



Committee on Climate and Energy

Meeting Dates:

February 12, 2026

February 25, 2026

The Committee convened on Thursday February 12, 2026 at 5:15 pm. Present were Tony Palomba, Chair; Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and Theo Offei, Secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct interviews for the Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee.

Laurel Schaider

Dr. Laurel Schaider is a Senior Scientist in Environmental Chemistry and Engineering at Silent Spring Institute. She studies exposures to PFAS "forever chemicals" from drinking water, diet, and consumer products and how PFAS can affect human health. She works with communities to develop research studies and resources to address their concerns about chemical exposures. Dr. Schaider leads the Massachusetts PFAS and Your Health Study, part of the broader PFAS Multi-Site Study funded by the CDC in impacted communities across the US. She also leads the PFAS-REACH study and co-leads the Community Engagement Core for the University of Rhode Island STEEP Superfund Research Program. She has been interviewed by NPR, The Washington Post, and other major news outlets, and testified in front of a Senate subcommittee last December. Before joining Silent Spring Institute, she was a research associate at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Dr. Schaider earned her master's and PhD in Environmental Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, and a bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering Science from MIT.

She has an extensive background in policy engagement. Amongst those:

- Invited witness for U.S. Senate subcommittee hearing "Examining the Public Health Impacts of PFAS Exposures," December 2024.
- Wrote and contributed to technical written and/or oral comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Mass. Department of Environmental Protection, Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources, and legislative hearings in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, and California. Topics included PFAS health assessments, drinking water standards, PFAS in consumer products, and herbicide use on Cape Cod.
- Presented at legislative briefings at the Mass. State House and met with Senators and Representatives.
- Presented at the Maine PFAS Task Force, October 2019, and Massachusetts PFAS Interagency Task Force, July 2021.

Laurel hasn't worked at the local level before. She was inspired to get involved after federal funds for climate initiatives were defunded. She believes listening and taking initiative are essential to being a great team member.

Action Item

Councilor Bays made a motion seconded by Councilor Offei to appoint Laurel Schaider to the Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee with a term expiring November 15, 2028. The motion passed 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 5.52 PM

The Committee convened on Thursday February 25, 2026 at 6:03 pm. Present were Tony Palomba, Chair; Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and Theo Offei, Secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct interviews for the Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee.

Susan LaDue

Ms. LaDue brings an extensive background in climate and energy work in Watertown. Amongst those: serving as a longstanding member of Watertown Faces Climate Change (WFCC), where she helped analyze the current state of energy use and climate issues and developed recommendations that directly informed the city's Climate and Energy Plan; gaining working knowledge of energy use and carbon emissions from buildings and transportation, the role of the urban tree canopy in carbon capture and cooling, and the financial and practical considerations of sustainable building through her WFCC involvement; engaging directly with developers on sustainable building practices for Watertown projects, working to understand their design and construction constraints rather than taking an adversarial approach; actively advocating for net zero energy construction during the planning, design, and construction of the Hosmer School, attending every School Building Committee meeting during that period and continuing to do so; and serving on the Town Personnel Board in Northborough, MA, where she completed a comprehensive compensation study and implemented changes to the non-union compensation structure in collaboration with the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, and department heads.

Ms. LaDue emphasizes several strengths she would bring to the committee. Amongst those: a balanced, respectful approach to differing viewpoints, including constructive engagement with developers on energy-related issues; prior experience working within municipal governance structures across boards, committees, elected officials, and staff; and a clear understanding of the advisory nature of the committee and its relationship to the Climate and Energy Committee, city staff, and the City Council.

She has indicated eagerness to support the implementation of the Climate and Energy

Plan and to contribute productively to the committee's advisory role.

Action Item

Councilor Bays made a motion seconded by Councilor Offei to appoint Susan LaDue to the Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee with a term expiring November 15, 2028. The motion passed 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6.23 PM

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba,
Chair

Caroline Bays,
Vice Chair

Theophilus Offei
Secretary