

Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee (WE3C) met remotely via Zoom 7:00 pm Monday, June 15, 2026

Attendees

WE3C Members: Ellen Menounos (Co-chair), Wally Cole (Co-chair), Laurel Schaidler, Lauri Murphy

Members Not Present: Jeanne Trubek, Susan LaDue

Non-Members: Laurel Schwab (Sustainability Manager), Silas Fyler (Staff Liaison, Energy Manager), Steve Steadman

Meeting started 7:05 PM with Co-chair_Ellen Menounos presiding with roll call of members present. Quorum of four met.

Approval of May 18th minutes is delayed until next meeting.

Discussion of draft WE3C committee protocols due to the City Manager by July 1st

Discussion Highlights

- **Procedural Compliance:** Wally noted that the committee must now begin every meeting with a roll call vote to comply with new guidance from the clerk's office. The committee is also reviewing its agenda template to ensure full compliance with Open Meeting Law.
- **Membership Updates:** The committee clarified that **Larry Raskin** is an interested citizen but not a standing member. Wally confirmed one committee vacancy, with active recruitment underway, including outreach to **Eco Fest** attendees.
- **Draft Committee Protocols:** The committee reviewed draft protocols based on a template from the **Resident Advisory Committee**. Susan LaDue provided input, and the document remains a work in progress.
- **Meeting Technology:** The committee discussed formalizing the requirement for the staff liaison to ensure all technology, including the **Zoom Room AI companion**, is functional prior to meetings.
- **Clerk Role & Responsibilities:** The group clarified the clerk's responsibilities: preparing draft minutes and transferring them to the chairs for membership review. A distinction was made between the committee clerk and the city clerk, noting that approved minutes must be sent to the city clerk for official posting.
- **Document Standardization:** The group agreed to standardize terminology: the full name, **Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee**, will be used at first mention, followed by "**the committee**" or "**W3C**."

Decisions Made

- **Roll Call Implementation:** The committee officially adopted the practice of starting all future meetings with a roll call vote
- **Minutes Deferral:** Approval of the May 18th meeting minutes was deferred to the next meeting
- **Protocol Review:** The committee decided to continue the review of draft protocols to allow for additional member input
- **Clerk Duties:** The clerk's responsibilities will be defined as preparing draft minutes and transferring them to the chairs for distribution
- **Clerk Backup:** In the event the primary clerk is unavailable, a member will be designated to serve as clerk on a case-by-case basis
- **Document Structure:** The group decided to separate the sections regarding "Agendas" and "Minutes" to avoid confusion
- **Terminology:** The document will use the full name at first mention, followed by "**the committee**" or "**W3C**" thereafter

Action Items

- **Ellen:** Update the draft document to standardize committee name references, separate the "Agendas" and "Minutes" sections, and clarify the clerk's responsibilities
- **Wally:** Coordinate with the clerk's office regarding the new agenda template and submission deadlines
- **Committee Members:** Review the draft committee protocols and provide feedback for the next meeting
- **Silas:** Finalize and distribute the May 18th meeting minutes for approval at the next session
- **City Manager's Office:** Continue recruitment efforts for the current committee vacancy, including outreach to **Eco Fest** attendees

- **Lauri:** Continue serving as the acting clerk while the group finalizes the formal role description

Notable Details

- **Correction: Wally** confirmed that the meeting time was edited to remove a reference to "Wednesday" following feedback from **Susan LaDue**
- Regarding the clerk's role, **Wally** noted: "I think we should define in this page like what exactly are the responsibilities because there's being present, there's writing, there's editing, and then there's submitting and keeping track of all of these."

Ellen and Wally elected to table the remaining discussion of WE3C committee protocols for the Sustainability Manager Report until next meeting.

8:23 pm - Sustainability Manager Report: Laurel Schwab

"Heat Pump Coach & Incentive Program": Electrify Watertown Heat Pump program – received competitive empower grant from MassCEC for at least 5 heat pump coaches to recruit and train to demonstrate to renters, lower income homes, and landlords and provide general awareness citywide.

- \$1,000 grants for up to 20 households for the grants
- Grant period through end of 2027
- Partnering with MassEnergize for materials creation
- And Heat Smart Alliance will do training of heat pump coaches – training late fall 2026 – identify 5-10 people for training - \$2,500 each from grant
- The program will dovetail with ongoing MassSave outreach via new Watertown's Energy Advocate Em Schule.
- Webportal in multiple languages
- Surveys, tabling at public events about program
- Hoping to guide up to 25 households and offer \$1,000 grant to offset cost
- Laurel requested ideas or contacts on outreach to potential coaches and interested parties and baseline data from current users of heat pumps

Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent Katie Swan worked with Watertown Communities group about black swallowwort. It was very successful in a certain neighborhood and gave residents an opportunity to invite volunteers to remove it. More removal events on their properties are possible. Team is generating materials for more such efforts on invasive species.

Laurel's team is also working on a map of cooling resources to publicize during the summer.

Energy Manager Report: Silas Fyler -

- EV charges in back of police station – out to bid. Company not yet assigned. Transportation Manager Zeke Mermell has taken over Arsenal Mall routes – 4 EV busses/charges for the police station only.
- Ridgelawn cemetery (small building) – in the Fall, we changed out from oil to all electric, did weatherization process, for equipment for cemetery and couple offices. Energy Use Intensity (EUI) went from 43 down to 15. Now one of the better buildings.
- Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC): Given the national energy economy, Watertown renegotiated new rates for two years. The standard/default for the city is now \$0.15990 per kWh – no class I RECs as they are harder to get with the state pursuing the same. Greener product now at \$0.18430 and will be advertised in December when it takes effect. Basic rate is now \$0.15940 per kWh. Jumping up \$0.03/kWh and the summer rate is \$0.17+ so it's still lower than Eversource's prices right now.
- Watertown High School: Ellen questioned the opening of WHS with delays of installations – Silas addressed a cement pour complication and voltage too high on the lines for fire permits, etc. which delayed operations until

August. Solar photovoltaics are on roof loaded and should be working by September. Also, there is a CO2 heat pump system (no freon) for showers.

Meeting Adjournment

Ellen motioned to adjourn. Wally seconded. All in favor.

New Business: Lauri requested an update on the Wadda Hoppa. Ellen suggested bringing in more guest speakers as well.

Adjourned: 8:254pm. Lauri Motioned. Wally seconded. All in favor.

Next meeting: Scheduled for July 20, with plans to potentially hold future meetings in person or in a hybrid format.

Respectfully submitted by Lauri A. Murphy