

Harwich Energy and Climate Action Committee Minutes

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Small Meeting Room, Harwich Town Hall

Present: Valerie Bell	Chairperson
Jacqueline Pentz-Greene	Vice-Chairperson
Charlie Czech	Member, Secretary
Copy: Mark Kelleher	Select Board Liaison

- Meeting begun at 3:00 PM
- No members of the public were present
- June minutes were approved
- The Climate Leader Program is still being reviewed by the Select Board. The 33-page roadmap prepared by the Town of Truro, MA has been provided to the Select Board for review. The town of Truro did not incur any cost to prepare the decarbonization roadmap or become a Climate Leader. The town of Truro applied for technical assistance to DOER to provide the roadmap. The committee discussed how we might move forward on this issue.
 - Plan to go back to the Select Board to find out if the info provided by Lisa Sullivan and the Truro roadmap have modified their opinion of whether the town should proceed with the Climate Leader Program
 - Get the community educated about the Climate Leader Program by explaining in info sessions:
 - Why we want to do this
 - Benefits in grants
 - Planet weather with major 1000 yr storms, fires and lightning strikes occurring almost daily
 - <https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/climate-action-plan/municipal-climate-action-toolkit/> After clicking on the link page down to Community and click on Public Awareness of Climate Change
- The committee discussed the Climate roadmap prepared by the town of Truro:
 - How could we develop a similar roadmap for Harwich?
 - Get a copy to Sean Libby and find out if he is the right person to provide info on the various buildings to summarize what we have and what we have done so far and what we would need to do to reduce the fossil fuels by 2050 per the Climate Leader goals
 - Ask the Building Inspector to come to one of our meetings to help develop a plan that small contractors can easily understand and perhaps even recommend local HERS experts which the small contractors can use to determine HERS rating before and after a contract. Also to help them understand they can still install natural gas appliance as long as they also furnish electrical connections so that the owner may easily switch to electric at a later date.
 - Get the town to vote on Climate Leader Program at town meeting and then ask for technical assistance from DOER to provide the roadmap.
- Val will contact the acting Town Administrator, Meggan Eldredge to see if she has continued the work to provide EV charging stations and whether she is aware of the Climate Leader Program and the grants associated with it.
- The charter commission is requesting input from various committees so that our ideas on Energy and Climate Action may be incorporated into the charter revisions. Jacqueline suggested we add this to our minutes:

- There is a disconnect between advisory bodies (us, HEC) and the decision-making authority (the BOS) we are meant to support. The breakdown in communication described creates exactly the kind of "ineffective silo" situation that undermines the entire purpose of having advisory committees.
- A few thoughts on potential solutions:
- **Structural Communication Improvements:**
- Regular written briefings or executive summaries that go directly to all BOS members, not just the liaison
- Quarterly joint sessions where committee chairs present key initiatives and recommendations
- Digital dashboards or shared platforms where committee work is visible and accessible to BOS members
- **Redefining the Liaison Role:** If the current liaison can't attend meetings, perhaps the role needs restructuring - maybe rotating liaisons, virtual participation options, or having liaisons receive detailed meeting summaries with specific action items that require BOS input.
- **Process Integration:** The Climate Leader proposal obstacles suggests that major committee initiatives need BOS input much earlier in the development process, not just at the final recommendation stage.
- There will be no August meeting. Next meeting in September. No date was set at this time.
- Meeting adjourned at approx. 3:45 PM