



GREEN ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

TUESDAY, December 12, 2023 - 6:00 pm

Acton Memorial Library - Conference Room

HYBRID MEETING

GAB Members Present: Cameren Cousins, Mary Smith, Partha Krishnan, Peter Berry

GAB Members Virtual: Dennis Loria, Eric Hudson

Town Staff Present: Andrea Becerra, Lauren West

Town Staff Virtual: Kate Crosby

Guests Present: Jeff Vandegrift, Paul Kampas, Kurt Marden

Guests Virtual: Dave B, Jacqueline Marden

Mary calls the meeting to order at 6:05pm and reads the hybrid meeting statement. Attendees are advised that the meeting is being recorded.

I. Business

1. Resident Concerns
 - None
2. GAB updates
 - None
3. Sustainability Updates
 - None
4. Battery Storage
 - Jeff Vandegrift abutter to Boardwalk campus/school shares noise concerns of proposed the battery project.
 - Peter Berry created a letter in support of the solar project while addressing concerns that have come up in past GAB meetings.
 - Mary confirms the Gates and Douglas schools are included in the Boardwalk campus.
 - Cameren has some edits and questions regarding the letter:
 - Bottom of first page, last paragraph, “Triple Net Zero carbon emission design” should be changed to Triple Net Zero (energy waste & water) design, to clarify.
 - Second page, asks Peter to define “imposed conditions”.
 - Peter explains that conditions are added to address any safety or design concerns in plans.
 - Peter proposes the GAB support the letter.
 - Resident Dave asks if there were other pieces of technology assessed for the project.

- Shares concern that lithium batteries are outdated.
- Peter explains school building committee was overseeing design, school committee decided how array was designed & installed.
- Kate Crosby explains more details of the process of selecting Nexamp, noting that the battery is not yet installed, but it is permitted.
- Peter Berry explains the GAB's responsibility is to propose actions to reduce GHG emissions in Acton. The board of health will be considering the safety impacts of this project.
- Jeff asks if we can reduce the capacity at which the battery runs
- Kurt Marden asks a question regarding the lithium ion battery storage system (BESS) potentially being installed in an environmentally sensitive area (a flood zone). He wanted to know if the GAB members had consulted or worked together with the Conservation Commission regarding this concern and if this would fall under the board's scope.
 - Cameren responds that location is an item the School Board's third-party committee will be looking at. The GAB does not have the answers but looks forward to see the relevant report when it comes out.
 - Peter emphasizes that the Conservation Department and Board of Health must follow State law and meet legal criteria to grant permits, and have already granted an order of conditions including a floodplain review for this project. Kate is unsure when the order was granted. Kate checked with the design team of the project who confirmed that the battery storage is not located in the floodplain.
 - Kurt Marden expresses concern that the conceptual design has not been reviewed by a licensed civil engineer.
- Dennis makes a motion to approve the letter as of 12/12 with one change on behalf of GAB.
 - Cameren seconds the motion
 - Mary, Cameren, Partha, and Dennis vote in favor. The motion carries.

5. Census Mailer

- Andrea explains that a few communities have sent surveys with their Census forms requesting information on residential heating / cooling systems.
 - Due to lack of data on which systems residents have.
 - Residents do not always pull permits to change systems, making it hard to track.
- Cameren asks if residents in apartments will be captured in this survey
 - Andrea suggests addresses returned with the survey can identify multifamily and single-family buildings, but not necessarily renters vs owners.
- The Board discusses how to briefly identify primary and secondary heating systems.
 - The Board also discusses defining different electric heating and cooling systems. Andrea makes notes to edit the survey to be more specific.

- Andrea will circulate the edited version and request comments from the GAB.

6. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

- Andrea explains that the Town last completed a Greenhouse Gas inventory in 2019 for the year 2017.
- Lauren explains the 2022 inventory was completed using the ICLEI Greenhouse Gas Inventory Tool, but an inventory using the MAPC tool is available in the report's appendix.
- Peter Berry asks if there is an explanation for the decrease in the transportation emissions. Lauren refers to the appendix where more information on the data is available.
- Cameren asks if the Greenhouse Gas Inventory will be accounting for open space and carbon sequestration. She notes this was a conversation held around the 2017 inventory.
 - The Board discusses documenting estimated carbon sequestration from vegetation and tracking development of land.
- Andrea adds that the scope of the GAB continues to come up in discussion. She proposes the Board revisit its charter and discuss its scope of work.
- Eric Hudson asks if transfer station user data was extrapolated across the remaining community members who use a private hauler.
 - Lauren explains this method was not used due to the Transfer Station using a Pay as You Throw program. This program which is not common in private haulers incentivizes users to create much less waste. This distinction would skew the data, so state averages were used to represent Acton residents not using the Transfer Station.

7. Gas Powered Leaf Blower Ordinance

- Resident Paul Kampas has shared information with the GAB. This information has also been presented to Select Board twice. He has also presented to the Board of Health.
- Paul presents additional information regarding the proposed Gas-Powered Leaf Blower ordinance; covering leaf plows, other community ordinances, and air pollution.
- Mary expresses concern over the ban deadline and its potential economic impact for businesses and suggests a 2028 deadline.
 - Paul replies with economic information on the cost of operating electric leaf blowers.
- Eric Hudson comments that the Green Advisory Board would likely support this bill completely if not for possible impact on GLB operators. He believes two years is a reasonable amount of time to allow businesses to convert to electric. He notes that the performance of and transition to electric equipment can be disadvantages.

- Dennis Loria expresses concern over deadline. He suggests that the financial cost of operating many batteries throughout a day will be high. He expresses favor over extended deadlines.

8. Minutes

- Cameren makes a motion to approve minutes from the July, September, and October 2023 meetings.
 - Eric Hudson seconds the motion
 - Mary, Cameren, Eric, and Partha vote in favor. The motion carries.

9. Andrea provides updates for upcoming meeting dates and locations.

- January GAB meeting will be held in Town Hall room #204.
- February meeting will be virtual only.
- March – December, meetings will be held in the Library Conference Room.

At 7:46 Cameren makes a motion to close the meeting. Partha seconds the motion. Mary, Cameren, Eric, and Partha vote in favor; meeting adjourned.