



## GREEN ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, February 11, 2025 - 6:00 pm

\*HYBRID MEETING\*

**GAB Members Present:** Mary Smith, Cameren Cousins, Peter Berry

**GAB Members Virtual:** Partha Krishnan

**Guests Virtual:** Jim Snyder-Grant

**Guests Present:** Kate Crosby

**Town Staff Present:** Lauren West

Mary calls the meeting to order at 6:00pm and reads the hybrid meeting statement. Attendees are advised that the meeting is being recorded.

### **Business**

#### **1. Resident Concerns**

- None

#### **2. ABRSD Update**

- Kate Crosby joins from the school district to provide an update.
- She reports the Boardwalk school is operating well. The Energy Use Intensity Score (EUI) was estimated at 23.1 but came in 3 points below (just above 20). The occupancy has been slightly lower than modeled due to after-hours use being lower than expected (gyms, etc.). Reflects a weather normalized score. She offers to organize a tour for the GAB.
  - Mary asks about cost savings. Kate explains because the building is so tight and efficient, fuel costs were anticipated to be the same as a gas system despite electric being more expensive. Coefficient of Performance (COP) is much higher in geothermal systems than fossil fuel systems.
  - Rooftop solar, solar canopy, and battery projects have been paused. These were not included in the lifecycle costs of geothermal system. Nexamp is still engaged with Fire Dept. & Board of Health. Currently buying electricity from grid, not 100% green electricity at this point.
  - Cameren asks about combining the Town and ABRSD electricity contracts. Kate considers the possibility and mentions the School District has committed

to decarbonizing 100% by 2050. Students are working on decarbonization roadmap and a stronger commitment as well.

- The ABRSD is anticipating a \$2.75 million payout for the Boardwalk campus, but things are currently uncertain with IRA. Also awarded \$200,000 for school buses. \$1.4 mil from State for buses is secure and should be available within the next year.
- Cameren asks for slides or a report on Boardwalk performance to be shared. Mary suggests it could be included in the school's annual report. Kate will send existing slides.
- Update on Green Communities
  - The Town and ABRSD typically apply for up to \$250,000 through the DOER's Green Communities Competitive Grant program twice each year. There is an option to apply for one \$500,000 project but then you are unable to apply for the next two years. The State has suggested that these funds may not be available once Acton becomes a Climate Leader Community, which would make them eligible for \$1 million.
  - The ABRSD needs to electrify the high school soon due to aging equipment. They hope to apply for funds to replace rooftop units at the Parker Damon building and High School with electric units.
  - Peter asks about the status of the Town Hall electrification project. Lauren confirms that the Town has hired project managers and a design team for the project. They are waiting on the design team's proposals for air source heat pump and ground source heat pump systems before including a recommendation for the capital request in May's Town meeting.

### **3. GAB Updates**

#### GAB 2024 Annual Report

- Each year an annual report is included in Town Meeting materials summarizing progress of Boards and Committees. Lauren will create an updated draft and send it out to GAB members. She will include any comments into the final report.
- Cameren suggests dividing actions clearly between the GAB and Sustainability Office sections.
- Peter suggests including total grant funds received through the Green Communities program and total grants received by the Sustainability Office.
- Include updates to Sustainability Policy and new electric contract.
- Mention updated GAB charge.

### **4. Sustainability Updates**

#### Greening the Red House

- The grant has been closed out, everything has been purchased. The Sustainability Office used initial grant funds on the landscaping work and received additional funds from MAPC to get other elements such as accessible picnic tables, accessible raised garden beds, and community art project supplies.
- Received Historic District approval for required items. Also applied for CPC funds for the patio and additional community elements.
- There has been some discussion around expanding native plants and climate resilience education across the Town Hall campus by the Asa Parlin and the Acton Memorial Library.
- Cameren suggests having goats do meadow maintenance and mentions farm in Westford that offers goat snuggling time. Kate mentions a group called Goat Busters.

## 5. DPW Building Committee Public Meeting

- Mary recaps the meeting on the plans for the new DPW building she was surprised by the payback periods suggested. Current plans show an all-electric building would be more expensive than alternatives.
- Mary would like to send a letter to the committee supporting an all-electric system. The GAB could reference the Fossil Fuel Free bylaw and the community's support for climate action.
- Mary will send Lauren the presentation. Lauren can share it with the GAB and ask for questions.
- GAB members review materials Mary brought from the meeting and are surprised by the lifecycle cost analysis.
- Lauren to draft letter of support with Mary. Will vote at next GAB meeting.
- Could ask someone from the Green Engineer to attend a GAB meeting and answer questions.
- Cameren and Kate will draft questions on the presentation to be shared with the DPW design vendor.

## 6. Approve Minutes: October, November, and December 2024

- Cameren makes a motion to accept the minutes, Partha Seconds. The motion passes by a unanimous vote.

Cameren makes a motion to close the meeting at 7:19. Partha seconds the motion. By a unanimous roll call vote; meeting adjourned.