The Town submitted an application for an MVP Action grant for an integrated water resource management plan.

- The Climate Action and Resilience Plan has been completed on time and on budget. She noted that the public comments suggested overall support for the Plan and the goals with some suggestions to consider gaining more clarity from the document and to incorporate an Executive Summary to help citizens more easily comprehend the large document with its key elements and actions. There was also a request that the Plan address impacts of the town's consumption. The final document is up on the town's website. She stated that now is the time to begin implementation. There will also be an online dashboard to engage the community and share progress from the Plan. The consultants have completed their obligation but will be available for dashboard development.

Brian Foulds asked about grants and whether the pandemic has impacted grant timelines. Kate shared that most spring deadlines were extended or the timeframes were pushed out. Others are on-track.

#### **4. Annual Town Meeting and Letter of Support for Article 40**

The board discussed a letter of support for Article 40.

- Warren Leon suggested that the onerous language in the beginning of the letter be dropped and replaced with reasons why this Article is important to the town and to the future of clean energy.
- Jake Swenson believed the letter could be strengthened with more emphasis on the why and that it could be made clearer as a proposal.
- Pam Hill agreed that the Article is consistent with Article 51 and builds on the town's goals to stand for a carbon free future.

A motion was made to approve the letter with suggested edits that were discussed and it was unanimously supported by the Board.

#### **5. Presentation from Abigail Ahern, UNH Sustainability Fellow**

The Board was pleased to receive an outstanding presentation from UNH Sustainability Fellow, Abigail Ahern, about her work to understand the barriers and best practices for sustainability improvements in historic and older homes. Abigail did interviews with other communities and property owners to obtain real time strategies for making these improvements. As part of her research she highlighted the importance of social and economic justice.

John Bolduc pointed out that solar applied in the historic space has been a challenge and to not include it in the building programming creates a serious problem for meeting emissions reductions. That indeed it is possible to create harmony in the goals to preserve historic structures while also advancing sustainability goals.

Pam noted that HDC would benefit from a friendlier consideration's for sustainability and how these might be adopted into new language that looks to promote a clean energy future and historic preservation in tandem.

Warren also believed that historic districts should accept both solar and electrifying buildings as basic tenants in their deliberations, that technology advancements are important to incorporate in all buildings.

Heather Gill provided comments to help CAAB understand the process and rules currently being addressed by the HDC.

## **6. Discussion of Agenda Items for 2020 Meetings**

The board discussed the role of the committee going forward now that the climate plan is complete. This was a lively session that offered the Board and the public an opportunity to imagine what the future might look like as execution of the Climate Plan unfolds. There was a common theme among board members of *“now is the time to take action and help address the climate emergency.”*

- Michael McAteer said that CAAB role should be as advisors, not researchers or implementers.
- Brian Foulds said CAAB is best positioned to tee up good policy, strategies, and dig into implementation steps to help and be a resource for champions. One example where CAAB can be researchers is buildings, where CAAB could understand what good policies are out there and suggest what Concord should be doing. CAAB should also be a resource to help departments move initiatives forward.
- Warren Leon agree with Michael’s comments that CAAB should provide advice and help advise on priorities.
- Pam Hill said that CAAB is advisory and feels that they are not a research arm of the town. CAAB is at a higher advisory level and agree that we should be teeing up policies and helping to set priorities.
- Courtney Eaton said it’s important the board help with setting priorities. There is also an accountability responsibility, which will take different forms depending on the goal, which will often be asking the right questions.
- John Bolduc said the role of CAAB is advisory. On accountability, CAAB should devise a process by which they will execute that role, for example an annual review. The process would help CAAB to advise the town on how Concord is doing on climate change. Accountability could also mean calling out actions that are not happening and propose changes. There could be a reactive advisory role by providing feedback to boards or departments seeking help.
- Jake Swenson said that CAAB’s charge is well-written and the responsibilities are outlined well, but we need to figure out the most important next steps coming out of this plan and it’s important for us to discuss how we can be most effective as an advisory board now that the plan is completed. CAAB should be willing to support in a variety of ways to drive the changes we need to make throughout the town to realize the goals of the plan. Accountability is also an important role and Article 51 provides authority for advocating for action.
- Brian Crouse said he would like to make the indicators in the plan more visible and would be helpful to update more often in order to show tangible progress. The charge says that we need to stay abreast of best practices and that may involve some research.
- Kate Hanley said that the role of CAAB as advisory is broad and we are at a transition point. She said that her priority is on implementation of the plan. CAAB can be helpful in moving forward the action that they are a champion of in the plan (new building policies). Kate would like to see CAAB be more closely connected with CSEC and other committees to identify opportunities for collaboration and overlap.

Alice Kaufman shared that small groups of CAAB members would be considered subcommittees and subject to open meeting law.

John asked Kate about accountability. Kate said that accountability is important and CAAB could play a role in an annual review. There is a balance of time spent to collect metrics and suggested that we be thoughtful about whether the metrics and data points support and inform policies.

Kate mentioned that there is a lot support for sustainability in town and sometimes what is needed is not getting support but helping stakeholders and implementers to understand what the most sustainable option or strategy is.

Brian suggested that CAAB focus on policies for new buildings as indicated in the plan and asked if the group was willing to do some homework and come back to the next meeting with ideas.

John Bolduc asked how CAAB would do that work. The first step may be the research, but how would we work with the planning board or planning department. Is CAAB taking the lead or other taking the lead and provide input? Brian requested the board consider how to proceed.

Courtney suggested considering the top questions that we need to consider in order to focus our research on new building policies. For example – What are the existing policies in place? What are the barriers that we know of? What are other communities that have policies we might want to model? Kate agreed the guiding questions would be helpful and offered to compile those questions.

Warren said another important next step is that CAAB get an understanding of the implications of the plan. We should understand from the champions which ones will be a heavy lift and additional support or resources will be required to move forward the implementation steps. Kate offered to facilitate this process and bring a status update to the board in August or September.

Pam Hill said it important that CAAB to circle back to John's suggestion to create a process for accountability and monitoring progress on goals. Part of CAAB's role should be to check-in on progress and make sure we're meeting our goals.

#### *Next Steps and Outcomes*

- CAAB to review final Climate and Resilience Plan available on the web
- Consider themes and suggestions for building out CAAB planning through 2020
- What additional enablers might CAAB consider as we move the Plan forward to implementation

## **7. Public Comments**

Laura Davis requested that the meeting packet be made available to virtual participants. She commented that the discussion about mission was interesting and shared that CAAB's role in providing strategic direction is really important. She noted that there are some sticky issues in the plan and these issues need the attention of a board of experts like this one. Laura stated that she hoped the CAAB would both identify the complicated and most impactful sectors first.

Alice Kaufman suggested that there may be a need for a different committee that wants to do more research if that's needed. Alice asked Kate about the MVP Action Grant and what resources will be

required. Kate replied that the MVP Action Grant would fund the development of an integrated water resource management plan that will be mostly led by the public works department.

## **8. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

*Minutes were prepared by Michael McAteer*