

# Waltham Energy Action Committee Meeting Minutes

## December 12, 2014

### Members Present:

Kathy Randel, Eileen Zubrowski, Melissa Downes, Amy Gortler, Jacob Miller, Beth MacBlane

### Others Present:

Bob Ferrone

Jillian Dimedio

Leo Keightley

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## Agenda

**Ms. Randel called the meeting to order at 7PM.**

### Welcome

### November Minutes – Kathy

There were text recommendations.. with these changes, the minutes were approved unanimously.

### Report Back on Our Research:

- **Healthy Waltham – Grace**

No discussion.

- **Watch CDC – Jillian**

Jillian talked to a staff member at WATCH CDC. Two areas of WEAC/WATCH overlap were identified: barnraising and basic community organizing. Regarding the latter, WATCH has a Community Organizing page on their Website with details of a rental Voucher Program which lists groups endorsing the program. WEAC may want to consider similar pages for its programs. Kathy noted that one WATCH organizer voiced interest in solar and Daria Gere, WATCH's Executive Director, is interested in possible collaboration with WEAC.

- **Schools – Jessica**

- Kathy: Jessica Balacios checked out Bentley University and its “Office of Sustainability.” The potential UMass Waltham Urban Farming Center (still in planning) was discussed. Bob noted that UMass Boston has a sustainability center in Boston and may be worth talking to regarding possibilities for the Waltham Center.

Jessica will be asked to look further into Bentley's Office of Sustainability and a “Sustainability Plan” it has had for the past few years.

- Another area of investigation will be Waltham Public Schools.
- Beth MacBlane received a note from a Brandeis student interested in starting a “sustainability club.” Beth will look into background and skills being considered for this club.

- **Waltham Bicycle Advocacy Group – Mel and Eileen**

(Note regarding support from City Councilors: Discussion noted that all councilors are environmentally concerned and should be considered environmental allies.) The Waltham Bicycle Advisory Committee (WBAC) is considering creation of a plan or program for the future of cycling in Waltham.

- It is considering outreach into potential supporting organizations, such as The 128 Council and projects such as (and in particular) the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT). MAPC estimates a \$5,371,000 cost for the Waltham section and there is no current funding.

- Another project is to develop a map showing bicycle-safe routes  
Help would be sought from MAPC.
  - Another area of effort is a social media push.  
[waltham-bikes@googlegroups.com](mailto:waltham-bikes@googlegroups.com) currently exists (invitation may be required).
  - WBAC is considering possible areas of collaboration w/ WEAC and other groups.  
WEAC could identify areas of collaboration on its new energy plan.
  - Give feedback to the Planning Dept. on implementation of sharrows.
  - Conduct safe biking classes (spring '15).
- **Mothers Out Front – Amy**  
Amy attended a rally of about 250 people.  
3 Waltham people are starting a Waltham (Mothers Out Front) team.  
Amy described Mothers Out Front members as parents/caregivers focusing on political action (pressure on officials) to favor climate action.  
Kathy asked how we can get notices of events. Amy said there is a website and possible listserve having Mothers Out Front information. Amy noted this is another organization for WEAC to ally with.
  - **Planning Department Open Space Plan – Kathy**  
Kathy suggested the way the plan is organized could be a possible model for WEAC's plan.  
Kathy reviewed the 4 main goals as listed in the Open Space Plan, and mentioned 2 possible areas of overlap with WEAC:  
Preservation of open space (and Open Space Plan goal) has some environmental plus.  
Possibly we could suggest energy efficient lighting for athletic facilities and other lighting uses.
  - **Waltham Land Trust and Watch CDC – Jim (via email)**  
Jim talked to Sonja Wadman (WLT Program Director) who said she would be interested in talking to us about collaboration. Jim has not yet talked with Nadene Stein (WLT President). Jim thinks we should first develop energy plan and then see where overlap is.
  - **Energy Action Plans from other cities - Jacob**
    - Based on reading other plans, Jacob suggested WEAC filter possible Waltham Projects to things we can address (not things other organizations would better address): public transportation and residential and commercial properties (the sum of which is so much larger than just municipal transportation and properties). To make a plan comprehensive, do we want to add factors (like recycling and local food sourcing) that are not directly measured in energy use?
    - Amy noted that compared to the Medway report (70% emissions residential), “Jake’s Waltham Report” has a much lower residential percentage. Is that because Waltham is much more commercial? Possibly apartments are included.
    - Bob suggested we look at the Newton report (Waltham's report is based on ICLE software and the Newton report is more custom made for Newton).
    - Eileen asked if we are going to work on getting City government support or work on a plan and then look for City support (for a City sustainability office for example). There was some discussion of this.
    - Beth suggested that MAPC could help with this plan but they would require payment. She will contact MAPC to see what assistance is available for what cost.

### **Discussion of and volunteering for next steps – Kathy**

Between now and January: Ideas?

- Come to the January meeting with goals for brainstorming.

- Talk to contacts from other communities to get an overview of how to assemble a plan.
- Continue outreach to other groups.
- Beth will contact MAPC.
- Efforts noted elsewhere in these notes.
- Mel said she'd put out a charge for to do tasks for next meeting independent of minutes.

### **Additional items**

Articles Beth sent out:

- Encouraging attendance to Walsh initiative (summit)  
Beth noted we're not a member of that group.
- Reach out to zero waste for office space:  
Kathy is hesitant, being unsure what we would ask for and what we could accept.  
Beth asked if WEAC has a list of environmentally-focused businesses. Kathy and Mel said yes, at least one, and Eileen mentioned her intern's green business survey.
- Mass rebates for efficient heating systems.  
Some concerns about 2 things mentioned. 1) Pellet supply may be short. Jillian thinks this has been addressed. Jillian said all kinds of biomass go into pellets. Jillian will look into statistics. 2) Heat pumps: Leo questioned some of the implied benefits. Kathy suggested we advise people to look carefully into trade-offs.

### **Closing**

[Next Meeting: January 08, 2015 in the Auditorium at Govt. Center \(119 School St.\).](#)

The committee adjourned at 9:00 PM.