

POLICY ENCOURAGING BUILDING WITH CLEAN ENERGY (approved 10 Jan 2022)

Whereas, the Select Board and the Town have demonstrated strong interest in robust action to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, including discouraging use of greenhouse-gas-emitting fossil fuels in buildings; and

Whereas, we have seen the Town's resolve in the near-unanimous votes on the Climate Emergency Declaration of 2020, and the Regulating Fossil Fuel Infrastructure in Buildings bylaw and Home Rule Petition of 2021; and

Whereas, Acton's Comprehensive Community Plan (Acton 2020) calls on the Town to “reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses” (Objective 2.3), and “reduce energy use in new and renovated buildings” (Strategy 2.3.2), and calls for a “joint community and town effort to use less fossil fuels” (Action Item 2.3.6.4); and

Whereas, in many cases a new building or major rehabilitation project does not appear before the Select Board, or appears too late in the process to allow any impact on energy system choices;

Therefore, to facilitate the Town's conversion to clean energy technology, the Select Board adopts the following as policy.

- The Town Manager will work with appropriate staff, consultants, boards, and committees to ensure that project developers and owners are informed, as early as possible in the development process, of the Town's preference for no fossil fuel use.
- The Town will find and publicize access to comparative informational resources that will help project developers and owners learn about the financial and environmental aspects of building without fossil-fueled technology for heating, cooling, and appliances.
- The Select Board will communicate with permit-granting and advisory boards and committees that work with developers about this policy, to encourage them to inquire, of any project proponent bringing forth a project that uses fossil fuels, whether they have considered alternatives. If they choose fossil fuels, ask if they can share their reasons, so that we can understand more about their consideration of alternatives.

The information provided to developers and owners shall be adjusted to accommodate future changes to bylaws and in resource information, including the Massachusetts Legislature's permission to implement Acton's Home Rule Petition bylaw, “Regulating Fossil Fuel Infrastructure in Buildings,” and any future such bylaws.