

Green Marblehead Committee/Net Zero Planning Committee Minutes

Approved as amended at 5/16/22 meeting

April 7, 2022

Present: Brooks Winner, MAPC, Becky Curran Cutting, Alexa Singer, Joe Kowalik, Andrew Petty, John Livermore, Mike Hull, Eileen Mathieu;

Present: community members, Mimi Hollister, Louise Yarmoff, Elaine Leahy, Lynn Nadeau

Updates:

Becky Curran Cutting: Coastal Zone Management/Resiliency webinar is on Community Pages of Town Website,

Brooks Winner: planning a follow up conversation with MMWEC about on-bill financing mechanism for electrification of homes

Solar on Municipal Building roofs:

Andrew Petty: question about what constitutes a solar ready roof, has been looking into this for Transfer Station building and was told that ballasted solar arrays would weigh too much for an older structure. He asked Joe K about the plans for Marblehead High School's roof renovation, which is stated to include plans for the roof to be "solar ready" after the renovation is completed, and which is currently part of a package going before the Town at Town Meeting. He asked what type of solar array attachment will be implemented at the High School, where it is not new construction.

Joe K responded that the architect at the Brown School (which was just constructed), had recommended the ballasted solar arrangement so that no leaks would be caused in the roof. The Brown School roof was built to bear the weight of ballasted solar arrays.

Andrew suggested that we needed to get the Building inspector involved in the plans for the High School roof reconstruction.

Joe K stated that MMLD now has a tab on their website called "Powerful News" which has information on the MMLD's power portfolio and the Go Green rate.

Eileen asked when we were going to meet with the other towns in our grant group, and stated that she had heard that Ipswich was doing creative financing for getting homes electrified and would like to learn more. Brooks said that Julie, from MAPC, is working on it and we should have a regional meeting soon.

Committee resumed review of Marblehead Net Zero Roadmap Action List spreadsheet:

#49: EV car sharing: high:

priority private models, not Town

#52: Transit oriented development: high

Becky said that the town is already obliged to do planning with this in mind to be part of MBTA and participate in state grants, it is a “matter of right”, Marblehead must plan to have any new housing within ½ mile of bus line be multifamily. It was suggested that we add that any new housing in this zone be net zero; Becky said this would be a good idea but would require zoning changes, so we should recommend zoning changes. She referred to MBTA Community Zoning Chapter 40A

#53 Explore and test e-bike rental system: medium

Becky said that the previous attempts at “Blue Bike” were not successful and e-bikes are cost prohibitive; even e-scooters are expensive, having people return them to a more central site was difficult

#54 Advocate for community and regional transit needs: High

Becky said that the census data are available and that the average Marblehead resident spends 38 minute commuting . We discussed the “Skipper” subsidized, flexible transportation model that Salem uses, people can call it when needed, it is like a low cost Uber, Lexington has the “Lexspress”. Concept: to help people get the “last mile” after they take the train or bus for their commute, or to get to the train or bus especially since there are not cross city lines that run from Salem to Marblehead, or Marblehead to Swampscott train station.

#55 Develop a bike and pedestrian plan: medium:

Becky emphasized that this had to be done in concert with complete streets and there is an RPF using local rapid recovery funding. Earmarks in the state budget have given money to begin Swampscott to Seaview Ave improvements of the rail-trail, will be covered with stone dust/ deconstructed granite. Also there is a master plan for Marblehead under Complete Streets, currently working on crossings.

#56 Complete Streets Policy: not necessary:

We already have a plan and it has been implemented, the Town Planner applies every other year to Mass DOT to get more funding for each next stage, there are 27 items to be accomplished, according to Becky

#57 Climate Smart Parking Policy: medium

Discussion re requiring new parking lots as part of any development be fitted with 25% spots for EV chargers. Then discussed zoning rules that there be less parking in certain zones to allow for biking. EVIP funds 60% cost of EV chargers. Discussed how to require of condo associations: zoning changes? Becky said we can't regulate private property, when we discussed how to get larger parking lots owned by private entities like churches and clubs, to add EV chargers. She suggested that we encourage private entities to install EV chargers "for their customers" and try incentives, assisting private owners, educating them about the changes coming in EV trends.

#58 Expand Public EV Charging stations: High

See previous discussion. Need to expand existing Town charging sites

#59 Advocate/implement utility rate design changes: High

Overlaps with #60, #62, #65

Long discussion: current meters are not able to differentiate which device is using electricity at what time, which would allow you to charge your EV at night and at a lower rate. Currently, one has to install a separate meter for your EV car charger and then the utility can charge you a lower rate. Time of use rates discussed, continued concerns that lower income folks who need to use electricity at peak times will be penalized, Joe K said there is no low rate for lower income ratepayers allowed under Mass Municipal Light Department laws. Andrew is concerned about the unintended effect of Time of Use rates. Demand management was discussed, with its potential pitfalls. Joe explained the concept that a base rate, which should reflect the fixed costs of transmitting electricity and maintaining the system, should be higher and the use rate will be lower. Andrew raised the concern that low income housing may be less energy efficient, not insulated, often renters, with no control over it their landlord, would be charged more. Brooks advised that in the worst case, 70% of income is spent on electric bill, and for low income people that is too high. Rate design changes needs to take this into consideration

#61: remove this, Becky says this will be accomplished by Complete Streets

#62 Town Bus Subsidy (MBTA): high:

Discussion that especially to have youth passes and senior passes might reduce car use

#63 Disincentives to parking: Change to "do a parking study": medium

Study: charging for parking, inventory of vehicles/ number of spaces used, don't implement right away, look at it from all sides, merchants want business and want people to come to their stores, and having convenient parking plays a role

#64 No idling: High

Equally important: we need system-wide busing for all kids; which would avoid lines at drop off and pick up. Bring schools into this, roads are not walkable in many parts of town, and with snow, sidewalks become impossible /impassable. Busing will reduce congestion, make parents feel safer allowing their children to ride bikes or walk to school. Busing should include a paid model and subsidized model for lower income but it should be mandatory. Beware of "You should have your kid ride a bike or walk to school" thinking, because of structure of this town, old, narrow streets, no sidewalks.

In short run, while getting busing up and running: Include children in education, to educate parents not to idle during pick up

Becky recommended changing ALL permitting through the planning board to include clauses to restrict and prevent idling during construction by Contractors.

#65 Infrastructure to increase the number of EV charging stations: Medium

See #63, need parking study: clarify on street, parking lots, state grants, difficulty that EV parking spots have restrictions and essentially take away an existing parking space from an IC car

#66 Reduce Boat Emissions: medium

put in report/Net Zero plan as a goal to acquire the following data: emissions data on boat engines, numbers of boats, numbers of engines, horsepower, gas or diesel, and have this item updated by 2023. This will require cooperation of the Harbormaster and the Tax Collector (who has the excise tax data on boat), and information from the entities selling fuel in Marblehead Harbor, Boston Yacht Club and ? Marblehead Transportation Company or Marblehead Trading. However, in the interim, since there is a Harbor Plan Committee, this document and anyone working on both (Town Planner, Sustainable) need to actively represent to the Harbor Committee that charging infrastructure for electric boat engines URGENTLY needs to be included in the 10 year Harbor Plan they are developing. How could the town outreach? Survey? to get info on how often boat owners use their boats, where they fill up, how often they run their engines, hours run, etc.

#67 excise tax changes: remove

#68 see #55/#56

#69 EV Charging Site Guidance: ? rating

Discussion that this could mean that site plan review by Planning Board be mandated to include EV charging be included for approval, even if just to be sure that new construction or additions are wired for EV chargers.

#70 Create data base of EV's: High:

Recommend this to track adoption of EVs and by neighborhood:

- a) necessary for MMLD to have necessary infrastructure ready; this would include new software and GIS, strongly recommend that that town develop this software, might include at time of issuance of building permit that that info be collected, when installing an EV charger.
- b) Needed to judge rate of adoption and how our (GMC/Net Zero) education efforts are going to get people to transition from IC engine vehicles to EV's.
- c) Brooks suggested looking at Net Zero Playbook webinar where Martha Grover of Melrose presented how they were doing on EV adoption

Next meeting April 13 at 4 PM

Respectfully submitted by Eileen Mathieu

April 13, 11 AM