



Watertown City Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

Committee Report Climate and Energy January 18, 2024

The Climate and Energy committee convened in Council Chambers on January 18th at 5:30pm. The purpose of the meeting was to hear updates on the progress of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) as well as hear a presentation on Building Emissions Reduction Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) Present at the meeting where; Tony Palomba; chair, Caroline Bays; vice chair, John Airasian; secretary. Also in the room were Councilor Vinnie Piccirilli, Doug Newton; Policy Analyst, Laurel Schwab; Senior Environmental Planner, Syllas Fyler; Energy Manager, Katie Swan; Environmental Planner, Marcia Ciro, Susan Falkoff, Ernesta Krackiewicz, Brian Hebeisen, Jolly Taggart, Pat Rathbone. Online attendees were Councilor Lisa Feltner, Anya Pforzheimer; Recycling and Sustainability Coordinator, Anita Dobbs, Lise Paul, Mary Rose, Jeanne Trubek and Libby Shaw.

Laurel and Silas began the presentation on implementation progress (see attachment A for detailed information on CAP as well as topics listed below). There has been steady progress made a year and a half since the CAP has passed and there will be a more rigorous review on a 5-year basis. Some highlights and goals of the recent progress of CAP are as follows:

- Year 1, 32 of 34 implementation goals are underway with 3 already completed.
- Year 2, 12 of 28 are underway. Several of these will be moved to year 3.
- A full tracking spreadsheet will be made publicly available.
- WE3C has formed working groups to further education.

Building and Energy updates

- Energy Advocate has left, and that position is once again open.
- Investigating solar panels at Watertown middle school.
- Currently looking at City Hall, Fire Dept and Library as a Municipal Campus for heating and cooling systems.

Transportation

- Working with MBTA to include bike/ped in their projects.
- Expanding bikes shares
- Developing RFP with developers to have charging stations in private lots.
- Coolidge Ave bike/ped path construction is underway.

Natural Resources

- Draft Tree ordinance is still under review.
- 26 tree trenches have been installed.
- Micro forest demonstration project is hopefully on target for Fall 2024.

Solid Waste and Recycling (presented by Anya)

- Trash and Recycling ordinance will be coming this year.
- May pursue larger composting companies as program grows. No one who enrolled in program has unenrolled.

Some next steps mentioned were, to launch EV charging infrastructure, plan and design micro forest, introduce BERDO and Tree ordinance, continue and expand education and outreach.

There were comments from public expressing gratitude for work done (WCA-TV link below Attachment B) and excitement about the micro forest demonstration.

Councilor Bays asked what portions they might be running behind on. Mrs. Schwab stated it has been hard to keep up in the Building and Energy portion now that the energy advocate has left. Also, infrastructure since it takes a lot of coordination between DPW, water and sewer and larger entities.

Next topic on agenda was a detailed introductory presentation by Silas on BERDO (please see attachment C for all info). For over a year, a working group within the WE3C has been investigating BERDO which is essentially a map to achieve the goal of Watertown's buildings being carbon neutral by 2050. The focus is on "larger" buildings which most define as 20,000 sq feet or more.

Some of the data that BERDO will capture:

- Electric Use
- Gas/Oil/Propane use
- Water use
- EV Chargers
- Thermal Systems

By looking at other communities that have adopted such ordinances, best process, practices and experiences can be integrated into what will work best for Watertown. There are different ways to collect reduction data. Some communities categorize how much reduction is necessary by building use and type. Others have a standard baseline they follow. There will need to be a committee or arbiter for buildings who might have hardships. It was stated that the buildings affected represent only 1% of buildings in Watertown but will create a much larger positive impact on the environment. There were some questions on whether condominium complexes would be included as it was unclear if those are categorized as single buildings or lumped together. Several comments and questions were raised by attendees and watching broadcast and presentations is encouraged for full scope. Councilor Bays made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Councilor Airasian. motion passed 3-0.

Attachment A

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:996b324b-26cf-48b6-8a87-48bb399323ee>

Attachment B

<http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/show/2978?seekto=3443&site=3>

Attachment C

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:0aff52b1-0886-472d-a83b-a2c498eb3723>

Minutes prepared by John M. Airasian

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba,
Chair

Caroline Bays,
Vice Chair

John M. Airasian,
Secretary