

**MELROSE ENERGY COMMISSION Meeting Minutes****Date/Time:** Thursday, January 27, 2022 7:00 pm**Location:** Webex Meeting**Attendees:** Susan Baron, David Bliss, Doug Dick, Martha Grover, Ellen Katz, Gary Lamothe, Lori Timmermann, Janine Venuti, Ian Moriarty, Lisa Montuori Trimble, Cassandra Koutalidis, Ed Schmitt (Keep Melrose Beautiful, guest)**Presiding:** David Bliss**Secretary:** Doug Dick (acting)

Approve November 18 meeting minutes: Motion to accept meeting minutes (Gary). Seconded (Doug). Discussion - No changes, Motion approved.

Shaws Parking Lot Improvement collaboration with Keep Melrose Beautiful (Ed Schmitt guest)

Keep Melrose Beautiful is investigating improvements to the Shaw's Parking lot (mainly beautification) and at the encouragement of the Mayor's office is partnering with the city. A broader concept being discussed with the Ped/Bike committee is to make it a community engagement area (a hot spot) as much as possible. Some initial ideas include:

- Possibly closing Essex Street entrance and making it a park, or reorganizing the parking to be more efficient, adding bike racks.
- Possibly closing Main Street on Friday evenings (between Essex and the YMCA).
- MEC's involvement might be to add solar panels to the parking lot (putting overhead wires underground), adding other efficient lighting in what could be more of a community gathering space as well as current use of parking. Possible remediation of heat island effect. MEC could re-engage with businesses downtown to put solar on their roofs and for energy efficiency.
- First steps might be to engage with the community to find out what is desired/needed from this public space.

Potential collaborators include:

- City of Melrose (DPW has been a collaborator)
- Keep Melrose Beautiful Committee
- Melrose Ped/Bike Committee
- Melrose Historical Society
- Melrose Energy Commission (to be discussed by MEC)

Next steps/process:

- Initially looking for input and ideas from MEC for a next meeting with the mayor. MEC should provide ideas by end of February.
- Ideas should be provided to Ed Schmitt at eswood7@comcast.net

MassEnergize Update (Gary)

Update – MEC, Zero Waste and the Ped/Bike committees will need to be the primary developers of content for the website. Gary contacted these groups and all are interested in providing that content.

Funding: The initial \$2,000 startup fee will be funded by the city and yearly \$750 fee will need to be provided by MEC from its yearly budget. Review of the terms and conditions are being conducted by the city solicitor. Once the website is approved, MEC will need to have volunteers to build the initial website (in the Mass Energize template) and other volunteers to provide maintenance to and add content monthly.

Sustainability Manager Update (Martha)

- Net Zero Action Plan is completed, with input from Ben Butterworth, Craig Foley and Charlie Harak incorporated. MEC needs to make a presentation to the Planning Board and the City Council (neither group needs to approve it but they need to understand the plan).
- National Grid Community First application submitted to fund an Energy Coach for outreach promoting energy efficiency/renewables in Melrose which will be key to implementing the NetZero Action Plan.
- Police Chief has received the all electric Ford Mustang MachE to replace his gas vehicle. The department is hoping to add another.
- New library project is planning to be an all-electric building with VRF and rooftop solar. EUI 30 is goal (EUI is currently 45 with a natural gas). The only natural gas will be associated with the emergency generator (for resilience reasons). Some of the challenges related to the EUI 30 goal is the envelope of the existing building and the historic book room.
- MOU with Homeworks is from 2016 and doesn't reflect the current energy efficiency and net zero community goals. It may be time to issue a new RFP for current energy efficiency goals and the new incentives being developed. A MEC subcommittee should be developed to prepare an RFP in February and March. There are examples of this type of RFP's from other communities. Potential volunteers to assist Martha: Lori, Lisa and Ellen.

Melrose Community Power

- OptUp: Lily the new City communications Coordinator and Daria from Good Energy are working together to help people understand the program and process for Opting up to 100% renewable energy
- 240 people in Opted Up to 100% renewable by the end of December.

Utility Pole Mounted EV Chargers

- Martha said that National Grid is going to include a bill insert to promote the chargers.
- News of the chargers has been picked up by a YouTuber and their video has over 35,000 views
- Martha suggested that MEC produce a video to promote the chargers.

Newspaper Articles (Dave)

- MEC is still investigating writing short articles (like the Zero Waste Committee) to include in the local newspapers (Melrose Weekly). Gary spoke with Zero Waste and they support the idea of MEC and other organizations doing sustainability related articles.
- Dave is willing to coordinate and will also work on a short article. Cassandra is also interested writing short stories.
- The weekly article could be called "Climate Corner" and besides short stories around energy, climate, and renewables it could be tips, interviews, etc.

- MEC Members are encouraged to submit short blurbs focused on energy to David.

Social Media (Ian)

- Ian will be working on sending out social media posts on Twitter and Facebook
- Possibly using some of MEC's budget to buy ads in Facebook to increase our reach related to MEC projects and initiatives.

Monthly presentations at MEC Meetings

- Dave followed up on a suggestion that MEC return to offering occasional presentations related to energy, energy efficiency, renewables, climate, etc that are a part of regular MEC meetings that would be informative to both MEC members and the community. This could be restarted once we return to in person meetings but could also be part of virtual meetings.
- Some ideas:
 - Mass Save presentation (how to sign up, available incentives, etc.) Lori noted that National Grid will be finalizing the 3 year plan for Mass Save soon so this information could be part of the presentation.
 - Energy efficiency measures for historic buildings
 - Demonstration with infrared cameras to show how and where buildings can leak energy.

Memorial Hall Renovations: (David and Ellen)

- The project scope has been drastically changed due to cost of construction and some critical basic building needs. Much of the work related to energy efficiency and potential new roofing and rooftop solar will likely be postponed.
- Ellen suggested that a masterplan should probably be developed so that both near and long term renovation needs be documented.
- It is hoped that there might be smaller energy efficiency projects that National Grid might help fund

Northeast Metro Tech Vocational High School (NEMT): (Martha)

- New building for Metro Tech was approved. Funding is by local communities and MSBA for \$317m school.
- The process is at the schematic design level, unfortunately, the building is currently designed to be heated by gas (MSBA only requires LEED Silver); there has been reluctance by the building committee to make the building all electric.
- The Wakefield Municipal Power and Light Department has pushed for electrification of the space heating system, rooftop solar, battery storage and EV chargers. Martha is working with Melrose and other NEMT communities to encourage the building committee to work towards Net Zero or at least an all electric building.
- Martha will keep MEC informed about opportunities to participate in the design process.
- A question was asked, who is on the building committee? (Ward Hamilton in the Melrose member. The full committee listing is here: <https://northeastbuildingproject.com/building-committee/>)

Melrose Housing Plan - David submitted comments on line suggesting Net Zero, Deep Energy Retrofits.

Net Zero Code Updates - Still waiting for DOER so updates will likely be delayed to the end of 2022.

Next Meeting Topics to Include:

Vehicle Survey Results (Susan Murphy and Martha Grover)

- Survey results will be presented at the February Meeting.

Budget issues:

- New website options (Ian will bring options forward).

Adjourned at 8:45pm (est.) – Next Meeting Thursday February 24th @ 7:00 pm